

Nashville VOAD ARP Grant Narrative

I. Introduction

Nashville Voluntary Organization Active in Disasters (VOAD) is a coalition of dozens of nonprofits, community organizations, faith-based institutions, and government departments working together to ensure effective response to disasters through cooperation, communication, coordination, and collaboration.

Nashville VOAD's goal is to provide knowledge and resources throughout the disaster cycle—preparation, mitigation, response, and recovery—to help disaster survivors in Davidson County communities.

During times of active disaster, the Nashville VOAD provides a single point of coordination for all member organizations seeking to assist survivors in our community so that needs are met in the most efficient manner possible.

Nashville VOAD has successfully relaunched in 2021 as a stronger organization. VOAD continues to receive executive-level buy-in, as evidenced by leadership and executive committee participation. Sustained executive support is key for long-term success and continued development of the coalition; this high-level participation keeps member organizations engaged.

In addition to its structural advancements, VOAD has also made significant strides toward its purpose – increasing the ability of the nonprofit community to coordinate and respond with speed after a disaster. Nashville VOAD will ensure that critical support is available after a disaster, but not duplicated in a way that makes it difficult for survivors to navigate. Overall, this group will make Nashville and its nonprofit community more prepared to face any future disasters.

II. Needs Statement and Accomplishments

The Nashville VOAD is beneficial to our community because it:

- Builds relationships and trust between organizations and community partners;
- Brings diverse groups together around an issue to create solutions;
- Increases community resiliency through collaborative preparedness and training efforts;
- Creates a responsive structure that can be deployed immediately upon disaster;
- Increases coordination among partnering organizations which leads to a reduction in duplication of services;
- Provides points of contact for emergency managers and allows for a smooth information flow in a disaster;

- Can support the development of long-term recovery by supporting Long-Term Recovery Groups and their activities;
- It's an educational resource for residents of a community.

Since its successful relaunch in 2021, Nashville VOAD:

- Recruited a total of 51 partners. After including a Memorandum of Understanding describing the commitment and adding guidelines around using the shared Charity Tracker system, 41 organizations committed to working together in 2022, yielding a greater than 80% retention rate, even with the increased requirements.
- The VOAD approved the name (Nashville VOAD), logo, and leadership team, and formed a committee structure in 2021. The VOAD's stated goal is "to provide knowledge and resources throughout the disaster cycle – preparation, mitigation, response, and recovery – to help disaster survivors in Davidson County communities". Bylaws were approved in March 2022. In lieu of a growth plan, the VOAD instituted a Member and Engagement Committee that conducts outreach and plans member engagement activities.
- The VOAD met six times in 2021; the full VOAD now meets monthly. The steering committee has handed over strategic direction to a leadership committee made up of officers and committee chairs, which meets bi-weekly. Other committees meet regularly or as needed.
- The Office of Emergency Management provided members with general education on the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan for 2021. Members have also received education around disaster communications and disaster activation procedures. The city is in the process of revising the CEMP, with an extension to complete that work by spring of 2023. It has hosted initial meetings on each chapter of the plan, which were attended by the relevant VOAD members. (For example, Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee attended the food-related meeting, while Hands on Nashville, the American Red Cross, and the United Methodist Committee on Relief participated in the case management plan review session. VOAD has proposed edits to the CEMP that represent actual conditions on the ground and reflect the reality of response and recovery.
- In 2021, FEMA provided VOAD members with education about the role of its Voluntary Agency Liaison and the sequence of delivery for individual disaster assistance. The VOAD also convened a panel that included VOAD and long-term recovery coalitions from Florida, Texas, and California to share their experiences in collective disaster response activities.
- In March of 2022, Tennessee Voices for Victims held a training on protocols for mass violence situations that some VOAD member organizations may respond to. The VOAD leadership team also participated in Incident Command training that included caring for and sustaining teams amid the stress of a disaster situation. The VOAD also shared opportunities for members to participate in Psychological First Aid and Stop the Bleed training.

- The VOAD had 38 members participate in training and exercises, including stress testing for Charity Tracker, a platform that connects survivors with the resources they need and to track the full impact of the VOAD agencies for each household. The VOAD also worked together to activate in a standby capacity ahead of Hurricane Ida’s potential impact on Middle Tennessee.
- Hands On Nashville has worked with the VOAD to create a Salesforce dashboard for easy resource identification.
- In 2021, the VOAD formed four committees – Training & Preparedness, Member Engagement, Communications, Case Management. Following the South Nashville flood, a Construction committee helped to develop processes for flood recovery construction. This temporary committee wound down its regular meetings once construction efforts were underway. In 2022, the VOAD added a Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs) committee tasked with designing a template for LTRG set up following a disaster. This will inform recommendations to the city for the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.
- The Nashville VOAD Preparedness committee developed an activity checklist for disaster activation. The Case Management committee developed Charity Tracker to create a single-intake database that survivors can be entered into immediately after a disaster to facilitate and coordinate support and has created user materials for that platform. The VOAD is also working to develop protocols for volunteer and materials assembly areas where people wanting to help can gather to receive assignments or make donations.

III – Sustainability Plan

1. Nashville VOAD Bylaws: Click [here](#) to access the full bylaws

Membership is open to any agency or organization within Davidson County with a role to play in any phase of emergency management. The membership of Nashville VOAD is comprised of three tiers of membership:

- a. Full Member
- b. Affiliate Members
- c. Corporate Partners

Nashville VOAD established a rotational plan for key leadership positions to maintain institutional knowledge. In addition, the structure of the Nashville VOAD provides an opportunity for members to actively participate, and a space to provide recommendations and raise any concerns.

The three primary groups are:

- a. Executive Committee

- b. Steering Committee
- c. General Members

Members also can engage by joining different focus groups that discuss and drive specific elements of our VOAD. These committees are:

- d. Communications Committee
- e. Membership Engagement and Training
- f. Emotional and Spiritual Care
- g. Case Management Committee
- h. Housing and Rebuilding Committee (new)

IV. Funding Request of ARP Funds:

1. Financial Request

The Nashville VOAD is requesting \$50,000 for a pilot program for the members and community leaders aimed at engaging the community and its members around Preparedness.

2. Preparedness Pilot Outline

Nashville VOAD's Preparedness Pilot will be focused on 4 key areas:

- 1. Risk Assessment
- 2. Planning
- 3. Preparation
- 4. Evaluation

Our goal for this program is to craft a training and resource guide for Davidson county in order to teach our community the skills need in preparedness, as well as engage our members and community leaders in education around Long Term Recovery and Equity in Disaster, while providing training, education, and resources needed in our Community, Non-Profit Organizations, and Houses of Worship.

Opportunities within the pilot project would include:

- Speakers available to members and non-members
- Further expansion of our website and marketing to make the Nashville community more aware of the resources
- Training specific topics
 - Long-Term Recovery Groups
 - Behavioral Health Disaster Training

- Equity in Disaster
- Personal Safety, Active Violence & Anti-Crime Training
- First AID/CPR training
- Hosting of a Preparedness Council including a roundtop of community leaders