



*LOUISIANA*  
**Family Assistance**  
C E N T E R

Family Assistance/Reunification Center Operations

By: Arbie Goings

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# Introduction

Arbie Goings-co-owner Goings Consulting Services, LLC

Retired funeral director after over 30 years

Member DMORT since 1998

Contracted with LDH since 1999-serve as Fatality Management Lead

Supports the Cemetery Response Task Force

# Purpose

Dependent on the incident and resulting needs

No "one size fits all"

Support mass fatality and/or cemetery response

Serve as a Reunification Center/Operation for reported missing

# Supports Reunification Efforts

## Disaster/Incident

Family Assistance/  
Reunification Center

Collection Info on  
reported missing



Investigations by:

- FAC personnel
- Law enforcement
- NGO's
- Others

# Supports Reunification Efforts

## Case Study-Katrina

Remains processed at  
Federal/State Morgue

910

**VS**

13,197 Reported  
missing

Over 10,000 found  
alive

# Supports Identification Efforts

## Mass Fatality Incident

Family Assistance  
Center

Collection of Ante  
Mortem Data



Temporary Morgue  
Operations

Collection of Post  
Mortem Data

# Supports Identification Efforts

## Cemetery Disruptions

Family Assistance  
Center

Collection of Burial  
Information



Cemetery Disruptions  
Analysis

Examination of  
caskets/vaults/HR



# No "One Size Fit's All"



- Will be incident specific
  - Open or Closed population
  - Range of needs
  - Location
  - Other factors



No "One Size Fit's All"



Combination of Both

Family present in FAC

Work done virtually



# What will the FAC/FRC look like?

Primarily ante mortem collection

Primarily reunification operation

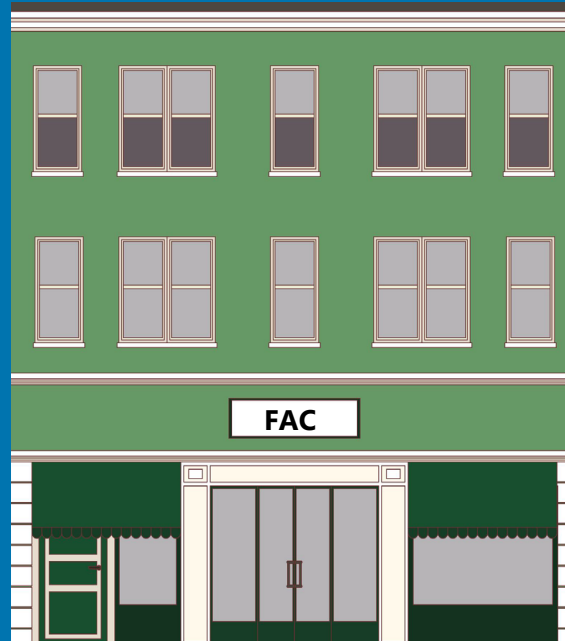
Housing assistance

Clothing/food assistance

Legal assistance

Pet food/needs

Baby/child needs



Typically will always have:

Mental/Spiritual care

Nutrition

Child care possibly

# Agencies/Organizations Involved

Louisiana Department of Health

Other State/Federal Agencies

Law Enforcement

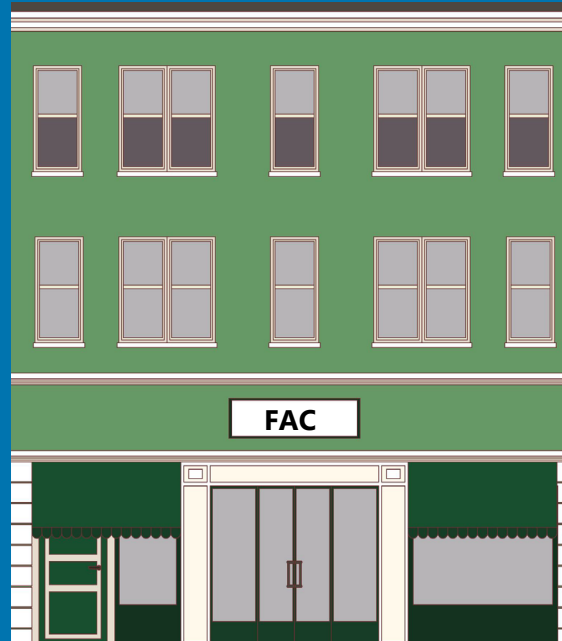
Local

State

Federal

Coroner's Office(s)

NGO's



Faith Based Organizations

Other Volunteers

DMORT/VIC Team

NTSB-TDA

Airline Personnel

Other's as Needed

# Components

Reception/Security

Call Center

Intake

Missing Persons

Support Services



Forensic Component

DNA

Dental

Pathology

Notification and Release

Data Management/IT/IR

Who will Staff These Components?

# Components Will Change Over Time

Example: Family History Unit-DNA



October 2005



August 2006

# Considerations



- Location
  - Not near Morgue/Incident Site
  - Available to public transportation
  - ADA compliant
- Infrastructure
  - Utilities
  - Parking
  - Restrooms
  - Lighting
- Length of Use
- Damage to Property
- Hours of Operation
- Staffing

# What is in a Name



Name can be confusing/not clear

Example-Hurricane Katrina/Rita

First-Family Assistance Center

Then-Find Family National Call Center

Finally-Louisiana Family Assistance Center

Solution

Manage Public Expectations

- Good messaging-PIO
- Web Sites
- Educate other agencies/organizations

# State Plan



## State of Louisiana ESF 8 LDH Mass Fatality Operational Response Plan

January 2024



Family Assistance Center   Body Recovery   Morgue   Identification

Louisiana Department of Health 628 N. 4th Street Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821



Louisiana Department of Health  
Mass Fatality Operational Response Plan

### Section 3: Morgue Operations

- 3.1 Plan of Operations
- 3.2 Morgue Command Structure
- 3.3 Morgue Site and Facility
- 3.4 Security and Traffic
- 3.5 Morgue Safety
- 3.6 Pictures and Media Relations
- 3.7 Overview of Operations
- 3.8 Maintaining Quality and Chain of Custody
- 3.9 Victim Identification Program (VIP)
- 3.10 General Supplies and Equipment
- 3.11 Operational Tasks and Personnel

### Section 4: Family Assistance Center

- 4.1 Establishing Operations
- 4.2 Logistics and Staffing
- 4.3 Security
- 4.4 Reception
- 4.5 Support Services
- 4.6 Call Center
- 4.7 Intake
- 4.8 Record Management/Data Entry
- 4.9 Information Technology
- 4.10 DNA, Dental, and Pathology
- 4.11 Family References/Kinship Samples
- 4.12 Family Notification and Body Release
- 4.13 Transition Plan

Table of Contents - Page 2 of 3  
January 2025

# Questions?

**Thank You**

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