



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Wednesday, August 30, 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR: HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: Kathleen M. McGettigan, Acting Director

Subject: Special Solicitation for Victims of Hurricane Harvey

On Friday, August 25, 2017, Hurricane Harvey made landfall on the Texas Gulf Coast. By Monday morning, many buildings and homes in Port Aransas and Rockport and throughout the region were destroyed; many parts of Houston and coastal Texas are under water; thousands have been displaced; and multiple people have lost their lives. The National Weather Service predicts Hurricane Harvey will stay in the area and regain strength. The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) declares, "This is still a dangerous storm."

As Hurricane Harvey continues to drop rain on the region, it is not possible to tell the exact size and scope of the devastation that will ultimately be caused; but it will be severe. Many Federal employees have expressed a desire to assist those in need in the region affected by this storm. As such, I am authorizing department and agency heads to allow a special solicitation of Federal employees at the workplace to support the victims of this disaster.

Special solicitations will allow Federal employees and military personnel to assist the disaster relief efforts with cash or check donations outside the normal Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). These donations should provide immediate relief. Such solicitations must be approved by the head of the Executive Department or Agency and meet the following criteria:

- This special solicitation must conclude no later than September 29, 2017.
- The Department or Agency must identify the 501(c)(3) charity or charities that will receive the contributions. The Department or Agency is responsible for making arrangements with those charities to receive the funds and provide receipts to the donors. ***Federal employees are not authorized to collect funds on behalf of charitable organizations.***
- Donors must be informed that the solicitation is not part of the CFC. However, contributions made through the CFC after the special solicitation has concluded will assist these organizations to replenish resources expended on this disaster, as well as helping with rebuilding and preparing for future needs.

The FEMA website contains information that includes 501(c)(3) charitable organizations providing disaster relief assistance (<http://www.fema.gov/volunteer-donate-responsibly>). In addition, a list of frequently asked questions and answers on special solicitations is attached.

If you decide to conduct a special solicitation, please contact OPM's Office of CFC (OCFC) to let us know of your efforts, including which charity or charities you selected for donations and how much was donated. In addition, please remind employees that contributions made through the CFC during the normal CFC campaign period will assist these organizations in replenishing resources expended on this disaster as well as prepare for those of the future. The OCFC is also available to respond to questions about the special solicitation donation process. The OCFC can be contacted at (202) 606-2564 or at cfc@opm.gov.

Attachment

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers
Human Resources Directors

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Special Solicitations for Victims of Hurricane Harvey

Q: What is a special solicitation?

A: Federal regulations, set forth at 5 CFR §950.102, state that the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) is the only authorized solicitation of employees in the Federal workplace on behalf of charitable organizations. Using an exception authority in this regulation, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) may grant permission for special solicitations of Federal employees, to be conducted outside of the CFC, in support of victims in cases of emergencies and disasters.

Q: Does the Head of the Agency still need to provide a written request?

A: No. OPM Acting Director Kathleen McGettigan has authorized government-wide solicitations for disaster relief efforts at Agency discretion.

Q: Is there a list of organizations providing relief assistance in the affected areas?

A: Each Agency may determine which 501(c)(3) charity or charities will receive funds from the special solicitation. OPM does not make recommendations, but encourages Federal Agencies to review information on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) website (<http://www.fema.gov/volunteer-donate-responsibly>).

Q: Who conducts the special solicitation?

A: Because the special solicitation is to be conducted outside of the CFC, the Federal Department, Agency, or component conducting the solicitation is responsible for the oversight and administration of the collection of contributions. OPM recommends that Federal Departments and Agencies holding a special solicitation request that the charities receiving funds from the solicitation be responsible for the collection and substantiation of all contributions.

Q: Can employees use a CFC pledge form to contribute during a special solicitation?

A: No. The special solicitation is not part of the CFC. Employees should receive instructions on how to make a special solicitation pledge by the Federal Department or Agency overseeing the solicitation.

Q: Are Local Federal Coordinating Committees (LFCCs), CFC Outreach Coordinators, or the Central Campaign Administrator (CCA) required to maintain records of special solicitations conducted by Federal Departments and Agencies in their campaign areas?

A: No. Federal Agencies and charities receiving the funds from the special solicitation are responsible for maintaining records of the solicitation. However, the Local Federal Coordinating Committees (LFCC) responsible for oversight of the local CFC in their area with Federal Agencies within their campaign borders to provide assistance for special solicitation efforts, if possible. Neither Outreach Coordinators nor the CCA are authorized to assist in special solicitation efforts.

Federal agencies conducting special solicitations should contact the Office of CFC to inform it of which charity or charities were selected for donations and how much was donated. The Office of CFC can be contacted at (202)606-2564 or cfc@opm.gov.

Q: I can give more to the special solicitation if I use payroll deduction. Is payroll deduction available for a special solicitation?

A: No. Special solicitations are conducted outside of the CFC. In addition, special solicitations are intended to provide immediate financial assistance to organizations involved in immediate relief efforts for disasters and emergencies. The fastest, most direct way to process special solicitation contributions is in the form of cash or check payable to the recipient charity. The 2017 CFC will begin October 2. During that campaign, Federal employees may use payroll deduction to assist qualified disaster relief organizations to replenish resources expended on this disaster as well as prepare for those of the future.

Q: What if a Department or Agency wants to help a non-CFC participating charity involved in disaster relief services?

A: If a Federal Agency wants to solicit funds for a charity not listed in the CFC Charity List, it may do so in a special solicitation, since this collection effort is conducted outside of the CFC through a special solicitation.

Q: Our Department or Agency has employees who were directly affected by a disaster. Do we need to seek authorization to collect funds from Federal employees to be given directly to these employees and/or their surviving family members?

A: Yes. Federal employees may only solicit funds for fellow employees in need subject to established ethics requirements and non-CFC solicitation requests affecting Federal buildings. We strongly encourage you to contact your agency's ethics counsel or General Counsel if you are planning such an activity. Your Department or Agency does not need OPM's authorization for a solicitation to permit collection of funds for this purpose.

Q: Is this authorization solely for special solicitations for Hurricane Harvey or can it be used to conduct special solicitations for other emergencies/disasters?

A: The authorization applies only to relief efforts related to Hurricane Harvey which made landfall on the Gulf Coast of Texas on Aug. 26, 2017.

Q: Whom can I contact if I have further questions?

A: The Office of CFC staff is available to provide technical assistance to Federal Agencies and can be reached at (202) 606-2564 or cfc@opm.gov.