




UNITED STATES
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20415-1000

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

December 30, 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: KAY COLES JAMES 
Director

SUBJECT: Relief Efforts for Victims of the Asian Earthquake and Tsunami Disaster

As a Nation, we are all troubled by the recent earthquake and resulting tsunami in South Asia. The incredible devastation and significant loss of life are truly horrifying. The anguish is felt around the world and has set in motion a remarkable response towards relief assistance. I share our President's expression of sympathy to the victims, their families and the affected countries.

Based on the recommendation by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), cash contributions are the most effective way to provide relief assistance. As such, I am authorizing department and agency heads to allow a special solicitation of Federal employees at the workplace to facilitate relief assistance within the Federal government. Such special solicitations will allow Federal employees to assist the ongoing relief efforts in South Asia with a one-time cash or check donation, outside the normal Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) procedures. USAID has provided a list of relief organizations and further information on its website at <http://www.usaid.gov>. In addition, a list of frequently asked questions and answers on special solicitations is attached.

I believe the special solicitations are the best option for Federal employees to provide relief assistance. However, a few local CFCs were previously approved for solicitation extensions and are still open. In those areas where the CFC has not yet been concluded, Federal employees wanting to contribute to the relief efforts still may contribute through their participation in the CFC. Federal employees, of course, can also participate by giving directly to charities involved in relief efforts, regardless of whether they participated in their local CFC.

If the CFC is still ongoing in a particular geographic area, Federal employees in that campaign area may contribute to the relief effort through either payroll deduction or by a direct cash or check contribution to a CFC participating relief organization. Federal employees can refer to the CFC national/international list to identify charitable organizations that may be providing relief efforts. The list can be accessed online at www.opm.gov/cfc/opmmemos/2004/2004-09.asp or Federal employees can refer to their

local CFC brochure/catalogue for the national/international list. Donors are encouraged to contact organizations prior to donating funds to ensure that relief efforts are being conducted by the organization. Pledge cards should be turned in as quickly as possible to Agency keyworkers or coordinators for processing.

If the CFC has already closed in a particular area and the Federal employee's agency does not conduct a special solicitation, Federal employees can still donate directly to relief organizations. I encourage Federal employees to contact relief organizations directly or visit their websites if the other options are not available.

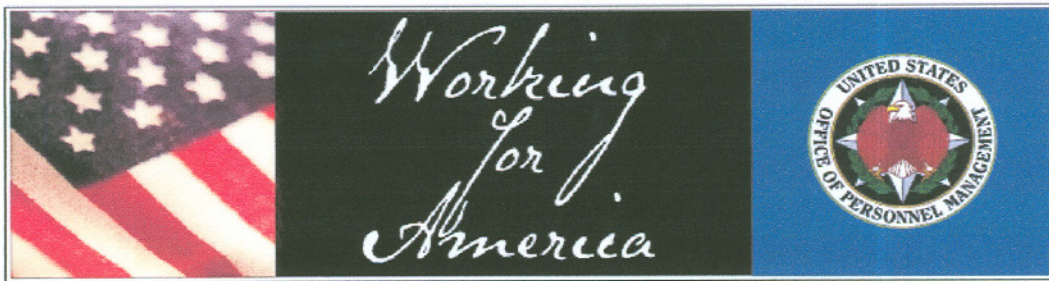
I encourage departments and agencies to contact OPM's Office of CFC Operations to let us know about any special solicitation efforts, to allow us to assist you in the development and implementation of such efforts, and to respond to questions about the special solicitation donation process. The Office of CFC Operations can be contacted at (202) 606-2564 or at cfc@opm.gov.

I greatly appreciate your efforts in allowing your employees this opportunity to assist those so much in need, and to show again the generous and caring character of Federal employees throughout the Nation.

Attachment

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers
Human Resources Directors

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT



www.opm.gov

**Office of CFC Operations
U.S. Office of Personnel Management**

**Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Special Solicitations
For Victims of the Asian Earthquake and Tsunami**

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, 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. The Director of OPM, Kay Coles James, has authorized governmentwide solicitations for disaster relief efforts at the agency directors' discretion.

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

A. Information on organizations providing disaster relief can be found on the U.S. Agency for International Development website (www.usaid.gov).

Q. Who conducts the special solicitation?

A. Because the special solicitation is 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. The Local Federal Coordinating Committee (LFCC) can be contacted for assistance. 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 card 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 the CFC fiscal agents known as Principal Combined Fund Organizations (PCFO) 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 LFCCs responsible for oversight of the local CFC in their area and the PCFOs are encouraged to cooperate with Federal agencies within their campaign borders to provide assistance for special solicitation efforts.

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 procedures. 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.

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 brochure, it may do so in a special solicitation. Again, this collection effort is conducted outside of the CFC through a special solicitation. The CFC has no mechanisms for tracking donations to agencies not identified by a CFC number.

Q. Our department or agency has employees that 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. Your department or agency does not need OPM's authorization for a solicitation to permit collection of funds for this purpose. However, Federal employees only may 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.

Q. Is this authorization solely for special solicitations for the Asian earthquake and tsunami disaster or can it be used to conduct special solicitations for other emergencies/disasters?

- A. The authorization applies only to relief efforts for victims of the Asian earthquake and tsunami. For more information on how to request permission to conduct special solicitations in response to other emergencies/disasters, please visit the CFC website (<http://www.opm.gov/cfc/html/faq.asp#emerg>).

Q. Who can I contact if I have further questions?

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