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Appendix 3A

Sample Business Case for a Volunteer Community Service Project

BUSINESS CASE: PROJECT TO ASSIST HURRICANE EVACUEES*

Executive Summary

A massive Category 3 hurricane made a direct hit on New Orleans two days ago. Much of the population was evacuated to surrounding cities before the storm made landfall, and even more are expected to relocate themselves now that the city has been declared a natural disaster area. Government agencies estimate that approximately 50,000 displaced New Orleans residents will relocate to Dallas, Texas, within the next two weeks. Many of these evacuees will have lost their homes and most of their personal belongings. They are likely to be in need of food, especially during the early part of their resettlement here. Our neighborhood association has come together to assess the best way to help the victims of this tragedy who will soon arrive in our city. We would like these people to know we care about them and that we welcome them to our city.

Given the rarity of a storm of this magnitude, there is very little historical information available about how to respond to the resulting evacuation. We do know that the current aid organizations will need much more help than normal in their efforts to help such a large number of evacuees, and we would like to contribute in the best way we can. After careful analysis and discussion, we have decided to conduct a food and clothing drive. Our choice of this activity over other possibilities was based on three decision criteria:

1. Anticipated value to the evacuees.
2. Fit with the time and resources available in our neighborhood association.
3. Ease of implementation.

* Jennifer Galek, MBA, Thunderbird School of Global Management, 2008, created this business case based on her experience. Thanks, Jennifer!

We have set a goal of collecting enough clothing for 1,000 evacuees and enough food to feed 500 evacuees for two weeks.

Problem Statement

Within the next two weeks, the hurricane that hit New Orleans will force an estimated 50,000 evacuees to relocate to Dallas, Texas for safety while they await word about the damage to their city and their homes. For some, this might require a stay in Dallas of a few days or weeks. Others may not be able to return to New Orleans for several months. Regardless of the length of their stay in our city, the evacuees will be in desperate need of shelter, food, clothing, and social support. Governmental and non-governmental aid agencies in Dallas are ill-prepared for an influx of so many people in need of assistance.

Given our interest in more completely understanding the problems faced by the evacuees, our community, and support agencies, we discussed the driving forces that have created the current situation and summarized them in a fishbone diagram, which is displayed below.

Fishbone Diagram for Project Drivers

Summary Statement about Underlying Causes Creating the Problem

Primary causal categories underlying the problems associated with the evacuees include the hurricane, government agencies, aid organizations, and the evacuees. The full set of circumstances has made it very difficult for the evacuees to take care of themselves. The cost of immediate relocation for an undetermined amount of time is extremely high, and most of these people do not have the kind of savings it would take to cover the unexpected needs created by a catastrophic event such as a major hurricane. Because the hurricane came so quickly, people were unable to plan effectively and bring the things they needed for an extended trip away from home. Those who were in New Orleans at the time of the storm and are now traveling to Dallas have found that the majority of their possessions have been destroyed. And finally, the emotional state of the evacuees is one of shock because of the suddenness of their necessary departure and the uncertainty of their return.

Goal Statement

The essential needs of the evacuees will be shelter, food, clothing, and social support. Because of our size and resources, we have decided that we will be able to help most efficiently by focusing on meeting the food and clothing needs of a portion of these