



# 2021 DISASTER FEEDING AT SCALE



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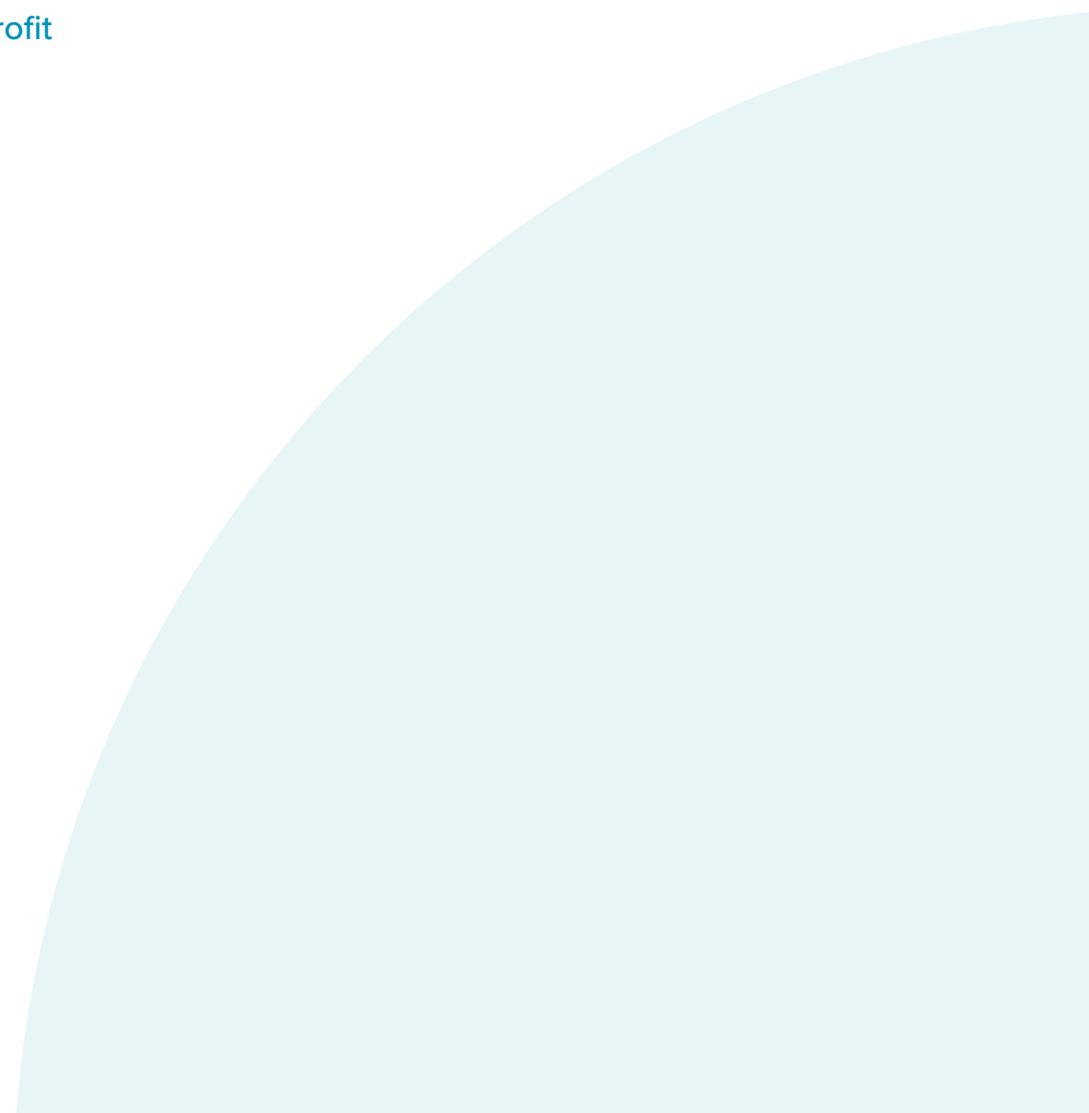
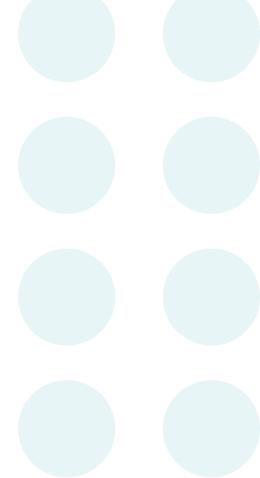
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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>AAR</b>	After Action Report
<b>ARC</b>	American Red Cross
<b>BPA</b>	Blanket Purchase Agreements
<b>CPUC</b>	California Public Utilities Commission
<b>EOP</b>	Emergency Operations Plan
<b>ESF</b>	Emergency Support Function
<b>FEMA</b>	Federal Emergency Management Agency
<b>FHSZ</b>	Fire Hazard Severity Zone
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NRF</b>	National Response Framework
<b>RFU</b>	Rogue Food Unites
<b>SNAP</b>	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
<b>WUI</b>	Wildland Urban Interface



# OVERVIEW

Emergencies occur at any moment and can devastate a community and its ability to care for each other. Inside the emergency management structure of any given community exists a set of Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) designed to coordinate, collaborate, and command resources as necessary to help communities respond to and recover from emergencies. While ESF's are designed to address many different community functions, Off the Grid fits under ESF #6 - Mass Care. Mass Care, as defined in the ESF, often includes mass feeding and sheltering capacities.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) ESF #6 response plan, published in 2016:

*Provides feeding services at fixed sites and distribution sites and through mobile feeding units. Feeding services may include hot or shelf-stable meals, infant formula, baby food, snacks, beverages, and food packages, as well as diverse dietary and culturally appropriate meals. ESF #6 works in concert with ESF #11 and local, state, and tribal governments; NGO's; and the private sector to acquire, prepare, cook and/or distribute food and food supplies. Additional support may include the provision of technical assistance for the development of state feeding plans.*

The ESF 6 response plan continues to note that the resources contained within ESF 6, "can help accelerate the recovery of individuals, households, and communities."

The intention of Off the Grid is to assist in this role to further facilitate the acceleration of recovery mechanisms, by facilitating the transition of public assistance monies to impacted communities, by meeting long-term mass feeding needs throughout the West Coast of the United States.



# EMERGENCY RESPONSE ON THE WEST COAST

## CALIFORNIA

The California Office of Emergency Services [www.caloes.gov] responds to hundreds of disasters each year. Their Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) [resource attached] is modeled after the FEMA National Response Framework (NRF) and uses ESF's to classify capabilities throughout the State. Mass Care and Feeding capabilities are represented with ESF #6.

The California Health and Human Services Agency oversees the overall development and administration of ESF #6. Underneath their oversight is the California Department of Social Services. At this level, a core working group of providers holds the ESF #6 work and chairs numerous Taskforce groupings. The CA Feeding Taskforce (chaired in 2021 by Stacey Duncan) is where Off the Grid would participate.

The CA Feeding Task Force includes numerous non-profit organizations and is often synonymous with the American Red Cross (ARC). The ARC can initiate many of the contracts that the State of California can initiate. The initiating organization may differ depending upon the local, state, tribal, or federal needs, but the goal is to acquire the tactical response level necessary to support the local response and recovery needs. As Off the Grid continues to partner with the CA Feeding Taskforce these relationships and capacities will become stronger and more likely to be relied upon.

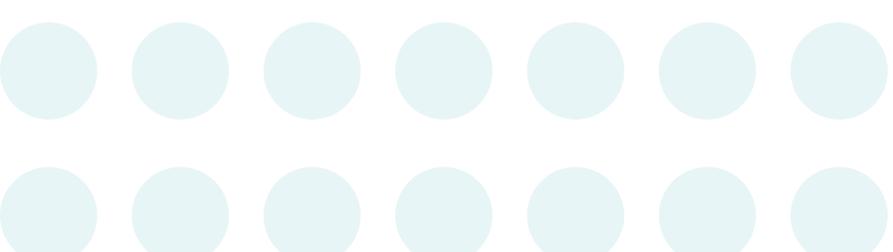
**CALIFORNIA HEALTH  
AND HUMAN  
SERVICES AGENCY**

**CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
SOCIAL SERVICES**

**ESF#6 CORE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GROUP**

### **TASK FORCES**

Mass Evacuation  
Distribution of Emergency  
Supplies  
Feeding  
Access and Functional  
Needs  
Service Animals and  
Household Pets  
Sheltering  
Reunification



# OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH: WILDLAND FIRE RISK AREAS

California has many hazards, chief among them is wildland fire. In the past five years, California has seen a record number of individuals, businesses, and communities impacted by wildland fire response and recovery. While expanding capacity of Off the Grid throughout California is necessary, emphasis should be placed on areas most likely to be impacted by and/or serve as evacuation and relocation areas for communities impacted by wildfire.

The Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) is the zone of transition between unoccupied land and human development. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, “Communities adjacent to and surrounded by wildland are at varying degrees of risk from wildfires.”

California fire risk is best seen visually. Both the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and CalFire provide online ArcGIS mapping resources for this type of work. The CPUC map is easier to navigate and can easily incorporate jurisdictional county and city boundaries to better target Off the Grid outreach in areas most likely to be impacted.



## CPUC Fire Map

[<https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/firemap/>]

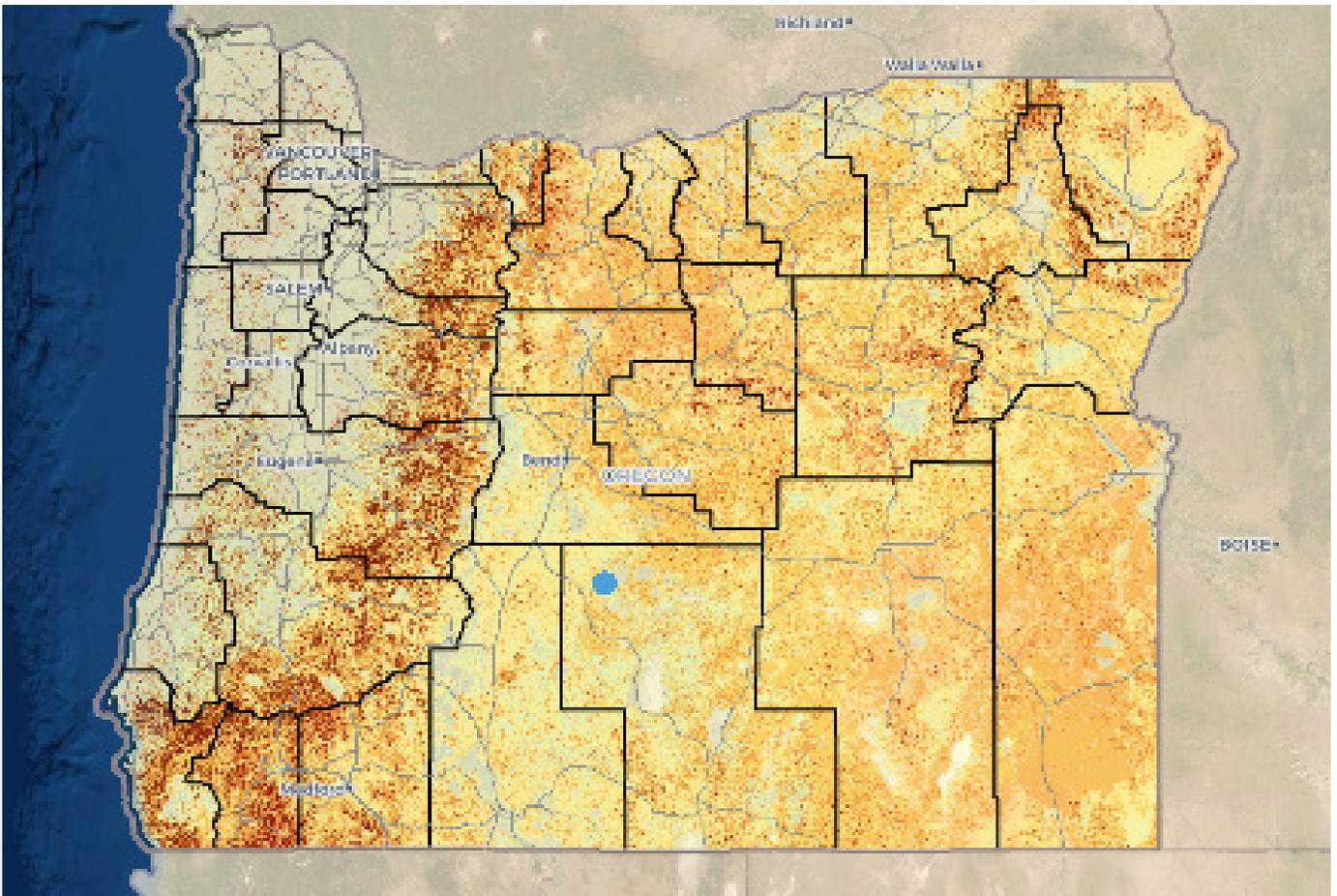
A note about the CPUC Fire Map: all fire maps evaluate wildfire hazards, which are physical conditions that create a likelihood that an area will burn over a 30- to 50-year period. They do not take into account modifications such as fuel reduction efforts and therefore are not 100 percent accurate as to immediate fire risk.



# OREGON

The Oregon 2020 fire season was unprecedented and resulted in extended mass care and feeding operation for the Oregon Office of Emergency Management [[www.oregon.gov/oem/](http://www.oregon.gov/oem/)]. Major fires began in the Interstate 5 corridor in mid-September 2020, by mid-October 2020 (approximately 30 days from the initiatory event) the State of Oregon began to transition feeding operations from their non-profit partners, mainly the ARC, to state-held contracts and vendors. They were given 5 days notice for this transition. Over the past six months, Oregon has served 600,000 meals, equivalent to 31,000 meals each week of their operations. Approximately 90 percent of their meals served have gone to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients. They expect this rate to extend for another six months as individuals and families impacted by the 2020 fire season remain displaced.

Oregon has only five feeding vendors statewide. All of whom are playing a large role in the 2020 fire season recovery and many who specifically target the most at risk areas (Interstate 5 corridor and coast of Oregon).



Over the summer of 2021, in preparation for the 2021 fire season, Oregon will be looking for additional feeding vendors, especially those in the long-term (10+ days) category. They fully anticipate needing vendor capacity for 12+ months in coming disaster responses.

Current extended feeding operations are led by Rogue Food Unites (RFU) [<https://www.roguefoodunites.org/>] inside Jackson, Marion, and Lincoln Counties. RFU acts as a pass-through organization, similar to the model Off the Grid would employ under these circumstances. They coordinate clients and creators, ensuring timely delivery and payments. Additionally, RFU helps to coordinate a voucher-based system to allow for recipients to pick up selected meals of their choice at a time convenient for their schedule. This voucher-based system is brand-new to Oregon and will likely be the preferable model in coming disasters. It is an area where Off the Grid could excel in increasing capacity and coordination throughout Oregon and particularly the I-5 corridor.

While much emphasis is placed on Oregon's fire hazard, many of their metro populations sit along or adjacent to the Cascadia Fault Zone. This earthquake hazard is extensive and is likely to devastate in-state food production capabilities along the I-5 corridor and coast of Oregon. It is estimated that nearly half of the population located along the Cascadia fault would need mass care feeding. For this reason, an extended network of providers, creators, suppliers, and service capabilities would be encouraged over the long-term when working with Oregon.



# BEST PRACTICES

Best practices within mass feeding are vast and while Off the Grid is already engaging in numerous opportunities throughout California these additional mechanisms may prove helpful in working with federal, tribal, state, local and nonprofit partners.

## INTERNAL BEST PRACTICES

Best practices within mass feeding are vast and while Off the Grid is already engaging in numerous opportunities throughout California these additional mechanisms may prove helpful in working with federal, tribal, state, local and nonprofit partners.

A leading expectation for nonprofit organizations in the disaster response space is that they themselves are prepared to handle an emergency in their home territory. Increasingly the obligation is that of a dual response capability - meaning a nonprofit organization is capable of responding to something near their headquarters and deploying their capacity in another location simultaneously. This responsibility is often unsaid, but no less expected.

To that end, an internal EOP is considered best practice for organizations with any response and/or recovery role. EOPs cover a wide-range of capacities and essentially describe capabilities within an organization should they be directly impacted by an emergency event.

### An internal EOP may include the following:

#### Executive Summary

#### Purpose and Scope

#### Assessment of Existing Operations

- Safety Assessment Checklist
- Staff Roster
- Off the Grid Specific Threats and Hazards

#### Concept of Operations

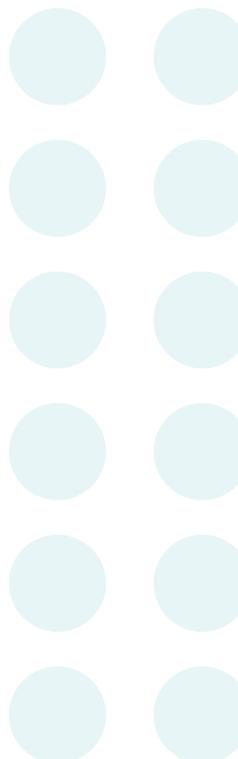
- Direction, Control, and Coordination
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Contingency Plan

#### Plan Review & Maintenance

- Exercising the Plan

#### Appendices

- Floor Plans
- Facilities Checklists
- Staff Roster
- Response Protocols
- Accident and Injury
- Client Emergency
- Severe Weather
- Fire
- Lockdown Protocol
- Evacuation Protocol
- Off the Grid Closings
- Return to Normal Operations



Additional information, resources, and next steps can be found at the California state-sponsored initiative Outsmart Disaster [<https://outsmartdisaster.com/>].

This internal EOP can be summarized and shared with external stakeholders as proof of response capacity and integration of capabilities during large-scale events.

## **EXTERNAL BEST PRACTICES**

While an EOP is helpful in determining capabilities and needs, as well as action steps necessary in an event, it does not serve as the leading external communications piece for creative partners, suppliers, and fellow nonprofit organizations.

Developing a Comprehensive Guide to Emergency Feeding with Off the Grid is an essential next step. The comprehensive guide would include two separate focuses one focused on Federal, Tribal, State, and Local governments throughout the West Coast and the second oriented toward creators and suppliers who would comprise Off the Grid's local network of mass feeding responders. These pieces would complement each other and comprise Off the Grid's external Emergency Cadre Outreach program.

## **GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDER GUIDE**

**A Government Stakeholder Guide would, at minimum, include the following:**

1. The justification for choosing Off the Grid to support long-term feeding recovery within a given community, including the ability to act as a pass-through organization to support local economies for an extended (6 months or more) timeframe.

As part of this justification particular emphasis on the ability to deliver trauma-informed, culturally competent meal choices and feeding options is essential to support stakeholder needs.

2. Deployment areas, both current and prospective; plus numbers of creator/supplier partners available in each region, county, or area;

3. Deployment options (including costs), length of deployment duration, and request requirements needed for each deployment;



4. Resource deployment packages available, categorized by region as appropriate; Deployment packages may include: descriptions of resources and capabilities available, by region (e.g. are vouchers available for this deployment area, etc); logistical support options, including delivery, length of deployment and how to continue support into community recovery, and opportunity to partner within ESF 6 deployment and support structures.

5. Abilities to deploy to multiple locations (within the same state or across states) simultaneously, with particular emphasis on deployment timelines for extended support.

## **CREATOR CADRE GUIDE**

**A Creator Cadre Guide would, at minimum, include the following:**

1. Onboarding opportunities with Off the Grid, acknowledging that supporting another disaster response organization (i.e. World Central Kitchen) does not conflict with joining the Off the Grid network of providers;

2. Expectations for each creator during an event, including circumstances on which they may be asked to provide their services;

- List of minimum capabilities/capacities post event (note: these requirements may be verified by the contracting authority);

3. Definition of roles for Creators/Suppliers and Off the Grid during long-term deployments and recovery operations;

4. Terms of agreement, including payment, billing, and procurement terms as necessary;

5. Contract requirements during a deployment, if necessary;

6. Emergency points of contact for Off the Grid

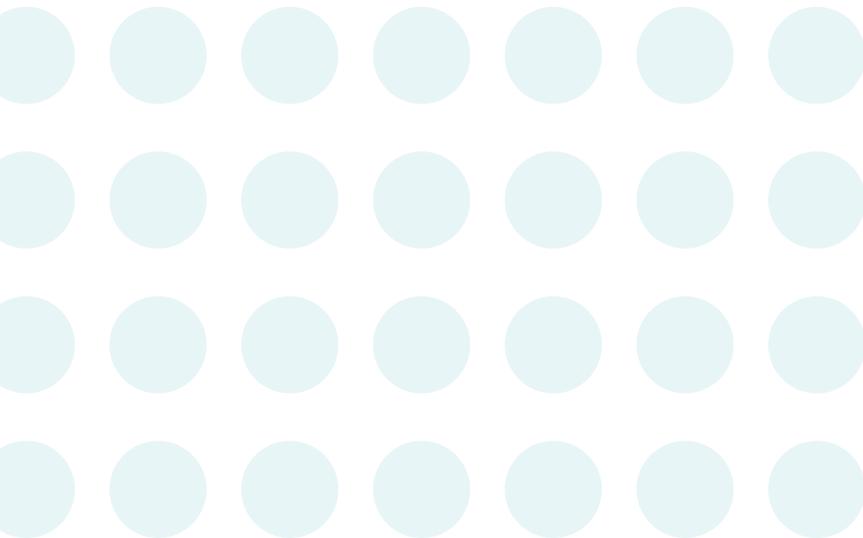
## ESF #6 FEEDING TASKFORCE

An additional best practice that Off the Grid has already begun to engage in is supporting the Statewide Feeding Taskforce. Given the number of state-declared emergencies (and eventually federally-declared emergencies) participation in the Statewide Feeding Taskforce is the best way to deploy to disasters at scale.

While local partnerships are helpful and often result in sustained long-term agreements, because Off the Grid does not operate with an ARC or Salvation Army canteen driven model it is unsustainable over time.

Additionally, deployment past 10 days, the market area Off the Grid is seeking to support, is financially supported nearly exclusively by federally or state funded monies.

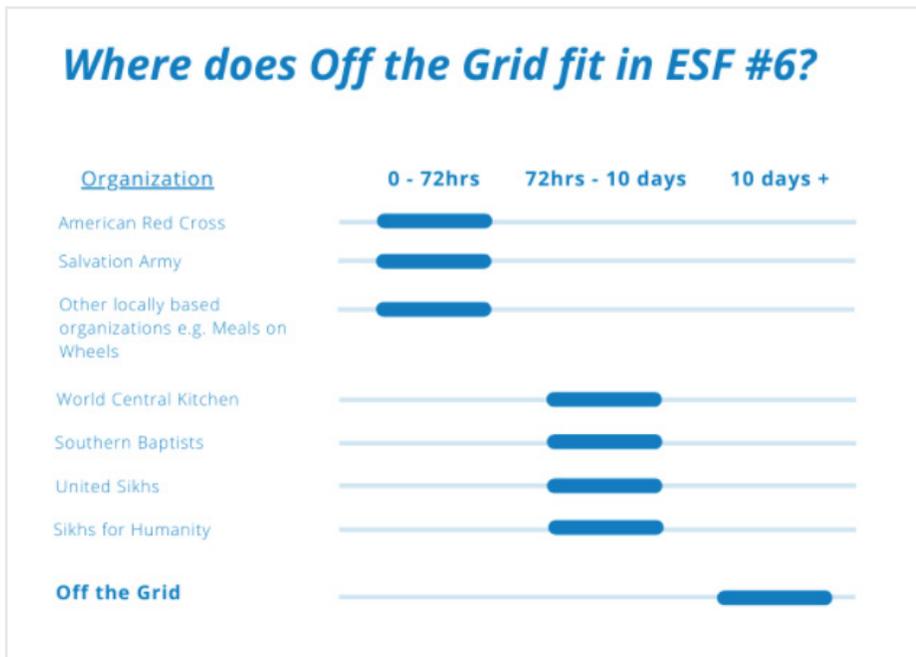
This partnership also allows in-depth coordination, direct deployment to areas most in need and quicker turnaround of financial support for the newly established nonprofit. It also ensures that Off the Grid can focus nearly exclusively on building local creator connections in areas most likely to be impacted within the next five years. Ensuring their presence aids local economies in their immediate disaster recovery.



# OPPORTUNITIES & NEXT STEPS

## A NETWORKED RECOVERY

Off the Grid is uniquely positioned to support ESF #6 operations in both California and Oregon by engaging in the under-supported area of recovery-based feeding. The model depicted here is unique in its capacity and does not overlap pre-existing nonprofit organizations in the feeding space.



Additionally Off the Grid's partnership with suppliers, as recently demonstrated during the COVID-19 deployment, will be integral to creating food box operations to support communities unable to access grocery supply lines during a disaster. As an example of this opportunity, Oregon noted that during the 2020 fire season a beef supplier connected with the state noting they were able to send their livestock to butchery and wanted to donate them to the state to feed displaced individuals. The state was unable to accept the donation because they lacked a connection to a butcher to help bring the meat from farm to table. This would be an excellent opportunity for Off the Grid to bridge the gap between both farm to table and restaurant to home.

The creation and nurturing of a network of creators and suppliers is something that Off the Grid excels at and is much needed when it comes to community-generated long-term recovery. While organizations such as World Central Kitchen deploy immediately post incident, they are often departing before the real work of recovery has even begun. This transition, while essential to World Central Kitchen's deployment model, is difficult on local economies and often means food creators are limited in their ability to employ, sell, and support their local community as that transition is being made.

Most local food creators have never dealt with emergency management, response or recovery and have little knowledge of how to generate income and support during their community's most difficult moments. That is the gap that Off the Grid can address moving forward.

## **EXPANDING ESF #6 CAPACITIES**

Delivering competent, effective, and responsive mass feeding is a difficult task. Although there are many nonprofits in the mass feeding space, the need is great. Off the Grid has potential to meet a need for disaster impacted communities by aiding long-term recovery. Building additional relationships with creators is vital, but the capacity conversation must include the development of internal resources that link directly to government resources only active during crisis.

For example, Off the Grid has the opportunity to broaden public assistance capacity for local governments, by investigating pre-qualification opportunities through Federal contracts. This pre-qualification would ensure that local communities are receiving the maximum amount of reimbursement for their response and recovery. It is perhaps one of the weakest areas for local and state governments, because they are unfamiliar with the capabilities of public assistance. While this is not an immediate step, it is an opportunity to explore and determine fit and capacity.

Interconnected to this analysis, is the exploration and development of Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPA) or a similar mechanism with the State of California and other western states. Both opportunities provide significant opportunity for Off the Grid and benefit community-driven long-term recovery.

## **ESF #6 COMMUNICATIONS**

Nearly every After-Action Report (AAR) compiled from a disaster response notes communications and logistics management as a pain point for mass feeding. The 2020 fire responses, in both California and Oregon, were no exception. Off the Grid has the opportunity to develop logistical capacity to improve communications from meal creation to delivery in coming deployments. This area, while not in the realm of food creation, is an area which would develop remarkably better service for disaster survivors and food creators.

Bryson, Crosby and Stone noted in 2006, there are identifiable elements that characterize effective collaboration and coordination, several of which include common problem understanding, shared purpose and explicitly arrangements pertaining to operations, resources, and authority. These well-known and predicted elements can be capitalized upon to build a more robust and survivor-driven response structure.

A solution in this area would help to streamline response time, save deployment and staff dollars, and ensure culturally appropriate, hot meals to those in need. It could serve as a national model for disaster response in the mass feeding sector and could be easily deployed in both California and Oregon in 2021.

## **NONPROFIT VS FOR-PROFIT**

While some investigation has been done on whether Off the Grid should develop a non-profit foundational arm, more investigation should be completed. There are tradeoffs to either status, including how the organization may be deployed by the state and formal contract versus Memorandum of Agreement payment terms. Additionally, while most organizations inside the mass feeding sector are non-profits it is not a requirement for deployment or service during a disaster.

Often, as depicted by the previous chart, nonprofits serve in the immediate response window, but do not deploy for long periods of time during recovery operations. Recovery operations are often given to more stable organizations capable of longer-term commitments and stronger logistical management.



As an example, Oregon currently uses a for-profit organization, RFU, which can receive donations via the United Way (a nonprofit partner) to act as a pass-through organization for local food creators and suppliers.

It should be noted that there are certain federal and state streams of money which cannot be duplicated or intersected during disaster work. Those restrictions exist no matter the tax status of the responding organization.

## CONCLUSION

Mass feeding is an essential part of disaster response and community recovery. Off the Grid is strategically positioned to build mass feeding capacity and support community-driven recovery in a way unique among standard feeding partners. Whether as a nonprofit or for-profit organization Off the Grid can bolster long-term feeding and community recovery by building a network of creators and suppliers throughout Wildland Urban Interface communities in California and Oregon.

Building a network of community-centric responders that are prepared and able to respond to a yearly fire season and unplanned disasters in and near their communities is integral to the work that Off the Grid is embarking upon. Integrating that community into the Federal, State, Tribal and Local response capacities is what makes Off the Grid more than a one-off organization, but rather a consistent responder that communities can count upon in their most trying moments. The consistent practice and methodology via guides, plans, etc that Off the Grid can integrate into mass feeding response will help local food creators and the service capacity of the support function as a whole.

## REFERENCES

All planning and meeting transcripts available are located at [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Zy\\_ux53OMjb5QD8k3Jk-Btb0UQgj\\_6Lu?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Zy_ux53OMjb5QD8k3Jk-Btb0UQgj_6Lu?usp=sharing).



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