

2026 SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Schedule is Subject to Change

MONDAY, MAY 4

7:30 am – 5:00 pm

Registration

8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Pre-Conference Trainings (Registration Required – Limited Space Available)

Beyond the Flames – Navigating the Financial Maze of Wildfire Recovery

Facilitators: Valerie Brown, Jeri Curry, Sidra Goldwater, Kate Bulger

Centering Children in Disasters

Facilitator: Greta Wetzel

DCM Essentials: Blended Delivery with Applied Learning Experiences

Facilitator: Melissa Hruska

Finding Your Leadership Core in Times of Uncertainty (Additional Fee Required)

Facilitator: Leonard J. Marcus

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

National VOAD Member and State/Territory VOAD Meeting (Closed Business Meeting – Designated Member Representatives)

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Annual Meeting (Open to All Attendees)

4:15 pm – 5:15 pm

Committee Leadership Meeting

5:30 pm – 7:00 pm

Welcome Reception (Open to All Attendees)

TUESDAY, MAY 5

7:00 am – 5:00 pm

Reflection Room

7:30 am – 5:00 pm

Registration

8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Exhibit Hall Open

8:00 am – 11:45 am

Exhibitor Meet & Greet

8:00 am – 11:45 am

Service Project

8:00 am – 9:00 am

State/Territory VOAD Leadership Meeting (Closed Meeting – Open to Primary & Secondary Representatives)

9:15 am – 10:15 am

First Timers Mixer

10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Meet the Members

12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

Welcome Luncheon

1:45 pm – 2:45 pm**Committee Meetings 1**

Community Preparedness

International

Long Term Recovery Groups

Donations Management

Disaster Migration

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm**Breakout Session 1** – [Click Here to View Session Descriptions](#)

Beyond Immediate Relief: Long-Term Resilience and Sustainable Housing Solutions for Low-Income Survivors

Speakers: Jenn Dorsch-Messler, Seth Long

Tech Tools for Disaster Response, Recovery, & Rebuilding: Is there an APP for that?

Speakers: Valerie Brown, Jeri Curry, Patty Ratterman, Sierra Kos

Including Inclusion: A Reflective Exercise on How Emergency Responses Failed People with Disabilities—and How We Must Do Better

Speakers: Bjorn Betzler, Ann Diapaola

Building Community Resilience through Fellowship in Mass Casualty Events

Speaker: Leon Ferraez

Transforming Disaster Response Through Innovative Partnerships

Speakers: Juanicia Crump, Jose Madera, Luke Pratt

Transforming Disaster Response Through Innovative Partnerships

Speaker: Ashley Bustillo

Imagining a World Where the Emotional Aftershocks of Disaster No Longer Define Lives, But Give Way to Healing, Resilience, and Hope

Speaker: Jolie Willis

4:15 pm – 5:15 pm**Committee Meetings 2**

Communications

Advocacy

Mass Care

Volunteer Management

Disaster Legal

5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Awards Dinner Social Hour

6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

Awards Dinner

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6

7:00 am – 5:00 pm

Reflection Room

7:30 am – 5:00 pm

Registration

7:30 am – 5:00 pm

Exhibit Hall Open

7:30 am – 8:45 am

Expo Breakfast

9:00 am – 10:00 am

Plenary Keynote

10:15 am – 11:15 am**Breakout Session 2** – [Click Here to View Session Descriptions](#)

The Appalachian Relay: Visionary Leadership, Trusted Messengers, Building Recovery

Speakers: Kat Latham, Leslie Dalton

Master Disaster Communication: A Hands-On Lab with Next-Gen Tools

Speakers: Vivi Siegel, Anne Meyers, Sabrina Riera

Small Disasters, Big Impact: The Importance of Community Resilience and Local Disaster Coordination

Speakers: Cindy Stewart, Jen Ponce

Rehumanizing Long Term Recovery: Centering Survivor-Determined Measures of Success

Speakers: Nyla Howell, Julia Frank

The Continuity You Can't Download: Practicing Mentorship as Leadership

Speakers: Emily Kukulies

Building the Next Generation of Disaster Data Tools: How Louisiana VOAD Is Developing Innovative Technologies to Improve Disaster Response

Speakers: Andrew Holbein

"Cast a Wider Net!": How Collaboration with Non-Traditional and Traditional Partners Enhanced Community Recovery

Speakers: Janna Bowman, Alexander Falcone

11:15 am – 12:45 pm

Networking Lunch

12:45 pm – 1:45 pm**Breakout Session 3** – [Click Here to View Session Descriptions](#)

AKVOAD: Unique Challenges for Disaster Response in Rural Alaska

Speakers: Jenni Ragland, Alan Budahl, Dan Wilcox, Mary Yoder Holsopple

The Future of Multi-Agency Resource Centers: Advancing Disaster Response with Fintech

Speakers: Hani Hamwi, Kirstin Trusco, Kevin Cox

Engaging Youth in Disaster Management: A Hands-On Exploration of a Summer Camp in Texas

Speakers: Seth Jordan, Michelle Meyer

Expanding Generosity: Building Lasting Recovery, Resilience, and Resource Strategies

Speakers: Renae Eze

Advancing a Unified Vision for Community Pet Protection: The Evolving Role of NGOs in Disaster Planning, Response, and Recovery

Speakers: Susan Anderson

Strategies for Effective Community Engagement and Partnerships in Disaster Recovery

Speakers: Kate Pifer, Stefanie Barnette, Jonathan Nazeer

From Abstract to Action: Practical Applications of Disaster Research

Speakers: Sydney Dyck, Julie Elliot, Roni Fraser, Mary Nelan

Beyond the Basics: How Government and VOAD Partners Elevate Mental Health in Response and Recovery

Speakers: Jessica Geib

1:45 pm – 2:15 pm

Coffee Break in Exhibit Hall

2:15 pm – 3:15 pm

Committee Meetings 3

Emotional Spiritual Care

Disaster Case Management

Disaster Health

Housing

3:30 pm – 4:30 pm

Breakout Session 4 – [Click Here to View Session Descriptions](#)

Frontline Responders: Community Justice Workers Leading Long-Term Disaster Recovery

Speakers: Izzy Williamson, David Bonebrake, Sarah Carver, Cher Thompson

Activating Communities: Reimagining Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) Methods for Improving Community Access and Agency

Speakers: Clinton Carlson, Rodrigo Ramirez

Visionary Logistics: Securing Infant Health with Infant and Young Child Feeding Integration (The 4 C's in Action)

Speakers: Ashley Mickelson, Melinda Delisle, Brandi Harrison, Rachel Fann

Mapping Needs of Underserved Populations for Rural Resilience

Speakers: Judanne Lennox-Morrison

Fighting the Fires of Wildfire Recovery

Speakers: Valerie Brown, Jeri Curry, Ian Anderson

Safe, Sanitary, Secure and CHOSEN: How to Embed Survivor Choice into Disaster Programming

Speakers: Katie Mears, Race Hodges, Katharine Boyette

Feeding Hope: The Hidden Impact of Disaster Feeding

Speakers: Victor Magana, Dana Reed, Kevin White

From Crisis to Clarity: How GIS Supports Disaster Response

Speakers: Jon Pedder, Madison Musgrave

THURSDAY, MAY 7

7:00 am – 12:00 pm

Reflection Room

8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Registration

9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Exhibit Hall Open

9:00 am – 10:00 am

Coffee with Exhibitors

10:15 am – 11:15 am**Breakout Session 5** – [Click Here to View Session Descriptions](#)

Innovation in Disaster Case Management: Florida's Combined Helene and Milton Program

Speakers: Christy Rojas, Jim O'Brien

Don't Forget to Help the Helpers! Legal and Fundraising Support for Disaster Groups

Speakers: Kristine Hansen, Jason Susalla, Alicia Edwards, Marcus Coleman

Disaster Systems in Remote America: Lessons from the Pacific, Arctic, and Caribbean

Speakers: Heidi Simpson, Amelia Hoppe

Getting Cash Assistance Right: From LA Wildfires to a New Vision for Domestic Cash Assistance

Speakers: George Hernandez Mejia, Bjorn Betzler, Natalie Chang, Erin Coltrera

80 Years Later, Reimagining the Emergency CARE Package

Speakers: Rachel Almond, Alice Turner

Stronger Together: A Community-Wide Disaster Simulation

Speakers: Alexia Nobles

Better Together: How a Long-Standing LTRG from the Camp Fire Built a Collaborative Hub for Lasting Recovery

Speakers: Bruce Yerman, Aaron Singer, Theresa Azevedo

Practical Climate Adaptation for VOADs in a Changing Disaster Landscape

Speakers: Katie Mears, Jono Anzalone, Lucy Cummings, Race Hodges, Raphael Osuna

11:15 am – 12:00 pm

Last Look at Exhibits

12:15 pm – 1:30 pm

Plenary Luncheon

1:45 pm – 2:45 pm**Breakout Session 6** – [Click Here to View Session Descriptions](#)

The Power of Play in Disaster Recovery: Experiencing What Children Need Most

Speakers: Erin Myers, Caitlin McNamara, Carolyn Neher, Kathy Fry-Miller

Information as Infrastructure: Redefining How Communities Access Help Before, During, and After Disaster

Speakers: James Collins, Heather Black, Marcus Coleman, Alex Schwab

Reimagining Disaster Relief Through Small Business Support

Speakers: David Nelson, Kat Latham, Leslie Dalton

A New Vision for Collaboration: Reshaping State and VOAD Partnership for Recovery (A Case Study Discussion)

Speakers: Christine Heyser, Karl Jones, Staci Ferreira

BE READY: Visionary Disaster Cooking & Community Feeding Models for the Next Era of Crisis Response

Speaker: Sinnidra Taylor

The Power of Stories in Navigating Change: How MDS Used Personas in Updating its Volunteer Software

Speakers: Josh Carson, Jordan Kauffman

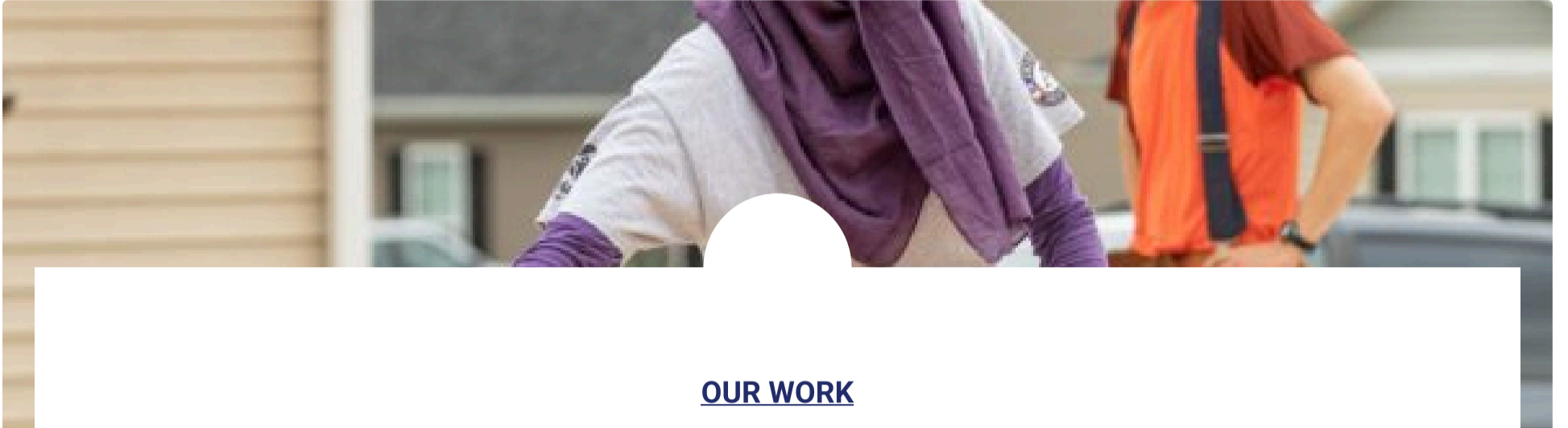
EMAC for Volunteer and Donations: How VALs Deploy, Integrate, and Serve Across State Lines

Speaker: Christy Rojas

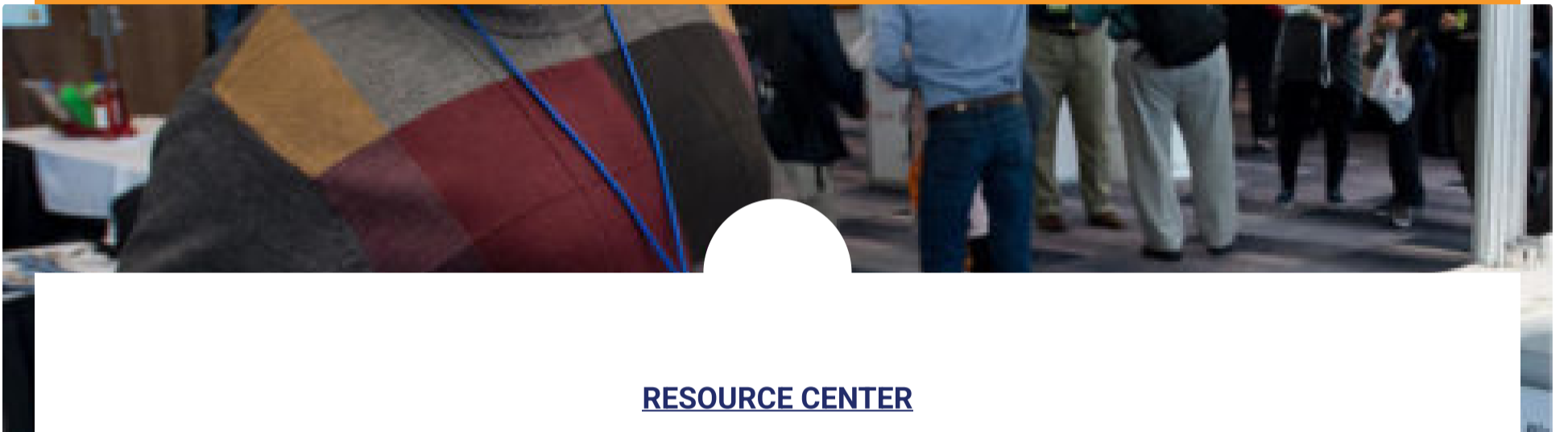
Forging Cross-Sector Partnerships: Helping Mothers and Babies in Emergencies

Speakers: Rachel Almond, Kasey Rivas

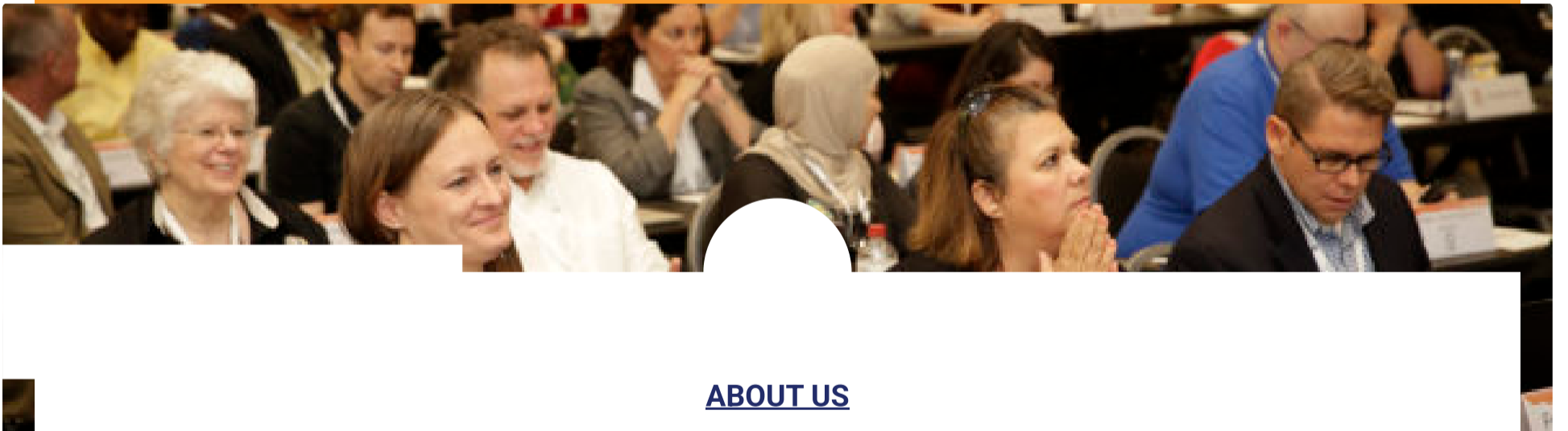
3:00 pm – 4:30 pm
Cheers to 2027!



OUR WORK



RESOURCE CENTER



ABOUT US

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