



FEMA

Lessons Learned  
Information Sharing  
[LLIS.gov](http://LLIS.gov)

Sharing Information  
Enhancing Preparedness  
Strengthening Homeland Security

## PRACTICE NOTE

### Special Event Management: Serve DC's Volunteer Planning and Coordination during the 2009 Presidential Inauguration

#### PRACTICE

Serve DC, the District of Columbia Mayor's Office on Volunteerism, successfully recruited and trained volunteers to support the District's operations during the 2009 Presidential Inauguration.

#### DESCRIPTION

After the historic 2008 election of Barack Obama as the first African-American president, planners anticipated that the 56<sup>th</sup> Presidential Inauguration would draw record crowds to the District of Columbia. Early projections of Inauguration Day attendees ranged from 2 million to as high as 5 million. The extraordinary scope of the Inauguration required multiple agencies and jurisdictions to coordinate their planning, response, and support efforts. The US Department of Homeland Security designated the Inauguration as a National Special Security Event, which made the US Secret Service the lead federal agency for planning, coordinating, and implementing security operations.

The mayor of the District issued Mayoral Order 2008-105 on August 1, 2008, to formalize the establishment of the DC Presidential Inaugural Committee (PIC), led by the District of Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA). In this capacity, DC HSEMA served as the lead District agency for planning and coordinating District resources for the Inauguration. The DC PIC formed 12 multi-agency subcommittees to coordinate District support for the Inauguration.

Serve DC had the lead role in the provision of volunteer services within the District during the Inaugural period. After Serve DC requested involvement in the planning discussions, DC HSEMA extended an invitation to join the DC PIC subcommittees in November 2008. Of the 12 subcommittees, Serve DC participated in 3: Transportation, Public Affairs, and Human Services.

Serve DC's mission is to strengthen and promote the District's spirit of service through partnerships, national service, and volunteerism. Serve DC was established by an Executive Order of the Mayor in 2000. It is one of 51 such bodies promoting volunteerism and overseeing national service programs in states across the country.

Serve DC received plans and communicated with other agencies through the DC PIC structure. Serve DC stressed the importance of managing partner expectations by including volunteer management in plans and by communicating projected volunteer needs early in the planning process. Specifically, Serve DC urged agencies to include the role of volunteers in agency concept of operations (CONOPS) and to consider volunteers as employees when budgeting resources such as food and equipment. As the chairman of

regional emergency support function (R-ESF)-16 (volunteer and donation management), Serve DC also engaged regional partners and brought in other stakeholders, including the Boy Scouts of America and the Girl Scouts of the USA. Cooperation with regional partners allowed Serve DC to coordinate stand-by resources for Inauguration Day, such as an American Red Cross station in Bethesda, Maryland. On Inauguration Day, the majority of Serve DC volunteers came from the organization's cadre of Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members who train, exercise, and mobilize throughout the year.

Serve DC's Inauguration CONOPS clarified that its role was to provide volunteers and that each agency was responsible for providing onsite, mission-specific training for volunteers as well as any necessary equipment, credentials, and logistical support. Serve DC planned to have emergency liaison officers (ELO) present at the DC emergency operations center (EOC) and at the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial (RFK) Stadium, a major transportation hub for charter buses. The CONOPS also delineated the flow of information to the field on Inauguration Day: information from the Serve DC public information officer at the joint information center would flow to EOC ELOs who would then pass the information to the ELO at RFK Stadium. Serve DC would communicate field information back to headquarters in the reverse order.

Serve DC's volunteer management efforts included the recruitment, training, and mobilization of 1,404 volunteers for the Inauguration. Serve DC, DC HSEMA, District Department of Transportation (DDOT), and the Office of the City Administrator provided direct training to 500 volunteers at 2 large-scale orientations. R-ESF-16 partners conducted the same training in their respective jurisdictions, which created a ripple effect of potential volunteers and information sharing. Training occurred 1 week before the Inauguration, which allowed for the use of near-final plans and the relay of more accurate information. Volunteers signed a DC government injury liability waiver at one of the mandatory orientations. At the orientation, Serve DC provided information to volunteers about the DC Evacuation Walk-Out Plan, prohibited items, and the locations of entry points, street and bridge closures, and first-aid stations. The Office of the City Administrator assisted Serve DC with orientation preparation, including securing participation from subject-matter experts to implement training. In addition, CERT instructors practiced possible Inauguration scenarios with volunteers acting as role-players.

Planning efforts culminated with successful volunteer operations on Inauguration Day. Serve DC provided volunteers to Callaway Transportation to coordinate charter bus parking at RFK Stadium. Serve DC also provided information ambassadors and directional support volunteers for the DDOT and for the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) at strategic locations of heavy foot traffic. These volunteers disseminated verbal information and MPD literature to spectators regarding entry points, prohibited items, and locations of first-aid stations. Serve DC used WebEOC and standard 800 MHz radios to communicate and share information with volunteers and other partners at the DC EOC. Volunteer assistance enabled agencies in the District to meet their obligations and to make the Inauguration a safe and successful event.

## CITATIONS

Department of Homeland Security. *Fact Sheet: National Special Security Events*. 28 Dec 2006.

[http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr\\_1167323822753.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr_1167323822753.shtm)

District of Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency. *The District of Columbia's Support to the 56<sup>th</sup> Presidential Inauguration After-Action Report Summary*.

08 Jun 2009.

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=36863>

Sheridan, Mary Beth. "Inauguration Day Crowd Estimate Reduced by Half." *The Washington Post*. 22 Dec 2008.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/12/21/AR2008122102224.html>

Serve DC, About Serve DC.

[http://www.serve.dc.gov/cncs/cwp/view,a,3,q,493083,cncsNav\\_GID,1462,cncsNav,%7C31065%7C,.asp](http://www.serve.dc.gov/cncs/cwp/view,a,3,q,493083,cncsNav_GID,1462,cncsNav,%7C31065%7C,.asp)

Serve DC. *Framework for DC PIC 56<sup>th</sup> Presidential Inauguration: ConOps*. 04 Jan 2009.

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=40391>

Ward, Amy. Executive Director, Serve DC. Interview with *Lessons Learned Information Sharing*. 16 Oct 2009.

### **DISCLAIMER**

*Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS.gov)* is the US Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency's national online network of lessons learned, best practices, and innovative ideas for the emergency response and homeland security communities. The Web site and its contents are provided for informational purposes only, without warranty or guarantee of any kind, and do not represent the official positions of the US Department of Homeland Security. For more information on *LLIS.gov*, please email [Feedback@llis.dhs.gov](mailto:Feedback@llis.dhs.gov).