

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Massachusetts Statewide Mass Care and Shelter Coordination Plan* provides guidance for coordinating and maximizing resources to support mass care and shelter operations across the Commonwealth and ensure all populations seeking mass care and shelter services receive adequate and appropriate accommodations. This plan is a scalable framework that can be implemented during all types of incidents, regardless of size and scope.

This plan improves the efficiency and sustainability of shelter operations and resource utilization across the Commonwealth by improving information sharing and enhancing the common operating picture related to the activation and operation of shelters.

In addition, the Commonwealth is committed to meeting the mass care and shelter needs of all residents, including those with access and functional needs, to the maximum extent possible.

The following four scenarios are examples of typical mass care and shelter situations where the statewide mass care and shelter coordination strategy may be implemented:

- **Shelter Scenario 1:** Several communities in the Commonwealth are impacted by an incident. Local communities assess the number of individuals seeking overnight shelter accommodations. Many communities have individuals seeking overnight shelter services, but the number of individuals in each community is very small. To shelter these small populations in multiple shelter facilities, a great number of resources would be required.
- **Shelter Scenario 2:** Several communities in the Commonwealth are impacted by an incident. Local communities assess the number of individuals seeking overnight shelter accommodations. Many communities identify a large number of individuals seeking overnight shelter services. These projected populations exceed the local communities' capabilities.
- **Shelter Scenario 3:** Many communities in the Commonwealth are affected by an incident, and many residents from the disaster area are displaced. The incident is so devastating that localized shelter operations are unfeasible in the immediate area.
- **Shelter Scenario 4:** Three weeks after an incident, local communities still have multiple shelters open for a small number of residents. Local communities are finding it difficult and expensive to continue providing services. Coordinating these activities is consuming resources that might otherwise be dedicated to recovery operations.

The *Massachusetts Statewide Mass Care and Shelter Coordination Plan* supports the efficient use of resources and increases the sustainability of mass care and shelter operations by establishing processes that improve communication, coordination, and information sharing, thereby improving situational awareness of mass care and shelter needs and capabilities.

These four shelter scenarios demonstrate the need for an effective plan that provides the following:

- A process that supports affected local communities and provides a mechanism for these communities to communicate and coordinate with each other, MEMA, and various mass care and shelter partners
- A system for allocating and sharing scarce resources
- A concrete solution for increasing overall mass care and shelter capacity in a sustainable manner

State-initiated regional shelters (SIRS) are shelters that serve multiple communities and are initiated by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and operated by the American Red Cross

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(ARC). These shelters are established to provide larger scale sheltering services when local capacities are exceeded and to maximize the use of resources and staffing to operate shelters across the Commonwealth. These shelters provide dietary, dormitory, and functional needs support services (FNSS).

SIRS may be located at select locations across the Commonwealth as part of the statewide shelter strategy.

Successful implementation of the statewide mass care and shelter plan and SIRS requires coordination and collaboration between local communities, MEMA, and Massachusetts Emergency Support Function (MAESF) #6 - Mass Care, Emergency Housing, Human Services, MAESF #8 - Public Health and Medical Services, MAESF #11 - Agriculture, Animals and Natural Resources, and MAESF #7 - Volunteers and Donations.

If situation reports (received through status reports, conference calls, or direct communication with communities, MEMA and/or mass care and shelter providers) reflect conditions that might trigger the activation of a SIRS, MEMA will facilitate a discussion with the affected communities, the ARC, MAESF #6, MAESF #8, MAESF #11, and shelter host communities. These discussions will also include other mass care and shelter partners in medical, mental health, and animal care disciplines. This coordination process may take place via conference call or at an on-site meeting in the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC).

After obtaining feedback from mass care and shelter partners, MEMA and ARC will decide whether to activate SIRS. MEMA and ARC will co-lead the coordination activities required to activate a SIRS and the ARC will manage and operate the shelters.