



Two Way Communication Expedites Impact Assessments

case study

The Salvation Army Greater New York Division relies on Send Word Now for critical communications when providing essential services to those in need.

The Salvation Army has been supporting those in need for more than 130 years in the United States. Without discrimination, nearly 30 million Americans receive assistance from the nonprofit, tax-exempt charitable organization annually through its 7,500+ centers across the country. These social services include: food for the hungry, relief for disaster victims, assistance for the disabled, outreach to the elderly and ill, clothing and shelter for the homeless, and opportunities for underprivileged children.



Before implementing Send Word Now's award-winning Alerting Service in 2011, The Salvation Army Greater New York (GNY) Division relied on manual call trees for emergency notification. Today, because of its fast speed and ease of use, among many other reasons, the service has been expanded to include Western Pennsylvania and Northeast Ohio. The nonprofit's Eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware Division is also following suit.

Case in Point

In the days following the landfall of Hurricane Irene, the seventh costliest cyclone in U.S. history, two employees of The Salvation Army Greater New York Division were tasked with calling all program directors to perform an impact assessment. Persistence paid off, but the project took two full days to complete.

The same type of impact assessment was needed after Hurricane Sandy hit the Northeast in October 2012. Only this time, the organization's employees were not making and taking calls; Send Word Now's Alerting Service was (and what a difference it made).

With all program directors automatically contacted by phone, email and SMS; and responses obtained through Send Word Now's Get Word Back feature, the nonprofit's leadership knew exactly what was needed for targeted follow-up and quick resolution of outstanding issues.

"In the case of Hurricane Sandy, Send Word Now proved invaluable to both our business continuity and overall mission," said Zachary Hodgson, The Salvation Army Greater New York Division, Deputy Director, Emergency Services. "We are grateful to the company and for the high level of customer service it continues to provide our organization."

The Experience

For The Salvation Army, conducting impact assessments like those after hurricanes Irene and Sandy is standard operating procedure. In fact, the organization must determine the effects of an emergency/disaster on its own programs, personnel and property before providing relief services that respond to public need and donor intent.

As an example, The Salvation Army Greater New York Division must perform such assessments when bouts of extreme cold or excessive heat affect its 17 residential programs (these support the needs of 6,000+ people on a daily basis). The nonprofit's provision of housing includes transitional shelter for adults and families, young professional women and veterans, along with group homes for the developmentally disabled requiring special care and rehabilitation programs for men and women with addictions.

"As our guests, we are responsible for the safety and security of these individuals at all times," said Hodgson. "With Send Word Now, we can expedite communications to complete our assessments and further extend a helping hand."

During declared heat waves, as agreed upon with the New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM), The Salvation Army of Greater New York activates its 39 community centers as

cooling centers providing air conditioning and cold water. Using Send Word Now, the organization can quickly let NYC OEM know if any facilities will not be available due to mechanical or staffing issues. Hodgson credits Send Word Now's Get Word Back feature as "ideal" for this type assessment.

"Since 2011, we have used Send Word Now for a myriad of circumstances. The service is a vital part of our business continuity plan and everyday operations."

Zachary Hodgson, Deputy Director, Emergency Services
The Salvation Army, Greater New York Division

When using Send Word Now in response to severe weather and its effects on the organization's residential shelter programs, The Salvation Army Greater New York Division as a best practice, has found it helpful to schedule alerts to occur just after a staffing shift change. "With Send Word Now, we are able to locate potential staffing issues, so program directors can address them sooner," said Hodgson. "This capability benefits our employees, the people we serve and our organization as a whole."

Charitable contributions to The Salvation Army Greater New York Division can be made online at www.salvationarmyny.org.

