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Manuscripts and Archives Division**

Guide to the
9/11 United Services Group records
2001-2004
MssCol 6141

Compiled by Lea Jordan, June 2013

Summary

Creator: 9/11 United Services Group

Title: 9/11 United Services Group records, 2001-2004

Size: 9.91 linear feet (24 boxes); 11 videos; 855.71 Megabytes (4640 computer files)

Source: Donated by 9/11 United Services Group, 2004

Abstract: The 9/11 United Services Group was formed in December 2001 to facilitate, expedite, and enhance coordination of services among various charities and agencies in the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks. The September 11th Fund, the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and Safe Horizon were responsible for spearheading this collaborative charitable response after recognizing the need for coordinated service. The 9/11 United Services Group records hold administrative files, service coordination files, and files from the Ongoing Needs Study and the Framework for the Coordinated Delivery of Social Services in Future Major Emergencies report. There are also documents outlining the group's Financial Advice Referral Program and files documenting its work with victim advocacy and community relations.

Access: Apply to Manuscripts and Archives Division for access at <http://www.nypl.org/mssref>. Electronic records within the collection are available in the Reading Room where researchers can browse, keyword search, and view the records. Sound and video recordings are unavailable for use at this time pending preservation transfer.

Preferred citation: 9/11 United Services Group records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

Custodial history: Materials for this collection were selected and arranged by a records manager prior to their transfer to the library. A limited selection of email was retained within the electronic records.

Processing note: The arrangement established by a records manager prior to donation to the division was maintained.

The compact discs that comprise the Electronic Records were forensically imaged for preservation. The textual documents from these images were migrated to Microsoft's .docx format in order to create a full-text keyword searchable index. Additionally, named entity extraction algorithms were run on the migrated documents to identify personal, organizational, and location names contained within them.

Creator history

The 9/11 United Services Group (USG) was formed in December 2001 to facilitate, expedite, and enhance coordination of services among various charities and agencies in the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks. USG was organized on the basis of a late 2001 study conducted by the September 11th Fund outlining the need for service coordination in the wake of a large scale disaster. The September 11th Fund, the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and Safe Horizon were responsible for spearheading this collaborative charitable response. USG was partially funded by the September 11th Fund with the remainder of their operating budget provided by private donations. USG did not work directly with victims, and was entirely focused on helping charitable groups coordinate and focus their efforts. USG operated from December 2001 through June 2004, when major relief efforts concluded.

USG was composed of a small core staff, whose efforts were aided by representatives from member organizations. The USG Board of Directors included individuals from many different disciplines. Among those who served on the Board were the heads of USG's thirteen founding member organizations, as well as victims and others affected by the events of 9/11. The group's finance committee oversaw the internal budget, and a nominating committee was formed to assist with filling board positions as they came open. Committees and workgroups within the USG hierarchy were composed of a mixture of USG and member organization staff.

The founding member organizations included the American Red Cross, the Asian American Federation of New York, Black Agency Executives, Inc., The Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York, Catholic Charities Diocese of Brooklyn, the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, the Hispanic Federation, the Mental Health Association of New York City, Safe Horizon, The Salvation Army, UJA-Federation of New York, and the United Neighborhood Houses of New York.

The 9/11 United Services Group was structured to facilitate cross-training of staff. The staff worked to assist individuals who were eligible for public programs, including Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) disaster housing assistance and New York State unemployment assistance. In addition, USG trained "Service Coordinators" from all thirteen member organizations who worked directly with people who had been affected on a long-term basis. Service Coordinators provided casework services to clients including assessment, counseling, crisis intervention, service referral and advocacy, with the goal of a personal recovery plan for each client. Service Coordinator training consisted of workshops and drills covering conflict resolution, mental health support, and cultural diversity, as well as simulations of real-life scenarios that volunteers might encounter. The training was run by USG staff and volunteers, and was often conducted on the premises of member organizations. Training was ongoing throughout USG's operation.

All USG member organizations could be reached through the Safe Horizon September 11th Support Hotline. Service coordination efforts were led by USG's Service Coordination steering committee. To brainstorm ways to help underserved individuals, they also formed the Committee for Serving Undocumented Clients.

The service coordinators from each agency had access to the comprehensive victims database (DataMart), which helped agencies identify where assistance was needed and who was receiving which services. USG's technology unit worked closely with pro bono assistance from IBM to create the DataMart database, which organized the information of 83,000 victims and allowed Service Coordinators from every participating agency to align their efforts. Service Coordinators were given database training, and signed confidentiality agreements before commencing work. The Technology Working Group was the unit responsible for keeping the DataMart and other USG technology initiatives up-to-date.

To help manage this operation, USG created its Information Portal, which encompassed an online assistance guide, a community website for 9/11 United Service Group Service Coordinators, an online newsletter, a separate public website, and a constantly updating online referral system. This portal allowed USG to ensure everyone was receiving a standard level of updated information. All changes made to guides and referrals were immediately implemented in the portal, removing the need to send out constant change notifications. All staff referred to online guides only when assessing the needs of victims, assuring that everyone was working from the same set of standards. Likewise, the information available to victims and their families was also updated immediately and consolidated in one place, providing access to the most current requirements and deadlines.

The 9/11 United Services Group also focused on advocacy and community relations. They planned community events such as walks and town hall style meetings, and brainstormed ways to reach the underserved such as undocumented immigrants, low income workers, and day laborers, whose employment loss due to 9/11 was not easy to report. An important component of USG's advocacy work was the Advisory Council. This council consisted of fourteen individuals representing a range of communities affected by the September 11th attacks, including some of the victims' families. Their meetings were designed to help USG understand the evolving needs of the victims so as to better advocate on their behalf. Assistance was also provided for individuals seeking financial aid from FEMA or other government agencies.

USG launched their Financial Advice Referral Program to offer pro bono financial education, planning, and investment advice to people who lost a family member or were seriously injured in the September 11th attacks. This program was designed to help victims and their families manage the large compensatory funds they received. Organizations involved included American Express, JPMorgan Chase, Merrill Lynch, Morgan Stanley, Prudential Financial, and Salomon Smith Barney.

As part of USG's mission to help meet the short- and long-term needs of those affected by the September 11th attacks, USG worked with McKinsey & Company between March and May 2002 to undertake a study of victims' ongoing needs. The goal of the study was to analyze the overall economic and emotional effects of September 11th on various New York City populations. The study concluded with a formal report that member organizations used to focus and update their relief efforts. The study was managed by USG's Unmet Needs Workgroup, a mixture of USG and organizational member staff.

The Framework for the Coordinated Delivery of Social Services in Future Major Emergencies, abbreviated by USG as "Framework", was a major report released by the Group in December of 2002. Through this report, USG offered a blueprint of how to set up coordinated relief efforts in the event of future emergencies, using lessons learned during the conception and operation of the 9/11 United Services Group. This report gave rise to meetings with FEMA, the New York State Office of Emergency Management (OEM), and many other service groups, both public and private. The Coordinated Assistance Network, a currently operational disaster recovery coordination group, grew out of these meetings in a partnership with other service groups, such as the American Red Cross and Safe Horizon. Until their dissolution in 2004, USG continued to work to improve and expand the national framework for

disaster response.

Scope and content note

The 9/11 United Services Group records consist of electronic and paper files. The bulk of records are electronic. Users should consult both the electronic and the paper records to gain a full understanding of the organization.

The Administrative Files relate to the governance and steering of USG. The bulk of these files are meeting minutes from the Board of Directors, the Finance Committee, and the Nominating committee – most of which are electronic. There are also staff management flow charts, all-staff meeting minutes, photographs from office events, and strategy documents such as notes from board retreats and an early service coordination operating plan. Strategy documents from the inception of USG are found here, including the September 11th Fund studies that led to the formation of the 9/11 United Services Group. There is also video footage from a two-day conference held in January of 2002 for member organizations.

The Service Coordination files document USG's main focus in action: the coordination of service throughout the member agencies. These files hold service coordinator training booklets and meeting minutes from internal service coordination centered committees, such as the Service Coordination steering committee and the Committee for Serving Undocumented Clients. There are weekly hotline reports and a record of how many clients each service coordinator was carrying on a weekly basis. There is also correspondence regarding workshop announcements and training session agendas. Agency files hold correspondence with member organizations, eligibility limitations, service coordination issues, informational packets, phase-down coordination plans, and individual agency brochures.

The Information Portal files document all aspects of the portal – the assistance guide, the community website, newsletters, the public website, and the online referral system. The assistance guide files hold correspondence with translation services, guide drafts and final copies, charts showing divisions of labor within the group for managing guide updates, internal and external focus group surveys, and guide marketing and press. The community website files hold weekly updates, community website utilization statistics and website content arranged by date. There are also copies of the “today’s headline” messages sent to all service coordinators, highlighting daily 9/11-related press. Public Website files consist of site content, revisions, ongoing needs online surveys, traffic statistics, and content testing documents. There are PDF files of every newsletter within the electronic records. Press clippings which were displayed on either the Community Website or the Public Website are found within the paper portion of the records.

USG’s Advocacy and Community Relations files contain advisory council meeting minutes and notes, advocacy plans and notes from community involvement brainstorming sessions, and notes from planned events with groups such as the Asian Mental Health Alliance. Files containing application statistics and correspondence with FEMA’s mortgage and rental assistance program are also here. Advisory council files (primarily electronic) hold meeting minutes, which document the evolving issues of victims and their families in the wake of 9/11.

The Financial Advice Referral program files hold training manuals for participating financial advisors, copies of outside financial planning needs studies, and videos introducing victims and their families to financial planning.

The Framework files contain the initial Framework report and document USG’s work on the Coordinated

Assistance Network. Files consist of slide presentations on inter-institutional coordination and disaster scenarios, as well as meeting minutes from teams in other locations, such as Washington, D.C. The Coordinated Assistance Network files hold participant lists, surveys, meeting agendas, presentations with screenshots of victim assistance software, and training manuals. There are also meeting minutes of USG's Framework Implementation Team and correspondence with FEMA and the OEM regarding the organization of quick and efficient relief efforts and framework meeting coordination. Many of USG's service coordination training materials were used in training at a national level. Researchers with an interest in USG's framework efforts may wish to consult the training materials within the paper Service Coordination files as well.

The Ongoing Needs Study files consist of background research; correspondence with McKinsey, the group operating the study; drafts; and copies of the final study. There are also press releases, board presentations, internal reviews and input from the staff as a whole, reports on key findings, and the minutes of the study's steering committee.

Technology files hold training manuals for DataMart, memos regarding future technology initiatives, and the meetings and notes from USG's Technology Working Group, who were responsible for keeping the DataMart and Information Portal up to date.

The records hold a small selection of ephemera - a 9/11 United Services Group banner and a t-shirt printed with the names of the member organizations.

Users may also wish to consult the September 11th Fund records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

Arrangement

Alphabetical by file title.

Key terms

Subjects

Charities -- United States

Disaster relief

September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001 -- Economic aspects

Terrorism -- Economic aspects

Names

9/11 United Services Group

Safe Horizon (Organization)

September 11th Fund

Special formats

Correspondence

Minutes

Container list

- b.1 f.1-6 Administrative Files, 2001-2004
- b.2 f.1 Administrative Files, 2001-2004
- b.3 f.1-3 Administrative Files, 2001-2004
 - er.0001 Administrative Files, 2002-2004 (45.73 Megabytes (415 computer files))
- b.3 f.4 Advocacy and Community Relations, 2002-2004
- b.4 f.1-7 Advocacy and Community Relations, 2002-2004
- b.5 f.1-7 Advocacy and Community Relations, 2002-2004
 - er.0002 Advocacy and Community Relations, 2002-2004 (16.63 Megabytes (155 computer files))
- b.24 Ephemera, undated
 - t.1 Ephemera, undated
- b.6 f.1-4 Financial Advice Referral Program, 2002-2004
- b.7 f.1 Financial Advice Referral Program, 2002-2004
 - er.0003 Financial Advice Referral Program, 2002-2004 (19.29 Megabytes (138 computer files))
- b.7 f.2-4 Framework, 2002-2004
- b.8 f.1-5 Framework, 2002-2004
 - er.0004 Framework, 2002-2004 (22.89 Megabytes (272 computer files))
- b.9 f.1-10 Information Portal, 2002-2004
- b.10 f.1-7 Information Portal, 2002-2004
- b.11 f.1-3 Information Portal, 2002-2004
- b.12 f.1-2 Information Portal, 2002-2004
 - er.0005 Information Portal, 2002-2004 (318.55 Megabytes (2059 computer files))
- b.12 f.3-5 Ongoing Needs Study, 2002
- b.13 f.1 Ongoing Needs Study, 2002
 - er.0006 Ongoing Needs Study, 2002-2003 (8626 Kilobytes (73 computer files))
- b.13 f.2-5 Service Coordination, 2002-2004
- b.14 f.1-3 Service Coordination, 2002-2004
- b.15 f.1-5 Service Coordination, 2002-2004
- b.16 f.1-3 Service Coordination, 2002-2004
- b.17 f.1-4 Service Coordination, 2002-2004
- b.18 f.1-6 Service Coordination, 2002-2004
- b.19 f.1-5 Service Coordination, 2002-2004
- b.20 f.1-3 Service Coordination, 2002-2004
 - er.0007 Service Coordination, 2002-2004 (211.27 Megabytes (1340 computer files))
- b.20 f.4-5 Technology, 2002-2004
- b.21 f.1-10 Technology, 2002-2004
- b.22 f.1-4 Technology, 2002-2004
- b.23 f.1-4 Technology, 2002-2004
 - er.0008 Technology, 2002-2004 (212.92 Megabytes (188 computer files))