



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

**Mayor Newsom and Bay Area Mark 18th Anniversary of Loma Prieta
With Unveiling of Personnel Disaster Response Management Tool**

San Francisco, CA— On the 18th anniversary of the Loma Prieta earthquake, Mayor Gavin Newsom and the Bay Area SUASI (Super Urban Area Security Initiative) announced the launch of www.HelpBayArea.org, a secure, web-based disaster response management tool. This system offers the 10 Bay Area counties' disaster and volunteer organizations a highly effective means for notifying and managing emergency responders -- from the initial registration and credential verification, through mobilization, on-site check-in, tracking, and demobilization.

The City and County of San Francisco (CCSF) is the first jurisdiction in the nation to use this system to manage its employees in the event of a major disaster. To that end, the City has begun to integrate data from the existing human resources management system for our 32,000 employees into the new HelpBayArea.org system.

“San Francisco has taken the lead on this project, and we believe that it will serve as a regional and national model for managing disaster response,” said Mayor Gavin Newsom. “HelpBayArea.org will form a key part of the City’s Disaster Service Worker Program.”

CCSF employees will be asked to access their profiles on HelpBayArea.org to verify that contact information is current and to identify skills that may be of value during a disaster response. These skills include language abilities, possession of specialized training certification or licenses, or CPR/First Aid or NERT/CERT (Neighborhood Emergency Response Team/Community Emergency Response Team) training. On a nightly basis, the system will verify that medical and other professional licenses are valid. As employees update their personal profiles, the utility of the system will continue to increase.

“HelpBayArea.org will allow us to assign city employees and volunteers to provide disaster response assistance where they are needed most,” said Laura Phillips, Executive Director of the San Francisco Department of Emergency Management and Chair of the Bay Area SUASI’s Approval Authority.

“City employees have always been Disaster Service Workers; now, for the first time, the City will have the actual ability to effectively recall and deploy its employees in the event of a major disaster using the HelpBayArea.org system,” said Micki Callahan, Director of the San Francisco Department of Human Resources.

“The launching of HelpBayArea.org marks a significant project milestone,” said Bay Area SUASI General Manager Rich Shortall. “It is the first major 2006 grant year project to reach completion, and

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exemplifies how the collaborative process can benefit the entire region by addressing a universal challenge – the vetting, mobilization and tracking of emergency responders.”

Collaborative Fusion, Inc. developed the platform for this product and has recently worked with the Bay Area SUASI’s Volunteer Management System’s steering committee to develop the new website. One of the key mission management tools is the system’s powerful search criteria, which enable complex searches across responder groups. For example, the system can be used to search for a doctor fluent in Portuguese, who has had a flu vaccine and is able to deploy for two weeks to an in-state location. The platform on which HelpBayArea.org was built can be easily adapted to accommodate specific needs of individual jurisdictions or organizations, and it can sync with other systems in the region and throughout the state. It is currently used by nine states, including California, Florida, Pennsylvania, Georgia, North Carolina, Louisiana, Minnesota, West Virginia, Delaware, and the District of Columbia. HelpBayArea.org will be able to sync with systems used throughout California and to call up responders using the advanced search criteria, to provide more effective disaster support.

In other disaster preparedness activities, San Francisco is hosting an Interoperability Policy Academy to discuss ways to strengthen local and regional emergency first responder communications policies and procedures. The Academy, sponsored by the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the National League of Cities (NLC), will be held Oct. 18-19.

The Bay Area SUASI enhances regional capability through regional collaboration: to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from terrorist incidents and other catastrophic events in the 10-county region. For more information on the Bay Area SUASI, please visit www.bayareasuasi.org.

For more information about the Interoperability Policy Academy, please visit www.naco.org.

For more information on disaster preparedness, please visit www.72hours.org or call 3-1-1 to request emergency preparedness brochures.

For more information on the City and County of San Francisco's employee Disaster Service Worker (DSW) Program, please visit the Department of Human Resources' DSW website, www.SFDSW.org.