



2026 MID-ATLANTIC VOAD CONFERENCE

Cacapon State Park Resort Lodge · Berkeley Springs, WV



Regional Conference by the Mid-Atlantic Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) March 16 - 18, 2026



The Mid-Atlantic Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (DC VOAD, DE VOAD, MD VOAD, PA VOAD, and WV VOAD), invite you to join us for our 3rd Annual Conference. The theme of this year's conference is:

The Urgency of the 4C's: The Importance of State and VOAD Relationships

The conference, designed to be interactive, will focus on the 4C's (Collaboration, Cooperation, Communication, Coordination) as an important road map in the midst of shifting Federal policies, as States and VOAD's work together to identify the most critical service gaps and barriers to recovery, and how to address them.

Conference Date and Location: Noon on March 16 to noon on March 18, 2026, at the Cacapon Resort State Park Lodge, Berkeley Springs, West Virginia.

Getting There: Approximate distances are Baltimore – 100 miles; Washington, DC – 100 miles; Pittsburgh – 150 miles; Philadelphia – 165 miles; Charleston – 280 miles.

Conference Fee: \$150 includes conference registration as well as a break, and dinner on Monday; breakfast, lunch, dinner, and two breaks on Tuesday; and breakfast and a break on Wednesday. Spouses/significant others are welcome to participate in meals. Purchase a meals-only ticket for \$120 online during registration.

Registration: To register, please click on the [Conference Registration link](#) or scan the QR code below.

Questions: Should you have any questions, please contact *Bruce Morgenstern*, Conference Registration Committee, at treasurer@marylandvoad.org



Keynote Speaker



Jessica Vermilyea is a seasoned program and project management leader and principal consultant of Haphak Consulting, LLC. She brings more than 20 years of experience in the disaster response and recovery community, including 17 as Executive Director of Lutheran Social Services Disaster Response, a ministry of Upbring—stepping into the role in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina where she guided large-scale, survivor-centered recovery efforts across the Gulf Coast.

Jessica served more than a decade in leadership with Louisiana VOAD, guiding collaborative, cross-sector disaster recovery in a post-Katrina landscape at the epicenter of national attention and need. Her humanitarian-focused expertise spans the full disaster cycle, including mitigation, preparedness, early response coordination, emotional and spiritual care, disaster case management, donations and volunteer management, survivor advocacy, and the development of effective, locally led long-term recovery programs.

She has extensive experience working across nonprofit, faith-based, governmental, and private-sector environments, consistently championing community-driven solutions that strengthen local capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

Jessica is also a contributing author to *Practitioner Perspectives on Disaster Assistance Reform*, a recent report from the Consortium for Emergent Disaster Resilience (CEDR) at Tulane University's Disaster Resiliency Leadership Academy. The publication examines the challenges communities may face when responsibility for individual and household disaster assistance shifts from federal agencies—such as FEMA—to state or local systems.

Updated Conference Schedule

Monday, March 16 – Setting the Stage

Local, State & Federal Landscapes

Midday – Afternoon

- **Welcome & Conference Overview**
Setting shared purpose, expectations, and the 4 C's framework
- **Local Voices: Emergency Management Reflections**
County and state EM perspectives on recent disasters and VOAD partnerships
- **State VOAD Information Shares (WV, DC)**
Cross-state insights, challenges, and coordination highlights
- **Federal Disaster Strategy 2.0**
What's changing at FEMA and across federal/state frameworks
- **Facing the Unknown: Funding & Policy Uncertainty**
Anticipating gaps, capacity loss, and emerging survivor needs
- **Closing Reflections**
Key takeaways to carry forward into Day 2

Evening

Dinner & Trivia Night

Day 1 Outcome:

Participants share a common understanding of the **current disaster environment**, emerging gaps, and partnership realities.

Tuesday, March 17 – Diving Deeper

Strategies for Serving the Whole Community

Morning

- **Now What? From Insight to Action**

Case example and facilitated table discussions focused on improving survivor outcomes amid federal shifts

- **State VOAD Information Shares (PA)**

Updates, challenges, and opportunities

- **State-Focused Problem Solving**

DRAP, mutual aid, and facilitated discussions on priority challenges

- **TED-Style Inspiration Session**

Research-informed perspectives on recovery and community resilience

Midday – Afternoon

- **State VOAD Information Share (MD)**

- **Student Scholar Presentations**

- **State VOAD Information Share (DE)**

- **Function-Focused Problem Solving**

Identifying priority needs across key disaster functions (e.g., DCM, volunteer management)

- **Reflection & Inspiration**

Capturing learning and momentum

Evening

Day 2 Outcomes:

Participants identify **practical strategies** to reach survivors, strengthen coordination, and adapt to changing systems at the **state and function level**.

Dinner & Irish Band – One Street Over



One.Street.Over is a 5-person Celtic roots band from Winchester, Virginia. Known for their dynamic blend of traditional and original tunes and ballads, their music weaves the rich sounds of vocals, Irish flute, fiddle, cello, bouzouki, mandolin, guitar, mandocello, and bodhrán.

Wednesday, March 18 – Integration & Application

Morning Planning for Coordinated Futures

- **Putting It All Together: Technology & LTR Focus**

Interactive, scenario-based exercise demonstrating the potential for software platforms to enhance relationships between Emergency Managers and VOAD

- **Closing Plenary & Next Steps**

Personal action planning, shared commitments, and participant survey

Day 3 Outcome:

Participants leave with **clear action steps**, shared tools, and strengthened relationships for coordinated long-term recovery.

Interested in Being a Conference Sponsor?

Be a sponsor! Your sponsorship funds student scholarships and underwrites the cost of the conference. In return, you get free conference registration(s), a display table, and recognition throughout the conference and the conference materials.

If you wish to discuss potential conference sponsorship, please contact Clifford Oliver, Ph.D., CEM, CBCP, the Conference Sponsorship Chair at coliver@nanticokeglobal.com or 302 470-0535

Conference Lodging Information



Cacapon Resort State Park Lodge

The newest lodge in the West Virginia State Parks system, Cacapon Resort's 120-room luxury lodge sits at the foot of Cacapon Mountain. With indoor and outdoor dining, a spa, indoor swimming pool and a view of the park's golf course, it is the perfect place for adventurers to wind down.

Positioned in the shadow of a folded mountain ridge in West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle, Cacapon Resort State Park is a 6,000 plus-acre, year-round destination. The park is frequented by both nature lovers and adventure seekers from around the state, as well as nearby cities such as Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Cacapon Resort is also a draw for history buffs due to its proximity to the historic town of Berkeley Springs and Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

To receive the conference lodging rate, you must call the hotel at (304) 258-1022 to make a reservation. Ask to speak with the front desk or group services. The room block code is VOAD.

- ❖ **The conference rate is NOT available if you book your room online.**
- ❖ **Registration closes and hotel reservations MUST be complete by 4pm eastern time on March 2, 2026. This is a hard deadline.**

The rates below include the conference discount, but do not include the retail tax of 6% and hotel/motel tax of 6%.

Main Lodge

Single Queen Bed	\$99.99
Double Queen Bed	\$129.99
King Bed	\$149.99

Cabins

Two Bedroom Classic Cabin	\$145.99
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The address of the conference hotel is 818 Cacapon Lodge Dr, Berkeley Springs, WV 25411

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