UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

March 23, 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: **JOHN BERRY**
Director

SUBJECT: **Relief and Reconstruction Efforts for Victims of the Japanese Earthquake and Tsunami**

As you know, Japan is facing one of its biggest crises since World War II. We all are deeply saddened by the devastation caused by the earthquake and tsunami in Japan. I join President Obama in extending my thoughts and prayers to the people of Japan and to the many Japanese-Americans whose families and loved ones were affected by this disaster.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has advised that cash contributions are the most effective way to provide relief assistance and fund the ongoing reconstruction effort. I therefore am authorizing department and agency heads to allow a special solicitation of Federal employees at the workplace to facilitate relief and reconstruction assistance for Japan. Through this special solicitation, Federal employees can make a one-time cash or check donation outside the normal Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) procedures. USAID has provided a list of relief organizations and related information on its website at www.usaid.gov. I have also attached a list of frequently asked questions to help your agency with its special solicitation.

I believe that a special solicitation is the best option for Federal employees to provide assistance through a workplace giving effort. However, employees may also give directly to charities involved in relief efforts regardless of whether they participated in their local CFC. Employees may contact organizations directly or visit their websites if the other options are not available. Donors should note there may be cases where a charitable organization receives more contributions than is needed for its relief efforts. In those instances, the organization may use the excess funds for other purposes. I encourage agencies to inquire about a charity's policy when arranging fundraising events.

All special solicitation activities must conclude by July 31, 2011. I encourage you to contact OPM's Office of CFC so we can help you develop your agency's special solicitation and answer any questions you might have about this process. The Office of CFC can be contacted at (202) 606-2564 or at cfc@opm.gov.

I greatly appreciate your efforts to give employees this special opportunity to help those in need. I know that Federal workers will once again show their generosity and big hearts by providing much-needed relief assistance to the people of Japan.

Attachment

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers
Human Resources Directors

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Special Solicitations For Victims of the Earthquake and Tsunami in Japan

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Q. What is a special solicitation?

A. Federal regulations, set forth at 5 CFR §950.102, state that the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) is the only authorized solicitation of employees in the Federal workplace on behalf of charitable organizations. Using an exception authority in this regulation, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) may grant permission for special solicitations of Federal employees, outside of the CFC, in support of victims in cases of emergencies and disasters.

Q. Does the Head of the Agency still need to provide a written request?

A. No. OPM Director John Berry has authorized government-wide solicitations for disaster relief efforts at the agency directors' discretion.

Q. Is there a list of organizations providing relief assistance in the affected areas?

A. Information on organizations providing disaster relief can be found on the U.S. Agency for International Development website (http://www.usaid.gov/). Scroll down on this page until you see the section titled "How Can I Help?".

Q. Who conducts the special solicitation?

A. Because the special solicitation is outside of the CFC, the Federal department, agency, or component conducting the solicitation is responsible for the oversight and administration of the collection of contributions. OPM recommends that Federal departments and agencies holding a special solicitation request that the charities receiving funds from the solicitation be responsible for the collection and substantiation of all contributions.

Q. Can employees use a CFC pledge form to contribute during a special solicitation?

A. No. The special solicitation is not part of the CFC. Employees should receive instructions on how to make a special solicitation pledge by the Federal department or agency overseeing the solicitation.

Q. Are the CFC fiscal agents known as Principal Combined Fund Organizations (PCFO) required to maintain records of special solicitations conducted by Federal departments and agencies in their campaign areas?

A. No. Federal agencies and charities receiving the funds from the special solicitation are responsible for maintaining records of the solicitation. However, the Local Federal Coordinating Committees (LFCC) responsible for oversight of the local CFC in their area and the PCFOs are encouraged to cooperate with Federal agencies within their campaign borders to provide assistance for special solicitation efforts, if possible.

Q. I can give more to the special solicitation if I use payroll deduction. Is payroll deduction available for a special solicitation?

A. No. Special solicitations are conducted outside of the CFC procedures. In addition, special solicitations are intended to provide immediate financial assistance to organizations involved in immediate relief efforts for disasters and emergencies. The fastest, most direct way to process special solicitation contributions is in the form of cash or check payable to the recipient charity.

Q. What if a department or agency wants to help a non-CFC participating charity involved in disaster relief services?

A. If a Federal agency wants to solicit funds for a charity not listed in the CFC brochure, it may do so in a special solicitation. Again, this collection effort is conducted outside of the CFC through a special solicitation. The CFC has no mechanisms for tracking donations to agencies not identified by a CFC number.

Q. Our department or agency has employees who were directly affected by a disaster. Do we need to seek authorization to collect funds from Federal employees to be given directly to these employees and/or their surviving family members?

A. Your department or agency does not need OPM's authorization for a solicitation to permit collection of funds for this purpose. However, Federal employees only may solicit funds for fellow employees in need subject to established ethics requirements and non-CFC solicitation requests affecting Federal buildings. We strongly encourage you to contact your agency's ethics counsel or General Counsel if you are planning such an activity.

Q. Is this authorization solely for special solicitations for the Japanese Earthquake and Tsunami or can it be used to conduct special solicitations for other emergencies/disasters?

A. The authorization applies only to relief efforts for victims of the Japanese earthquake and tsunami. For more information on how to request permission to conduct special solicitations in response to other emergencies/disasters, please visit the CFC website (http://www.opm.gov/cfc/html/faq.asp#emerg).

Q. Who can I contact if I have further questions?

A. The Office of CFC staff is available to provide technical assistance to Federal agencies and can be reached at (202) 606-2564 or cfc@opm.gov.