

# Six Months Later: Partners Work for Progress in Louisiana Flood Recovery

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**BATON ROUGE, La.** — In the six months following the August flood, Louisiana recovery has moved forward as a result of survivors helping one another, volunteer groups and partnerships among different levels and agencies of government.

The partnership has worked together to advance recovery in many ways. Work includes mucking out homes, clearing debris, creating solutions to keep displaced survivors close to home, advancing flood insurance payments and other financial help to repair homes and businesses, and reimbursing local governments for temporary school facilities.

## Survivors Staying Close to Home

Survivors and communities have coordinated with the partnership to create solutions that accommodate their situations and—most importantly—keep them close to their schools, work and places of worship. Below are some of the recovery actions that have been used to meet increased disaster housing needs:

- Volunteer groups, family, friends and neighbors have mucked out houses and donated items and labor essential for recovery. These groups are important because they're usually the first and last presence following any disaster. Volunteers have contributed 750,000 hours to muck out and repair homes. They have also mucked out nearly 3,400 homes.
- The state and FEMA worked to extend curbside debris removal to ensure all affected residents received services needed to clean up and make repairs. Approximately 4 million cubic yards of flood debris have been removed—more than 99 percent of the total amount—enough to fill 90 percent of the Superdome.
- Many National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) policyholders received up to 50 percent advance payments to repair homes and businesses and replace contents so they can return home and get back to work faster.



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- The state requested a direct housing mission to supply Manufactured Housing Units (MHUs) to some survivors who cannot find temporary housing within a reasonable commuting distance. Units have been furnished, enhanced to meet federal standards and custom fitted for survivors who have access and functional needs.
  - 4,040 households have settled into 4,172 MHUs.
- Survivors have received other forms of temporary help—such as rental assistance and providing hotel room expenses—if they’re unable to return home.
  - Nearly 67,000 households have received help to pay rent and more than 4,300 have received FEMA-funded hotel stays.
- Survivors have also received grants to repair their homes and make safe, sanitary and functional so they can move back in.
  - About 35,000 households have received help for home repairs.
- Rapid damage assessment response teams sped up the home inspection process so survivors could get federal disaster assistance more quickly.
- The state’s Shelter at Home program has engaged contractors to provide emergency repairs to homes allowing families to stay there.
- FEMA’s Multi-Family Lease and Repair (MLRP) program has created more temporary housing options. The program provides funds to landlords to make rental units habitable again in order for eligible FEMA applicants to occupy them. The program has funded repairs to 142 rental units for flood survivors.

## Recovery through Partnerships

The state, voluntary agencies, FEMA and other federal recovery partners have coordinated solutions to overcome many recovery challenges after the August flood:

- 300 volunteer groups coordinate with FEMA to provide resources for unmet needs. Volunteer groups are crucial parts of recovery because federal disaster assistance alone cannot make survivors whole again.
- 18 long-term recovery committees comprised of volunteer groups and FEMA liaisons create solutions to fill in recovery gaps.
- Three faith-based groups have agreements with FEMA for 181 case managers to work directly with survivors on recovery plans and matching needs to available resources.



- Not long after the flood, disaster recovery specialists from various federal agencies brought resources and expertise to assist recovery. The Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Commerce, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Interior, FEMA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) work with state, local and parish governments, community leaders and the private sector to build communities better prepared to face disasters.
- USACE has assisted with debris removal, the restoration of critical infrastructure, and inspecting and installing MHUs. They provided more than 3,000 MHU site inspections to ensure feasibility and hauled and placed about 1,200 units.
- The state requested FEMA to initiate the Watershed Resiliency Study. Data will be used to determine ways to manage areas where rivers drain—watersheds—and prevent or reduce infrastructure damage.
- Nearly 300 private sector entities in Louisiana used their abilities to connect with communities efficiently to provide helpful information to 625,000 people, such as how to apply for FEMA help and tips on rebuilding safer, stronger and smarter.
- FEMA typically reimburses 75 percent of eligible Public Assistance (PA) expenses to eligible local and state government and certain private nonprofit entities. However, applicants will be reimbursed 90 percent of eligible PA expenses given the magnitude of the August flood.

## **By the Numbers**

The following summarizes contributions of various recovery partners:

### *Department of Agriculture*

- The USDA has provided more than \$90 million in Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits to survivors to help them with groceries due to lost income or damage following the flood. They've also provided nearly \$43 million in supplements and replacements for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program households that lost food because of the disaster.

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- Survivors have received about \$134 million to pay for somewhere to stay if their home is not habitable.
- Survivors have received \$456 million for home repairs to make them habitable and nearly \$161 million to replace essential household items.
- More than \$2.2 million in Disaster Unemployment Assistance has gone to certain workers whose employment was affected by the flood.
- Local and state government and certain private nonprofit entities have been obligated nearly \$295 million as part of the Public Assistance (PA) program for disaster-related expenses.
- The PA amount includes \$60 million to pay for temporary facilities for schools and to clean and remove flood debris so students can go back to school. While some schools have accommodated displaced students, these grants have helped many return to their original campuses.

### *National Flood Insurance Program*

- NFIP authorized and issued more than \$2.3 billion in payments so policyholders can repair and rebuild their flood-damaged homes and businesses and replace contents. The average payment has been nearly \$84,000 and about 29,000 claims have been closed.
- NFIP added more than 20,000 policies in the month following the flood.

### *U.S. Small Business Administration*

- The SBA approved low-interest disaster loans of nearly \$1.2 billion to help businesses, private nonprofits, homeowners and renters recover from property losses and other damage. Loans have been approved for more than 17,000 homeowners, renters and businesses.

