

Volunteers Continue to Lend a Hand, Find Resources for Unmet Needs

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ORLANDO, Fla. – Volunteers from across Florida and beyond continue to help Irma survivors with unmet needs and long-term recovery. So far, more than 26,200 people of all ages, backgrounds, occupations and creeds have spent over 1.24 million hours helping survivors.

People from over 300 nonprofits and faith-based organizations build and repair homes, raise funds for unmet needs and counsel those who have exhausted other official avenues of assistance.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Voluntary Agency Liaisons (VALs) coordinate information and resources with Volunteer Florida and the Florida Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (FLVOAD) to support collaboration, and communication among all the groups.

As local long-term recovery groups finalize plans for survivors' recovery, many national recovery partners also lend support to assess unmet needs and mobilize volunteers from across the nation. National VOAD partners include Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and World Renew among many others.

FLVOAD members active in recovery include Adventist Community Services, American Red Cross, Catholic Charities of Florida, Florida United Methodist Conference, The Salvation Army, United Way of Florida and many others.

One example of local volunteer partnerships is a large national hotel management company that has connected with Habitat for Humanity. It donates furniture to Habitat's ReStores, their home improvement and donation centers. Family owned and operated, the hospitality company has a large Florida presence and keeps its properties refurbished. After renovating properties, it donates furniture to various communities and nonprofits. Habitat for Humanity is a benefactor involved in Hurricane Irma's long-term recovery process.



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Disaster case managers from local and state recovery organizations will be able to make referrals to ReStores for survivors who need items. Beds, desks, night tables, dinette sets, appliances, artwork, mirrors and kitchen cabinets are available to survivors as donations or for nominal fees. In Palm Beach County, ReStores take the referrals, and if they have the furniture in stock, provide it to families or offer discounts and help to replenish lost items.

Habitat in Palm Beach County is also undertaking tarping, debris removal and minor repair projects. They continue to assess home damage for further repair and rebuild work.

Ten days after Hurricane Irma devastated southern Florida, Catholic Charities of Florida sent 140 semi-trucks filled with food, water, hygiene kits and assorted clothing donations for survivors along both coasts and in the Keys. This organization now works with survivors in assessing their unmet needs, connecting them with resources and support services.

With other partners, Catholic Charities has placed hundreds of families in hotels and housing and helped to rebuild and repair survivors' homes. They will continue their efforts in 2018 and for several years to come.

For more information on Hurricane Irma and Florida recovery, visit www.FEMA.gov/IrmaFL, @FEMARegion4 Twitter account, or the Florida Division of Emergency Management website.

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FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585.

FEMA's temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive



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SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

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