

Whole Community Joins Effort to Help Idalia Survivors

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Lake Mary, Fla. – They are serving meals, cutting trees, offering rides, staffing shelters, mucking out homes, assisting those with access and functional needs after the storm.

They are legion, thousands of people helping other people after Hurricane Idalia struck the Big Bend in Florida.

It happens after every disaster: The whole community comes together and gets to work. It starts with neighbors. Quickly, voluntary organizations go into action. Houses of worship offer shelter and feeding. Local partners provide food, water, cleanup supplies, hygiene kits. Private sector provides services and logistical support. All of these efforts supplement the aid that is coming from the State of Florida, FEMA and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Within one week of Idalia’s landfall, 80 organizations were coordinating with the State of Florida, FEMA’s Voluntary Agency Liaisons and Volunteer Florida. Many came from other states.

“The local communities provide emergency services and recovery resources along with the state and FEMA,” said Christopher Baker, FEMA’s Voluntary Agency Liaison for Idalia. “But the voluntary agencies bring so much more, meeting needs that can’t be met by government. All of these volunteers working in Florida right now are face to face with people who have had a terrible experience. They bring comfort and help.”

Florida has a strong network of volunteers, part of Florida Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters. The network was involved from the beginning when Idalia made landfall. The network will stay involved as long as it is needed, Baker said.

To apply for FEMA assistance, go online to DisasterAssistance.gov, call 800-621-3362, visit a Disaster Recovery Center or use the [FEMA mobile app](#). If you use a



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relay service such as VRS, captioned telephone service or others, give FEMA your number for that service. Application deadline is Oct. 30, 2023.

For the latest information on Florida's recovery from Hurricane Idalia, visit floridadisaster.org/updates/ and fema.gov/disaster/4734. Follow FEMA on X, formerly known as Twitter, at twitter.com/femaregion4 and at facebook.com/fema.



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