

Long-Term Recovery Groups Help Communities Affected by Disaster

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Frankfort, Ky -- In July 2022, Kentucky faced destructive straight-line winds, flooding and mudslides that impacted communities in Eastern Kentucky. Now, seven months later, survivors are working toward recovery. But what if a survivor still has disaster-related unmet needs? To help address those needs organizations such as faith-based, non-profit, governments and businesses have come together in Breathitt, Clay, Floyd, Knott, Perry, Letcher and Pike Counties to form Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs) and help Kentuckians keep their recovery on track.

The recovery process begins and ends at the local level. To support state and local officials, and help build back communities to be more resilient, FEMA's Voluntary Agency Liaisons (VALs) have worked in affected communities to help establish seven LTRGs, with the assistance from the Kentucky Division of Emergency Management, and the Kentucky Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD). These groups assess the needs of survivors in their communities then seek and vet resources to fulfill a survivor's unmet disaster related needs.

"The most effective recovery strategies are built around local organizations with strong ties to the community," said FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer Myra Shird. "LTRGs are an integral part of the mission to provide support and guidance to communities recovering from disasters."

Even after receiving insurance payments and federal disaster assistance, some survivors may continue to have disaster related unmet needs. This is where LTRGs can help.

These recovery groups are local teams committed to seeing their community through to full recovery. In Kentucky, LTRGs have been active in maintaining distribution centers to feed local families, providing much needed cleaning supplies, securing low-cost furniture and appliances for disaster survivors, and



making repairs to disaster damaged homes. FEMA VALs help to connect organizations with resources such as labor, materials and funding.

“There is a need for knowledgeable, connected VALs who are able to bring their experience to community volunteers who may not have access to national resources,” said FEMA VAL Judy Travis, “In Kentucky we were able to connect LTRGs with Camp Noah, a service that helps kindergarten through fifth grade children with disaster trauma counseling in a day camp setting. VALs bridge the gap between LTRGs and organizations that offer resources and help, while also ensuring access to the funding resources available above what the government can offer.”

Recently, FEMA VALs identified 33 funding sources to help survivors purchase more permanent housing solutions outside of the flood zone.

The goal of LTRGs is to unite recovery resources with community unmet needs to ensure that even the most vulnerable in the community can recover. They also help communities to build resiliency against future disasters.

Disaster survivors that have unmet needs can reach out to their case manager who will then present the need to their local recovery group. They may also contact their local LTRG and request to be put in contact with a case manager to find out what assistance may be available. There are currently seven recovery groups in Eastern Kentucky counties. To find your local LTRG visit <https://www.kentuckyvoad.org/long-term-recovery-groups/>.

Community members who want to get involved in their community may help by:

- Volunteering to participate in an LTRG. Leaders in the community who join an LTRG will provide a better understanding of the disaster’s impact, and effective ways their organization can collaborate with other groups to help.
- Supporting the LTRG infrastructure. LTRG infrastructure is typically supported by existing staff members from community organizations, volunteers, and occasionally an administrative assistant. Operational support through organizational participation and funding can help increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the group.

To learn how to join a VOAD to help respond to disasters across the commonwealth, visit www.KentuckyVOAD.org. To volunteer, email:



Kentuckyvoad@gmail.com. In Clay County, contact Robin Whitaker at 606-598-5127.



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