

Collaborative Effort Moves Florida Hurricane Recovery Forward Six Months after Hurricane Irma

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ORLANDO, Fla. —Florida recovery from Hurricane Irma continues to progress six months later due to private and public partnerships—and the hard work of survivors.

Private entities and different levels of government have joined together to advance recovery many ways. Accomplishments include cleaning up, creating solutions to keep displaced survivors near home, developing recovery plans with communities and advancing financial help so Floridians could start repairing and rebuilding. Much has been accomplished but the recovery partnership will continue working together for the long haul.

All numbers reported below are as of the week ending March 2.

Volunteers

- Nearly 43,000 volunteers have contributed 1.5 million hours to muck out and repair homes. Additionally, 474 AmeriCorps volunteers have contributed 115,000 hours.

The State

- The state will receive an additional **20 percent** of the total estimated federal disaster assistance amount to fund projects that prevent or reduce disaster damage. The state works with communities to develop strategies on how best to use these funds. Florida receives increased funding—20 percent as opposed to the standard 15 percent—because it has developed a program that enhances community disaster resiliency.
- With extensive hurricane recovery experience, the state has forged strong connections with voluntary agencies; those relationships have fostered a



network that strengthens help for survivors. More than **140 organizations** stepped up to aid their fellow Floridians through voluntary organizations.

- The state worked with FEMA to get all **102 applicants across the state** quickly approved with necessary documentation to perform private property debris removal. The efficient approach to approving private property debris removal—and not requiring applicants to wait for final approval prior to starting the work—helped communities statewide expeditiously remove harmful debris.
- Due to the preparation of FEMA Region IV—in coordination with the Division of Emergency Management staff—Hurricane Irma survivors benefitted from new FEMA programs, such as the Direct Lease Program. The program provided **62 households** in the hardest hit counties in Florida with temporary housing.

State and Federal Emergency Home Repairs

- The Sheltering and Temporary Essential Power program—or STEP—funds emergency repairs like fixing heating, air, plumbing and hot water systems and securing doors, walls and roofs. These repairs allow survivors to stay home while they fix their damaged residence. STEP has approved **189 projects, 69 are under construction** and **69 have been completed**. FEMA funds 75 percent of the cost while the state picks up 25 percent.

National Flood Insurance Program

- Policyholders have been paid nearly **\$855 million** on more than **28,000 claims** to repair and rebuild.
- Closed claims have averaged about **\$48,500**.
- Many received up to 50 percent advance payments—nearly **\$121 million**—to minimize waiting for money to start work.

U.S. Small Business Administration

- The SBA has approved low-interest disaster loans of **\$1.3 billion** to **34,800** businesses, private nonprofits, homeowners and renters who had hurricane-related losses.

Private Sector

- More than **180** companies in Florida used relationships with customers to relay ways to get help to **1.7 million people**. Florida home improvement stores



hosted events where more than **57,000 people** obtained information about building hazard-resistant homes.

FEMA

- FEMA provided travel trailers and apartment units to **318 households** in Collier, Hendry, Lee and Monroe counties. These temporary housing arrangements keep survivors as close as possible to their schools, work and places of worship while they work on their individual recovery.
- Some displaced survivors who needed a place to stay have also received temporary help with rental assistance and hotel room expenses.
 - Households have received **\$497 million** to pay rent.
 - More than **27,000** have participated in FEMA- and state-funded hotel stays. FEMA picks up 75 percent and the state pays 25 percent.
- Survivors have received **\$173 million** for home repairs to make them habitable.
- Survivors also received nearly **\$68 million** to replace certain household items.
- Nearly **\$7.1 million** in disaster unemployment assistance has helped some Florida workers whose employment was affected by the hurricane.
- The agency is collaborating with more than **1,000 applicants**—local and state government entities and certain private nonprofits—across Florida to reimburse hurricane-related expenses through FEMA's Public Assistance program. Eligible projects include repairing or replacing disaster-damaged facilities and infrastructure, debris removal and emergency response activities.

Survivors

- Survivors continue working hard to repair, rebuild or find a new residence. This includes **29 households** who received travel trailers and other FEMA-provided housing and have moved out because of their recovery progress. Also, more than **26,000 households** in FEMA-funded hotels have found suitable, longer-term housing.

Long-term efforts

Recovery partners have also established networks in the past six months to address unmet needs and enhance Florida's disaster resiliency. This includes:



- Nonprofits, volunteers and FEMA liaisons continue to coordinate with **26 Florida communities** to identify local recovery gaps and find resources to help.
- Several federal agencies are working with local and state officials and the private sector to apply resources that will enhance resiliency in Florida communities. Specialists from the following agencies are identifying ways to help: 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.

Helping people before, during, and after disasters.

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 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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