

How to Volunteer for Hurricane Irma Disaster Relief

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WASHINGTON - As Hurricane Irma rapidly approaches Florida, the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other federal agencies, along with non-profit, faith- and community-based organizations, and volunteers will be working together to provide services and assistance to help those affected by the destructive storm.

"Right now where we need citizens, neighbors helping neighbors, is in the life safety mission," said Brock Long, FEMA Administrator. "The objectives are clear: restore power, ensure lifesaving and life sustaining supplies, provide emergency medication, and maintain security. This response and recovery will take the whole community..."

FEMA expects thousands of volunteers to be needed to support mass care activities for evacuation shelters in Florida, and potentially other southeastern states in the path of Hurricane Irma.

Individuals seeking to volunteer in Hurricane Irma's aftermath should not self-deploy, but rather, coordinate with local and state organizations to ensure appropriate volunteer safety, training, and housing. Volunteers acting alone and attempting to enter impacted zones may find themselves turned away by local authorities.

In Florida, the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FEDM) is coordinating with volunteer organizations across the state and partnering with the American Red Cross (ARC) to provide shelter operations training to volunteers and AmeriCorps grantees.

Those interested in volunteering to assist in Florida are encouraged to learn about opportunities at www.volunteerflorida.org, the website of Volunteer Florida, the state's lead agency for volunteerism and national service that administers federal, state, and local funding for service programs. Individuals looking to volunteer at



FEMA

Page 1 of 3

shelters, should complete shelter operations training online and submit a registration [form](#). Since the damages are unknown as of now, potential volunteers are asked to seek opportunities with charitable organizations that are currently stocking supplies. The website is frequently updated, so please check back for new information.

If you are a nurse and available to volunteer, please email BPRCHDPreparedness@flhealth.gov to volunteer.

Individuals who register online and have completed the training, should note that if not contacted, please do not unexpectedly travel to disaster areas to volunteer, as it will create a burden on organizations and first responders. Volunteers should only go into affected areas with a specific volunteer assignment, proper safety gear, and valid identification.

VOLUNTEERING IN THE SOUTHEAST IN RESPONSE TO HURRICANE IRMA

As the storm is anticipated to affect other areas in the Southeast, the need for volunteers is expected to extend beyond Florida. Anyone looking to get involved after Hurricane Irma has passed, is encouraged to volunteer with local and nationally known organizations. A list of volunteer websites are available at www.nvoad.org.

Volunteer generosity helps impacted communities heal from the tragic consequences of disasters, but recovery will last much longer. There will be several volunteer needs in the coming months and years, so please continue to sign up after the disaster.

Hurricane Irma is still considered extremely dangerous, with the potential to impact additional areas than Florida. As the situation changes, needs may also change in these areas, so please continue to monitor traditional and social media channels to learn more.

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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.



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