

Volunteering and Donating in Alabama – Rise Above the Storm!

Release Date: October 30, 2020

MONTGOMERY, Ala. – When disaster strikes, people come together to help. It has been no different in Alabama.

Many volunteers have already given their time, money and talent to help put Alabama back on its feet following Hurricane Sally. But as survivors of the storm move into the long and difficult recovery phase of this disaster, many more volunteers are needed.

“Since Hurricane Sally, we have seen partnerships grow as we have welcomed the support of state and national players into our community,” said Dana Jepsen, president of [the Baldwin County chapter of Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster \(VOAD\)](#). “The work is not done though. We still have a lot of residents in need of assistance, and the recovery process is certainly going to be long term.”

A VOAD is a coalition of faith-based, community-based and other nonprofit organizations that are key to training and placing volunteers to help survivors after a disaster. If you want to volunteer to work in the Hurricane Sally recovery in Alabama, volunteering through an organization, already active in the disaster – like a VOAD, is the smart way to go. There are many tasks still to be done in impacted areas of the state; cleaning up and rebuilding remain two of the biggest, along with “muck and guts,” roof tarping services, tree work and debris removal.

Everyone is welcome. Men and women from all walks of life are needed. High school and college students, in particular, may want to look at this as a way to assist their neighbors and their community, but also as a means of fulfilling their community-service requirement for graduation.

“It is amazing what can be accomplished when groups from different walks of life work together to complete a goal,” said Alabama VOAD President Lana Mummah. “That goal has been to get families back on their feet.”



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In the first five weeks following Hurricane Sally's landfall, organizations associated with Alabama VOAD provided survivors with more than 1.1 million meals, beverages and snacks, 1,292 tarps, 48 house mud outs, 445 chainsaws, and other supplies and services. Some 3,780 clean-up calls were completed and 3,903 clean-up kits were distributed. More than 76,000 volunteer hours have been donated.

"I am personally amazed that people from across our country will take their vacations, often at their own expense, leave their families and assist strangers," said Michael Dillaber, president of the Mobile County VOAD. "America is great because of our willingness to volunteer."

Volunteer manhours used for delivery of such services may potentially help offset the "local match" share of eligible federally funded public assistance projects.

To make the most of your help, FEMA and state officials say, it is important to do it right and follow these guidelines for donating and volunteering responsibly:

- To find a list of trusted organizations that can put your contributions of time or money to the best possible use, check out the Alabama VOAD online at <https://alvoad.communityos.org/cms/> or for the National VOAD go to <https://www.nvoad.org/>.
- Financial contributions to recognized disaster relief organizations are the fastest, most flexible and most effective method of donating. Learn more at <https://www.nvoad.org/howtohelp/donate/>.
- **Cash is best. Cash offers voluntary agencies the most flexibility in obtaining the most-needed resources.**
- Know before you go. A list of trusted organizations operating in Alabama can be found online at <https://www.nvoad.org/volunteer/>. These organizations know where volunteers are needed and can ensure appropriate volunteer safety, training and housing.
- Be patient. Recovery in Alabama – and the need for volunteers – will last months, maybe years. Your volunteer help will be needed here when others may have long forgotten about Hurricane Sally.



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