

HURRICANE RELIEF “CALL” FOR HELP

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Disaster Response Ministry

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This has been an exceptionally busy year relative to disasters. Of course, we started the year with a pandemic that continues to invade our lives. Across the nation, we have seen wildfires, flooding, tornados, tropical storms, and hurricanes. And, there is a big need for volunteers to help with the recovery effort.

Invitations have been received asking for assistance with hurricane recovery in the Louisiana and Alabama-west Florida Conferences. And, if you are willing and able to come to the need of the communities in these areas, please contact the Disaster Response Ministry for more details.

More than 15,000 families across the nation have a need for assistance as a result of Hurricanes Laura, Sally, and now Delta. In the aftermath of these disasters, many survivors called the Crisis Cleanup Hotline (844-965-1386) to report the damage to their homes and request help. Thousands of volunteers from more than a hundred relief organizations answered those calls, literally, in their homes. They logged each call and local, state, and federal responders started responding. As the number of calls increase, there is a need to call them back to verify information and gather important details that will be used to get them the help they need. And, they need your help. Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster (VOAD) partner, Crisis Cleanup has issued a challenge to help as many of these survivors as possible.

‘20-5 CHALLENGE’ involves asking volunteers to make 20 calls per day for five days to give fielded volunteers the best possible data available. Without this updated information, these volunteers are unable to complete the work needed. Some get frustrated and go home early, unnecessarily costing communities millions of dollars.

If you are unable to respond and physically help with the recovery effort, this is an opportunity for you to virtually “lend a hand.” You can make and take calls from home. You don’t need to be a computer whiz, but should not be afraid of technology. All you need is a computer, reliable internet, and a phone. You work from home any time between 8:00 am and 8:00 pm central time. Schedules are flexible, but consistency is valuable. *Your caller ID will be hidden from survivors.*

This is a great opportunity for your ERT group, VIM Team, or local congregation to get involved in disaster response, without ever leaving your home. Ideally, each team or group should have a leader who will receive some additional training, manage your group of volunteers and take a few calls.

Once you decide to help, there are a few steps you will need to take. First, contact me with your interest. If you do not have a team, we can connect you with another group. I will register you and send you an invitation. When you receive it, follow the directions, which will include some short online training videos to familiarize you with the tasks you will perform. When you finish the training, you can start taking calls.