

## How You Can Help in Times of Disaster

### Register in advance to help in times of disaster.

Find out what training is available in your area, enroll, and become affiliated with an experienced disaster relief organization. Groups such as [The Salvation Army](#), [American Red Cross](#), churches, and voluntary organizations such as [VolunteerLEON](#), provide training for volunteers.



### Volunteers can:

- Promote family preparedness by distributing educational materials
- Prepare and distribute meals to victims and relief workers
- Assist with the placement and tracking of victims in evacuation shelters
- Provide child care for disaster survivors
- Compile and distribute disaster recovery information to survivors
- Answer phones at volunteer intake or disaster recovery centers
- Provide debris removal and clean-up assistance to the elderly or disabled

### Before traveling to a disaster area to help:

In a community struggling to respond to and recover from a disaster, an influx of unexpected or unneeded volunteers and donations can make the process even more difficult. Before traveling to a disaster area to help, learn where and when your skills will be needed. Discuss with volunteer organizers how your needs for food, water and shelter will be met while you are volunteering.

## When Making Donations

### Financial contributions are preferred:

- Cash donations help to avoid the labor and expense of sorting, packing, transporting, and distributing donated goods.
- Voluntary relief agencies use cash to meet victims' specific needs more quickly.
- Purchasing relief supplies available in the impacted community helps the local economy to recover more quickly.

### Donate through an experienced organization:

- Relief agencies prefer the versatility of cash donations; however, some have the infrastructure in place to store and distribute donated goods.
- To prevent waste, donations of goods should be made only to agencies that have requested specific items.
- Coordination with a relief organization is essential to ensure that the right goods in the right amounts are collected, and that transportation, warehousing, and distribution will go smoothly.