

Hurricanes Helene and Milton Response

FLORIDA DISASTER FUND OPERATIONS REPORT
AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2024



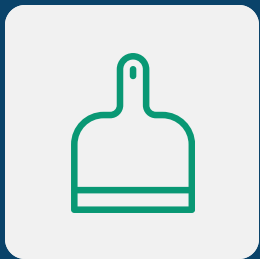
Unity = Strength

Last year, hurricanes impacted more than 1 million homes across Florida, with the number of natural disasters rising by 50%. Currently, 25 Florida counties are actively recovering through Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT).

Post-Hurricanes Helene and Milton Recovery Efforts



In response to Hurricane Helene, over 141 organizations have mobilized volunteers to assist those affected, showcasing solidarity and strength.



Disaster response includes food distribution, mass care, debris removal, and structural repairs, with agencies assessing damage and restoring homes.



Long-term recovery is vital, with experts focusing on disaster case management and legal aid for housing and insurance claims to help individuals navigate recovery.



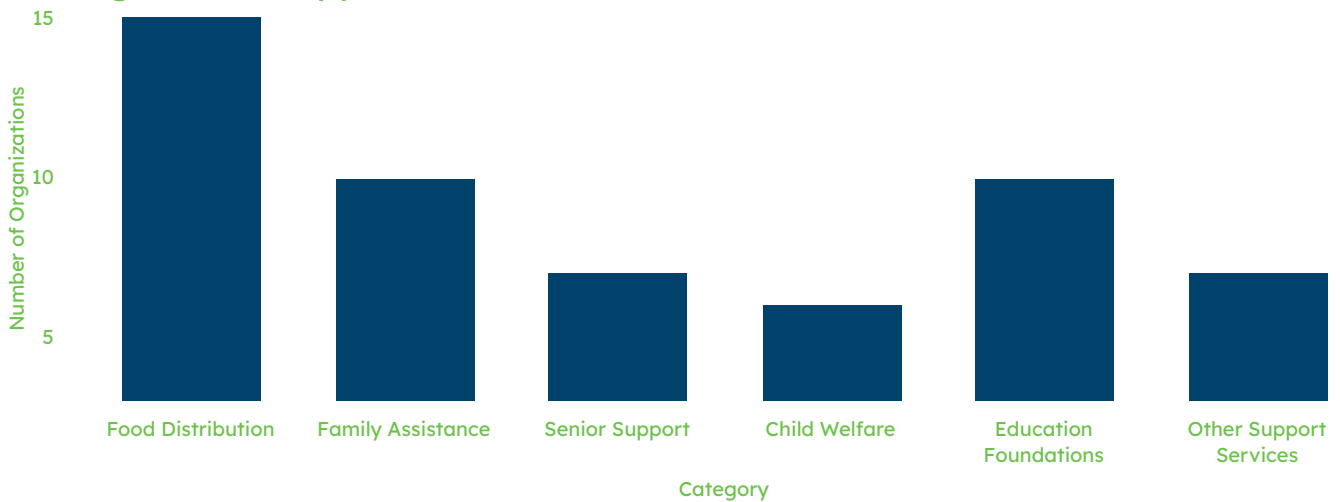
Emotional support is equally vital – Mental health services, wellness checks, and spiritual care are being offered to help community members cope with trauma and build resilience in the aftermath of the storm.



Florida Disaster Fund

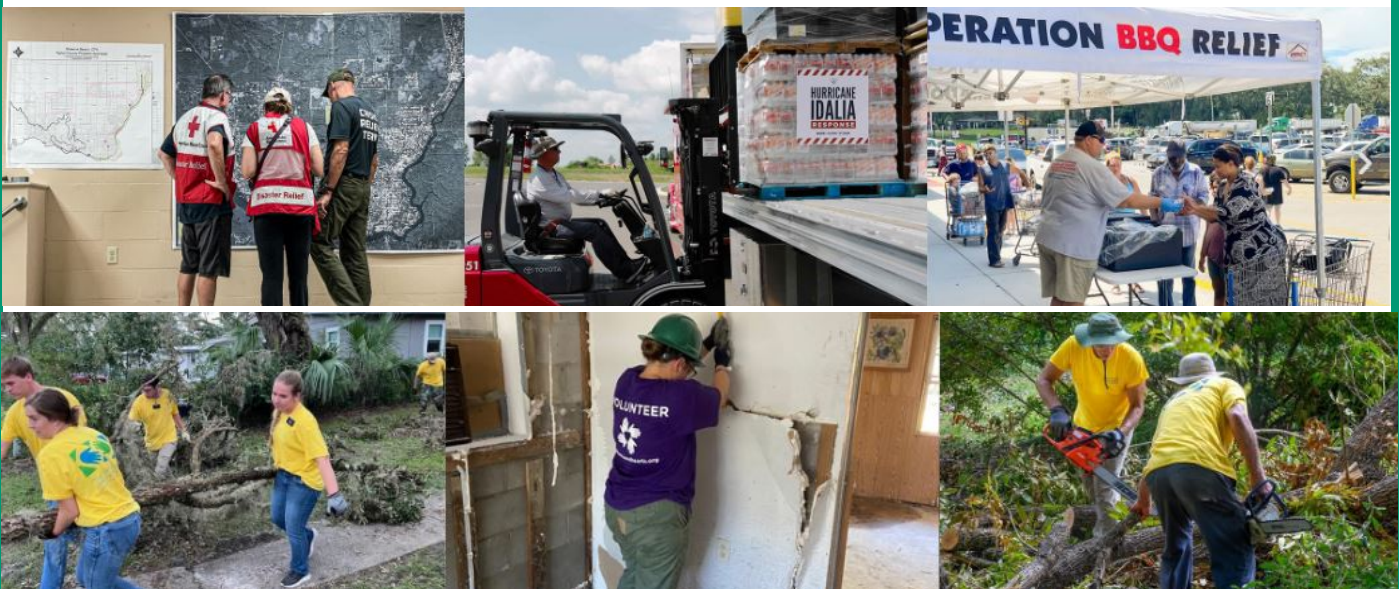
The Florida Disaster Fund provides crucial resources for recovery efforts following natural disasters, supporting a network of nonprofit organizations.

Categories of Support for Funds Allocated to Hurricanes Helene and Milton



Support Network

The funding provides vital support to a range of nonprofit organizations, enabling them to address a variety of critical needs within impacted communities. These efforts include enhancing food security for families, offering affordable and accessible childcare services, and ensuring seniors receive the care and resources they need. By targeting these and other essential areas, the funding helps to strengthen community resilience and improve quality of life for individuals facing challenges in the aftermath of disasters.



Florida Disaster Fund



Support

In a significant move to aid recovery efforts, Governor Ron DeSantis and First Lady Casey DeSantis have allocated \$1,000,000 from the Florida Disaster Fund to bolster 20 Hope Florida partners. These funds are aimed at assisting Floridians impacted by recent storms, with nonprofit organizations providing essential services such as hot meals, immediate support for mothers and children, and aid for foster children and individuals with unique abilities. Senior citizens will also receive targeted assistance to help them navigate the aftermath of the disasters.

Additionally, the Governor announced a \$500,000 grant from the Florida Disaster Fund to educational foundations across Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, and Sarasota counties, further emphasizing the commitment to community recovery. To read more, [click here](#).

Recovery

From an infrastructure recovery standpoint, the Governor has also pledged \$9.5 million to SeaPort Manatee to facilitate its restoration efforts following the severe damage inflicted by Hurricane Milton. This funding is crucial for repairing the infrastructure and ensuring the port's operational capabilities are restored swiftly.

Furthermore, an additional \$500,000 has been designated to support nonprofit organizations providing essential muck-and-gut services, debris removal, and temporary home repairs for those whose homes were devastated by the hurricanes.

The Governor has also allocated \$400,000 to bolster the efforts of Florida's first responders, who have been instrumental in rescue operations and community support in the wake of the storms.

Governor DeSantis announced the award of \$1,000,000 in funding from the Florida Disaster Fund to the Fish and Wildlife Foundation of Florida to support the rebuilding of fishing and aquaculture infrastructure damaged by Hurricanes Helene and Milton. The funding will go toward the rebuilding of boat slips and docks, the repair of fish houses, impacted aquaculture businesses, and other important infrastructure repairs for Florida's fishing economy across the Big Bend region.

[Click here](#) for a full list of awards announced from the Florida Disaster Fund in response to Hurricanes Helene and Milton.



Critical Support Functions

Community Resilience and Emergency Response

With the rise in natural disasters, effective emergency response is vital. Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) are essential for meeting local needs during crises, providing immediate aid and supporting long-term recovery. Their integration into local emergency management improves response efficiency and resource allocation during critical times.

Essential Functions of CERT

Strengthening Community Preparedness

As natural disasters become more common, establishing strong support systems for safety and recovery is essential. CERT members are trained in damage assessment, search and rescue, and resource distribution, ensuring communities are ready to respond effectively. Ongoing training and collaboration with local agencies enhance CERT's capabilities, making them crucial in emergencies.



Significance of Community Engagement



70%

of communities report improved recovery outcomes with active CERT involvement



\$500 million

is the estimated annual savings in emergency response costs attributed to volunteer efforts



\$1 billion

is the potential economic impact of enhanced community resilience through effective disaster preparedness programs

Community Resilience

Natural disasters are increasingly challenging community resilience, particularly in Florida, which faces hurricanes and flooding. This underscores the need for coordinated responses from both government and citizens, with Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) playing a vital role.

CERT members are trained to support their neighborhoods and serve as deployable assets for the state, working with Volunteer Florida to assist affected areas. They are essential for immediate disaster response and long-term recovery, collaborating effectively with professional first responders.

Post-disaster, CERT volunteers help with damage assessment, search and rescue, first aid, and donation management, addressing urgent needs when resources are scarce. Their local expertise allows for quicker, more effective responses to vulnerable populations.

Throughout the year, CERT members improve preparedness via training exercises and public education, enhancing community resilience and alleviating pressure on state resources during disasters.

CERT is more than a volunteer group; its members are dedicated professionals who continually refine their skills to ensure rapid mobilization during crises. Florida depends on these volunteers, making support for CERT's growth essential for effective disaster response and community readiness.



Deployed Teams

In response to Hurricanes Helene and Milton, Florida activated seven CERT teams across counties like Escambia, Santa Rosa, and Miami Dade. They provided essential support by:

- Assisting Steinhatchee and Horseshoe Beach with donation management for 10 days.
- Managing donations, tracking supplies, and aiding locals.
- Conducting assessments and distributing kits to those in need.

Ft. Lauderdale CERT supported Madison County with comfort stations, while Naples CERT supplied food and water in Charlotte County, showcasing their commitment to community resilience.



Impacting Lives

Impacts of the Florida Disaster Fund Distribution

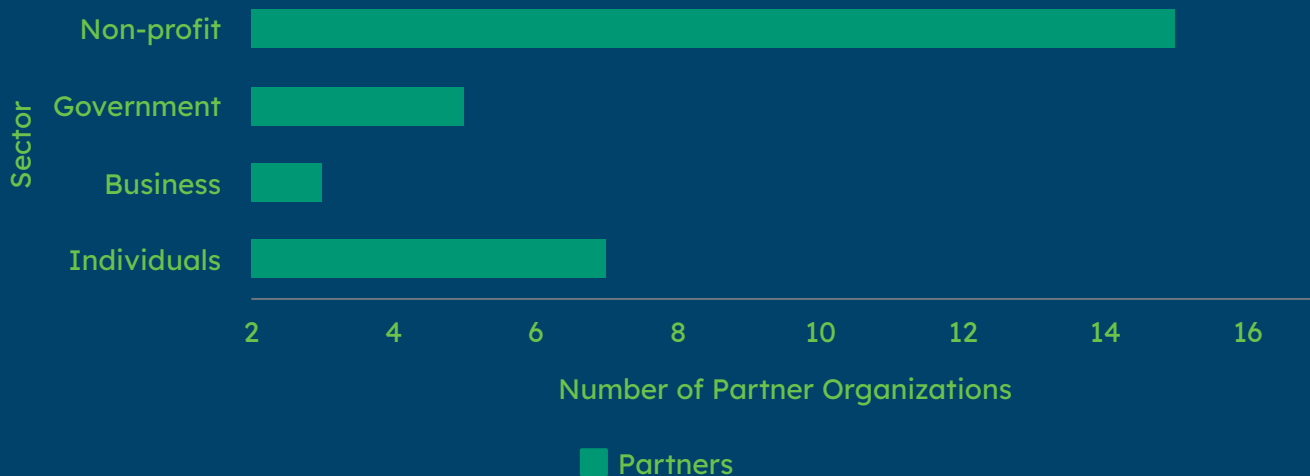


■ Food Security (40%)
 ■ Housing Assistance (30%)
 ■ Medical Support (20%)
 ■ Mental Health Services (10%)

Addressing Basic Needs

The Florida Disaster Fund helps address immediate needs like food, shelter, and clothing, providing vital support to families and individuals in distress.

Collaboration Across Sectors



Community Resilience

Beyond immediate needs, the fund empowers organizations to support long-term recovery efforts, helping communities rebuild and thrive.

Collaboration and Support

The Florida Disaster Fund fosters collaboration between organizations, ensuring comprehensive and impactful support for storm-affected communities.