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News Release

Volunteers Are Vital in Filling Unmet Needs After a Disaster

DURHAM, N.C. – North Carolina is no stranger to disasters: Since 2010, the state has received eight federal disaster declarations with losses totaling more than \$55 billion, according to NOAA and Governor Roy Cooper’s office.

With all that experience, North Carolinians know what to do before and as a disaster strikes. Local police, fire departments and the entire community work as first responders and assist with the early phases of recovery.

After a disaster, volunteer organizations play a vital role in aiding with disaster relief. These nonprofits step up to fill the gaps and help meet the needs of survivors not met by other means.

To date, more than 75,500 volunteers have performed more than 1.7 million hours of community service in the storm’s aftermath, according to the governor’s office. These volunteers help feed the hungry, find and give survivors essential commodities, help clear out and clean damaged homes and provide other services.

These volunteer groups sometimes spend two to three years at a disaster with volunteer workers rotating in and out. Some of the tasks they take on include demolition, removing all items from the home, removing flooring down to the subfloor and drywall down to the studs. They also help rebuild homes, place tarps on damaged roofs until they can be repaired, and supply meals, cleaning supplies and non-perishable items such as diapers and baby formula to survivors.

Long Term Recovery Groups (LTRG), composed of volunteers in counties and communities, oversee and schedule volunteer organizations, do case management, find and counsel those with unmet needs, seek donations and solicit volunteers. For Hurricane Florence, 32 LTRGs are working to help survivors and two other groups are forming.

Another partner helping survivors is the North Carolina Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NCVOAD). This organization provides a blueprint for forming and running LTRGs and helps find volunteer workers and donations of money and goods.

In this disaster, FEMA also plays a role in directly meeting unmet needs. FEMA voluntary agency liaisons (VALs) for Hurricane Florence assist and coordinate LTRGs and the VOAD and ensure no duplication of benefits occurs.

If you believe you have unmet needs from Hurricane Florence, your first step is to call 2-1-1 to find out how to get help.

For more information on North Carolina's recovery from Hurricane Florence, visit ncdps.gov/Florence and FEMA.gov/Disaster/4393. Follow us on Twitter: [@NCEmergency](https://twitter.com/NCEmergency) and [@FEMARegion4](https://twitter.com/FEMARegion4).

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FEMA's mission: Helping people before, during and after disasters.