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How to Help Disaster Survivors in Texas

Guidelines to ensure support is helpful

(MADISON) – The people of Wisconsin are compassionate and generous. Many of us are looking for ways to help the survivors of Hurricane Harvey and the flooding aftermath.

Here are a few important guidelines to ensure your support can be the most helpful.

- **Cash donations to trusted organizations:**
The most effective way to support disaster survivors in their recovery is to donate money and time to trusted, reputable, voluntary or charitable organizations. Cash donations offer these organizations the most flexibility to address urgently developing needs. With cash in hand, these organizations can obtain needed resources nearer to the disaster location. This inflow of cash also pumps money back into the local economy and helps local businesses recover faster.
- **Please do not donate unsolicited goods:**
Items such as used clothing, miscellaneous household items, medicine, or perishable foodstuffs are not helpful at this time. When used personal items are donated, the helping agencies must redirect their staff away from providing direct services to survivors in order to sort, package, transport, warehouse, and distribute items that may not meet the needs of disaster survivors.
- **Individuals, corporations, and volunteers:**
You can learn more about how to help on the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) website: <https://www.nvoad.org>. The State of Texas is asking volunteers to not self-deploy, as unexpectedly showing up to any of the communities that have been impacted by Hurricane Harvey will create an additional burden for first responders.

The National VOAD has also noted the situation may not be conducive to volunteers entering the impacted zone and individuals may find themselves turned away by law enforcement. To ensure volunteer safety, as well as the safety of disaster survivors, volunteers should only go into affected areas with a specific volunteer assignment, proper safety gear, and valid identification.

At this time, potential volunteers are asked to register with a voluntary or charitable organization of their choice, many of which are already in Texas and supporting survivors on the ground. Volunteer generosity helps impacted communities heal from the tragic consequences of disasters, but recovery lasts much longer than today. There will be volunteer needs for many months, and years, after the disaster, so sign up now.

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