



Typical Volunteer

Opportunities

Lutherans respond to disasters as individuals, churches, groups of churches, denominationally and through associated organizations. There are a variety of ways we can get involved in disaster response, regardless of physical or financial considerations. Disaster services involve providing personnel, equipment, supplies and finances. The following list provides ways volunteers can become involved:

- **Advisory/advocacy.** Provide advice and information about disaster services and assistance, including guidance for applying for grants and loans, assisting with paperwork, etc.
- **Bulk items.** Collect, sort, store and distribute such necessities as food, water, clothing, household goods, personal items, cleaning supplies (flood buckets) and building materials.
- **Case work.** Assist individuals and/or families regarding disaster services available to them and track their recovery.
- **Chain saw crew.** Clear trees and other major obstructions following tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, etc., and assist in the removal of debris.
- **Child care.** Provide temporary emergency child care at a church or school.
- **Cleanup.** Work with a team of trained volunteers who are responsible for salvage and cleanup after flooding, fires, windstorms, etc.
- **Communication.** Work with qualified personnel to provide communication capabilities during disasters and disaster relief responses, such as amateur radio.
- **Damage assessment.** Prepare the preliminary assessment of the disaster, including extent of damage, number of homes affected, resources needed, etc.
- **Evacuating.** Give assistance to individuals and/or families who need to be evacuated to safer areas.
- **Food/feeding.** Provide and serve nutritious meals for survivors and volunteer work crews. Handle kitchen cleanup and garbage disposal.
- **Interpreters.** Translate or interpret for those who do not understand or speak English in regard to disaster assistance.
- **Medical assistance.** Work with qualified medical personnel (nurses, paramedics, emergency medical technicians, doctors, etc.) out of a church to provide limited medical assistance.
- **Mucking** (muck-out/mud-out). Assist in removing mud and other debris from homes, churches and other buildings following a flood. Mucking includes washing and sanitizing areas that have been contaminated by floodwaters.
- **Rebuild/reconstruction.** Rebuild and make permanent repairs to churches, homes and other buildings affected by disaster.
- **Repair team.** Do emergency repairs to provide protection against further damage or vandalism. Repair teams also may serve their congregations by providing services to members or others in need of services.
- **Salvage.** Remove property to prevent further damage, looting or vandalism.

• **Shelter care.** Manage emergency shelters for displaced disaster victims or volunteer workers. Shelter care may take place in churches, schools or other facilities used for the purpose of providing safety and security for those affected by disaster or for the volunteer workers.

• **Transportation.** Carry passengers or haul goods to and from disaster locations as requested.

Devotions and prayer for volunteers and teams

It is good to set aside time for Scripture and prayer. It can be a blessing amid turmoil. Emphasize Christ on the cross. Use the *Small Catechism* and hymnal as tools for private and group meditation. Devotional resources are available from LCMS Disaster Response at www.lcms.org/disaster.

Sharing your experience

In order to remember all of the experiences you have during your relief work, you might consider keeping a journal. This will not only provide a record of your service once you return home, but

also will give you the opportunity to do a personal debriefing each day. You will have a chance to reflect and think about your experience as you jot down the things that have happened. You also might want to take pictures to remember your experiences. However, please be respectful of the people and places that you photograph.

Ask permission before taking pictures when there are people present whose lives were affected by a disaster.

When you return home after your work is done, you will again need to debrief. Each person's re-entry into their home setting is different. You may return unchanged but it is unlikely. Many volunteers return with new insights and strengthened faith. It is good for you to share your experiences with your family, friends and church members. People who did not go will be interested to hear about your experiences. Be prepared to tell your story but recognize that they may not be interested in every detail. Prepare to talk about your personal experiences in a way that will best communicate the purpose of your trip. Be as visual as possible. Listeners will catch your passion.

