



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DISASTER VOLUNTEERS:
DONATE WISELY TO HELP SURVIVORS

SEE VOLUNTEERFLORIDADISASTER.ORG FOR DETAILS

~An informed approach to disaster Donations maximizes the value of your efforts~

STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER, TALLAHASSEE – Florida residents continue struggling to recover from Tropical Storm Fay. While this storm is not a wind event, the National Weather Service describes Fay as a “storm of historic proportions,” because it is causing unprecedented rain and flooding in Florida.

After two storm-free years, community-based organizations throughout the state are experiencing lower-than-normal levels of financial and commodities contributions – contributions that are **essential** to getting relief supplies to survivors in a timely manner.

The Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service (Volunteer Florida) reminds everyone that **now** is an excellent time to contribute cash and goods toward recovery efforts for this and future disasters.

“If you give now, everyone benefits,” said Volunteer Florida CEO Wendy Spencer. “Donating cash and non-perishable food items now will give disaster relief agencies the ability to respond to this and future disasters quickly, which is Governor Crist's priority.”

“Florida's food banks currently are experiencing a **28 percent decrease** in financial contributions while simultaneously striving to meet and a **34 percent increase** in need statewide,” said Executive Director of

(more)



the Florida Association of Food Banks Hawley Botchford, a Volunteer Florida partner. “Adding to the challenge, our food donations have not increased to meet the need, making it that much harder for Floridians to meet the everyday challenge of putting food on their families’ tables.”

Please consider the following as you formulate plans to donate money and goods.

Financial Contributions are Critical and Effective:

Cash donations help to avoid the labor and expense of sorting, packing, transporting and distributing donated goods, and voluntary relief agencies can use cash to meet disaster survivors’ specific needs more quickly.

Donate locally for statewide relief:

Local organizations are the place to donate food and household items. Organizations including Florida’s food banks (fafb.org), church food banks and local nonprofits have the ability to channel your contributions to disaster survivors, where they are needed the most.

Donate to an Experienced Disaster Relief Organization:

Relief agencies prefer the versatility of cash donations; however, experienced disaster relief organizations frequently 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. Volunteer Florida’s web site provides a list of disaster relief organizations that need your financial support now.

Confirm the Need Before Collecting:

Donors should be wary of anyone who claims that “everything is needed.” A community hit by disaster does not have the time, manpower or money to dispose of unneeded donations. Many groups have been disappointed that their efforts and the goods they collected were not appreciated. Get precise information and *confirm the need* before collecting any donated goods.

The Governor’s Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service was established in 1994 by the Florida Legislature to administer grants under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. The Commission grants funds to Florida AmeriCorps and National Service programs; encourages volunteerism for everyone from youths to seniors to people with disabilities; promotes volunteerism in emergency management and preparedness; and supports the Governor’s initiatives through the creation of innovative volunteer programs.

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