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# Recovery News

## **VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING HELP TO DISASTER SURVIVORS**

*Editors: FEMA's Oct. 12 News Release NR-051, "New Jersey Voluntary Organizations Active In Disaster Relief," serves as a sidebar to this release.*

**NEPTUNE, N.J.** -- Many New Jersey survivors of Hurricane Irene have serious disaster-related needs. Groups known as Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) are stepping in to meet these needs and members of these groups expect to be assisting long after the emergency phase has passed.

VOAD groups partner with the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management (NJOEM) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide crucial assistance for disaster survivors. FEMA assists the VOADs by identifying available federal assistance programs and providing coordination and donations management. The partners also identify populations with access and functional needs and help applicants avoid duplication of benefits.

FEMA disaster assistance includes voluntary agency liaisons (VALs) who work with the voluntary groups at the state and local levels. These FEMA liaisons also refer people to the VOAD groups.

"Our priority is to coordinate the efforts of voluntary organizations," said Nancy Turnbull, the FEMA voluntary agency liaison lead in New Jersey. "We help to identify essential needs and priorities as well as resources in the community that will enable people to get their lives back to normal."

The voluntary organizations provide a broad range of assistance to Hurricane Irene survivors. The assistance includes such critical areas as flood debris clean up, shelter, food, clothing, counseling, home repairs and reconstruction not covered by FEMA.

"All of these needs are handled on a case-by-case basis," said Turnbull.

New Jersey storm survivors can find more information about the work of the national and local organizations by visiting [www.nvoad.org](http://www.nvoad.org). Disaster survivors in most counties can also call 211 to request help with debris clean up or to get information on other available services.

The VOAD groups include the Community Food Bank, Salvation Army, certain United Way agencies and faith-based organizations from individual churches, synagogues and mosques. The organizations have been crucial to the disaster response.

Voluntary agencies will continue to help disaster survivors and provide disaster relief services in New Jersey counties, regardless of the federal declaration status.

Even if individuals have registered with the American Red Cross or other voluntary organizations, people who suffered damage or loss because of Hurricane Irene should apply before Oct. 31 for FEMA assistance. Registering with voluntary organizations does not mean that a person has automatically registered with FEMA.

There are three ways to register – go to [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov), to [m.fema.gov](http://m.fema.gov) or call FEMA toll-free, **800-621-3362 (FEMA)**. Those with access or functional needs and who use a TTY may call 800-462-7585 or use 711 or Video Relay Service to call 800-621-3362. Telephone lines are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET; multilingual operators are available.

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