

## Pinellas County: Hurricanes Irma and Maria Response

The community of Pinellas County offers resources to those affected by Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria.

### Individuals

**Catholic Charities** in the Diocese of St. Petersburg is organizing comprehensive relief efforts to address the needs of our community. If you are facing an immediate emergency, such as a financial, home or family crisis because of Hurricanes Irma or Maria, please call Catholic Charities at (727) 893-1313. The office is located at 1213 16th St. N., St. Petersburg, FL 33705, Office Hours are 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

**Disaster Distress Helpline** The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Disaster Distress Helpline (1-800-985-5990) remains open 24/7 for free help coping with the stress of the storm. This toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories. Stress, anxiety, and other depression-like symptoms are common reactions after a disaster.

**Thursday, Nov 9, is the deadline to register for FEMA disaster assistance for individuals affected by Hurricane Irma. Survivors of Hurricane Maria from Puerto Rico are encouraged to continue registering.**

**FEMA Assistance** is offered to individuals affected by Hurricane Irma or Hurricane Maria, who are encouraged to [register online](#) for assistance from FEMA at [www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov) or through the FEMA app to avoid long wait times on the phone. If you call, it is recommended you call early or late to avoid waiting. The phone number for register for assistance is 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) while those who use TTY can call 1-800-462-7585. The toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. EDT seven days a week. You may be referred to the Small Business Administration to review your disaster-related losses.

**FEMA Disaster Recovery Center (DRC)** at 2431 Tampa Road, Palm Harbor is open to assist survivors of Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria with registration for disaster assistance. At the DRC, residents can seek guidance from representatives from FEMA, the Florida Division of Emergency Management, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and other state agencies. The DRC will be open every day from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and will close by the end of the month. The exact day will be announced.

**FEMA Disaster Recovery Center (DRC)** is open in Hillsborough County. From 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week until further notice at Hillsborough Community College - The Regent, 6437 Watson Road, Riverview, FL 33578. Regular hours: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week. As more centers open, survivors may [locate a DRC](#) near them at <https://www.fema.gov/disaster-recovery-centers> or by calling FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362. That information is also available on the [FEMA Mobile App](#).

**Hurricane Maria survivors** arriving from Puerto Rico can find information about resources in Pinellas County by contacting the Hispanic Outreach Center at (727) 445-9743; Catholic Charities at (727) 893-1313; The Salvation Army at (727) 446-4177, or 211 Tampa Bay Cares (dial 2-1-1).

**Legal Assistance** is offered by [Gulfcoast Legal Services](#), a non-profit legal aid organization serving the Tampa Bay area. Services include FEMA assistance, landlord/tenant issues, public benefits, consumer protection/scams and domestic violence. For more information or to register, call (727) 821-0726 or visit their website at [gulfcoastlegal.org](http://gulfcoastlegal.org). Se Habla Español.

**The Red Cross** is assisting residents whose homes were destroyed or heavily damaged by Hurricane Irma. To set up a time to speak to a caseworker, call the Red Cross at (727) 898-3111 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. for help with recovery planning, resource referrals and limited financial assistance. Oct. 27 is the deadline for opening a case.

## Housing

[Florida Housing Search](#) offers an extensive listing of available rental housing across Florida. You can search [www.FloridaHousingSearch.org](http://www.FloridaHousingSearch.org), email [DIT@socialserve.com](mailto:DIT@socialserve.com), or call toll-free at 877-428-8844. You can also visit [Social Serve](#) at <http://www.socialserve.com/tenant/FL/index.html?type=rental>. The status of available units listed on Florida Housing Search is updated frequently. If needed, call center specialists are available to provide assistance in conducting searches.

**Immediate Foreclosure Relief** from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for a 90-day moratorium on foreclosures and forbearance on foreclosures of Federal Housing Administration (FHA)-insured home mortgages. HUD is also offering longer-term recovery assistance to survivors and impacted communities. For more information, visit HUD's website.

**Individuals and Households Program** is a FEMA program that provides financial and direct services to eligible individuals and households affected by a disaster who have uninsured or underinsured necessary expenses and serious needs. To register for [FEMA assistance](#) programs, go to [www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov) or use the FEMA App. If you do not have access to a computer or mobile device, call (800) 621-FEMA (3362) TTY 1-800-462-7585 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. seven days a week until further notice.

## Businesses, Individuals and Non-Profits

**Business Recovery Center** Pinellas County Economic Development has partnered with the Small Business Administration to open a Business Recovery Center at its location (13805 58th St. N. #1, Largo). Business owners who experienced storm damage to their business can stop by for loan assistance information. Interested

applicants may also call (727) 453-7200 for more information. The Business Recovery Center will be open this week from 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

**Extended IRS Deadlines** Hurricane Irma victims in Florida have until Jan. 31, 2018, to file certain individual and business tax returns and make certain tax payments. The tax relief postpones various tax filing and payment deadlines that occurred starting on Sept. 4, 2017 in Florida. <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/help-for-victims-of-hurricane-irma>

## **Business/Employment**

**Employ Florida** has opened the Hurricane Irma Recovery Jobs Portal, with employment that is available as a result of the hurricane. Go to [Irma.employflorida.com/vosnet/default.aspx](http://Irma.employflorida.com/vosnet/default.aspx).

**Disaster Unemployment Assistance Program** Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) Program offers assistance to businesses and residents whose employment or self-employment was lost or interrupted due to Irma. For more information or to [file for DUA](#) <http://www.floridajobs.org/> or call (800) 385-3920.

**Short-Term Florida Disaster Business Bridge Loan** provides short-term funding until an SBA Loan or insurance reimbursement arrives. The purpose of the Emergency Bridge Loan Program is to provide a source of expedient cash flow to Florida small businesses impacted by a disaster.

Program: <http://www.floridadisasterloan.org> Shortcut: [PCED.org/bridge](http://PCED.org/bridge).

## **Volunteers & Donations**

**National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters** (NVOAD) at [www.nvoad.org](http://www.nvoad.org)

**Volunteer in Florida** at or call (800) FL-Help-1

**Florida Disaster Fund.org** to support individuals at <https://www.volunteerflorida.org/emergency-management/#fdf>

**How to Volunteer** For Hurricane Irma Disaster Relief at <https://www.fema.gov/news-release/2017/09/09/how-volunteer-hurricane-irma-disaster-relief>

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Pinellas County Emergency Management*