

HURRICANE IRMA RECOVERY

Final Report



UNITED METHODIST
DISASTER RESPONSE
Florida Conference

® A United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) partner

DISASTER RECOVERY MINISTRY

Hurricane Charley (August 2004) was the first of 7 major hurricanes to crisscross Florida over 14 months. It would take years to recover economically and restore homes and families.

As a result, The Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church set up a storm recovery center to respond to our impacted churches and their communities. No one knew then that this “temporary response” to Charley would lead to a vital and life-changing ministry.

Disaster Recovery has responded to numerous major events since then, including:

- ❖ Groundhog Day tornadoes (2007)
- ❖ Tropical Storm Fay (2008)
- ❖ Palm Bay fires (2008)
- ❖ Tropical Storm Debbie (2012)
- ❖ Pasco County Floods (2015)
- ❖ Hurricanes Hermine and Matthew (2016)
- ❖ Hurricanes Irma and Maria (2017)
- ❖ Hurricane Michael (2018)

We’ve also responded to small disasters, as well as disasters outside our conference; every disaster is an opportunity to be God’s love amid the pain and loss.

Hurricane Irma has been our greatest test to date. Hurricane Irma came as we were still recovering from Hurricanes Hermine and Matthew, and many of the same communities were impacted. Hurricane Irma was a large storm, affecting every county in our conference. Widespread power outages made communication nearly impossible.

Conference staff and UMCOR worked tirelessly to respond. Building on years of training and experience, our newly staffed Irma recovery, working with our many local, state and national partners, brought order to chaos and opened a path for recovery.

Florida Restores, the face of our Disaster Recovery Ministry initiative, has empowered hundreds of families for recovery today, and resilience tomorrow. Response and long-term recovery work haven’t been easy; we have a long list of best practices for the future, gleaned from lessons learned.

Disaster Recovery Ministry will continue to offer God’s love and hope to those impacted by disaster, both now and into the future. As this forty-month project comes to an end, our ministry is stronger and better prepared than ever to continue to serve those impacted by disaster.



OUR MISSION

During Hurricane Irma, the face of Disaster Recovery Ministry
became Florida Restores:

*Empowering lives, families and communities
impacted by disaster – an Initiative of The Florida Conference
of The United Methodist Church, an UMCOR partner.*



HURRICANE IRMA RECOVERY AT A GLANCE

Total Amount of Grant Awards

\$11,497,165

Outreach

Number of people contacted
to offer assistance

17,816

Number of Referrals

Number of people referred
to partner agencies for additional services

5,882

Number of homes repaired/rebuilt/replaced

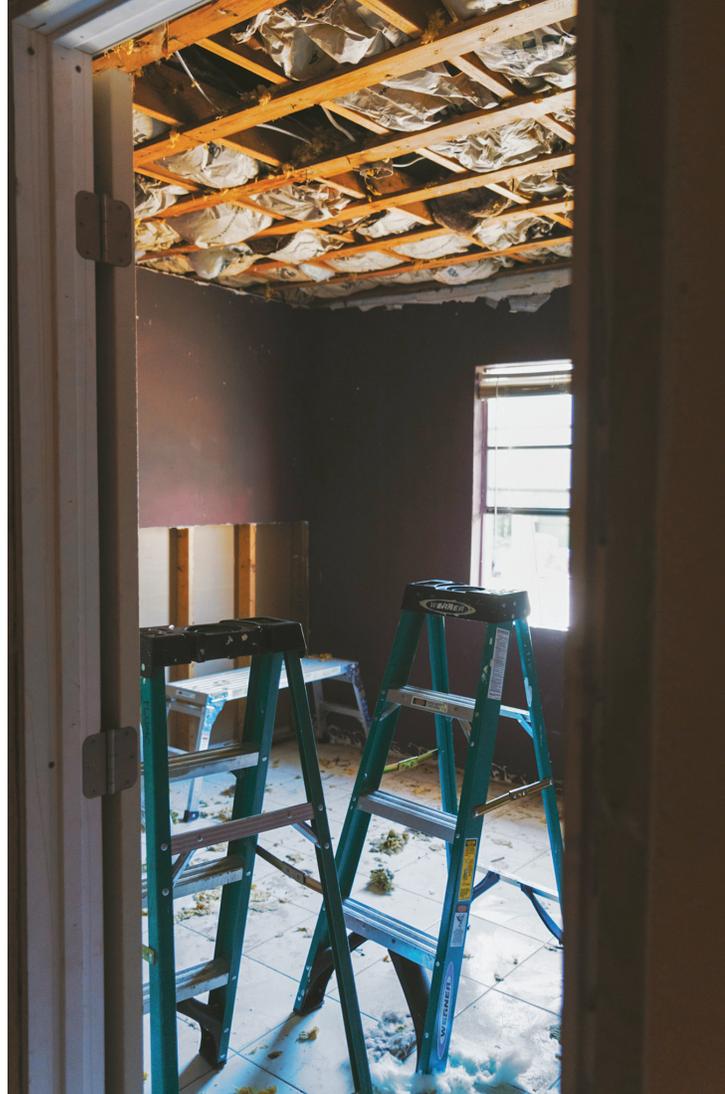
Homes that are now safe, secure and habitable

584

Number of Beneficiaries

Number of people who benefitted from
home repair, rebuild or replacement assistance
through our disaster case management program

1,395



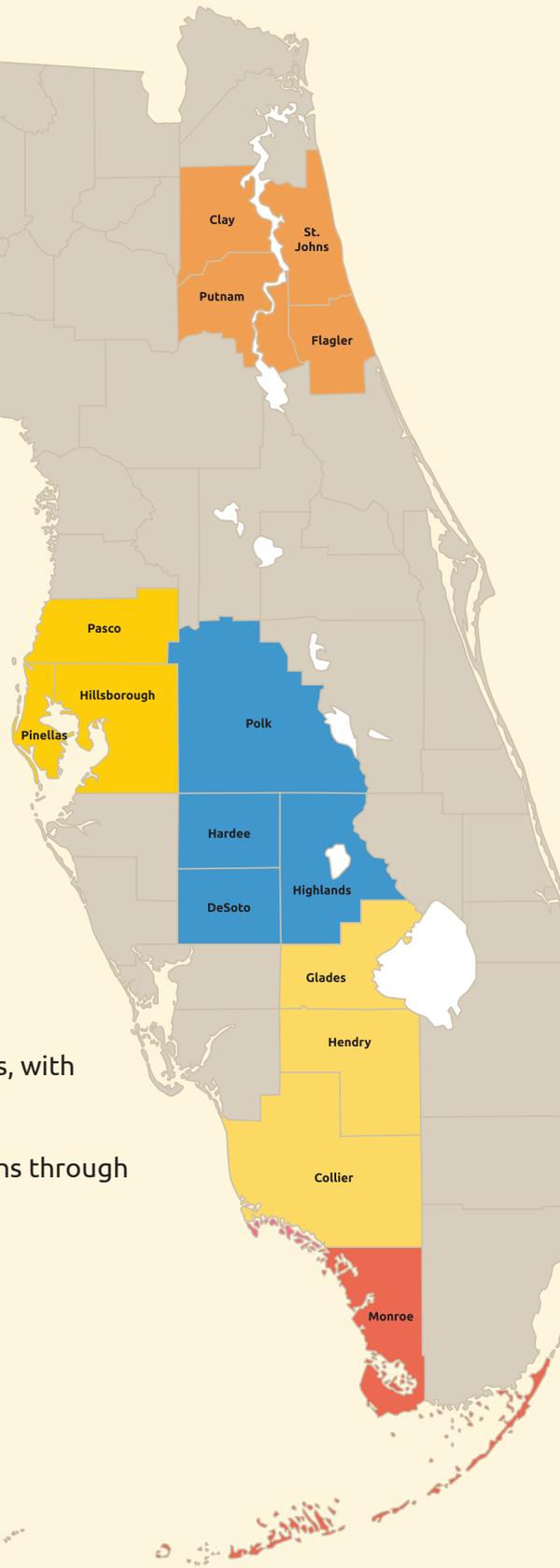
OUR STRATEGY

We began our recovery operation in November 2017, two months after Hurricane Irma made landfall twice, in Florida. We set up five recovery regions, covering 15 counties. In some of those counties, we were still doing recovery from the 2016 Hurricanes Hermine (west coast of Florida) and Matthew (east coast of Florida). Other counties were included because they were among the hardest hit, in some of the poorest communities of Florida, with limited availability and access to resources.

We hired disaster case managers, construction coordinators and volunteer coordinators in each region – nearly 50 staff – to partner with survivors for their recovery. We collaborated with local, state and national partners who provided grants, material resources and volunteers. We also worked with Home Depot and Lowes to receive discounts and rebates, as well as local retailers, when possible.

In the last quarter of 2019, we began our demobilization process, completing client home repairs, downsizing staff and closing regions, with a goal of project closure by the end of 2020.

Statistics in this report are as of September 30, 2020, with projections through the end of the project.



REGION	COUNTIES
Central	Polk, Hardee, Highlands, DeSoto
Collier SW	Glades, Hendry, Collier
Monroe	Monroe
North East	Clay, St. Johns, Putnam, Flagler
Tampa Bay	Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough

Partnerships

Developing excellent working relationships
with partners is a major factor
in our success.



UMCOR

The one partner we couldn't do without is the United Methodist Committee on Relief – UMCOR.

UMCOR partners with conferences through all phases of disaster. From preparation and readiness to relief and recovery, UMCOR is a steady presence. Their experience and expertise, as well as their longstanding relationships with FEMA and other national agencies and organizations, make them a vital partner.

We are also fortunate to have UMCOR's financial support. UMCOR supported our Hurricane Irma recovery with grants of more than \$9 million for staffing, administrative support and direct services to clients. Since Hurricane Charley in 2004, the Florida Conference has received over \$16.5 million in disaster grants from UMCOR.

Thank you, UMCOR, for being part of God's provision for those impacted by disaster in the Florida Conference!



THANK YOU TO ALL OUR PARTNERS!

AmeriCorps Mitigation Grant
Big Pine United Methodist Church
Calvary Chapel Key West
Carlson Memorial United Methodist Church
Catholic Charities
CEDR- Everglades City Unmet Needs Coalition
Centro Campesino
Community Foundation of Collier County
Community Foundation of Northern Colorado
Community Foundation of the Florida Keys
Community United Methodist Church - Marathon
Cornerstone United Methodist Church
East Lake United Methodist Church - Palm Harbor
Everglades Housing Group
First United Methodist Church of Clewiston
First United Methodist Church of Moore Haven
Flagler COAD
FLUMC Foundation Volunteers in Mission
Geneseo/Livingston County Cares
Goodland Fund
Guadalupe Center
Habitat for Humanity
Hendry County
Hendry Glades Unmet Needs Coalition
Hodges Blvd PC
Home Depot
Homeless Coalition
Immokalee Unmet Needs Coalition
Key West United Methodist Church
Keys Strong
Lutheran Services of Florida
Marco Naples Long Term Recovery Group
Marco Patriots
McMahon Solutions
Mennonite Disaster Services
Monroe County Long Term Recovery Group
Naples Senior Center
NOMADS
NVOAD Lowe's Grant
Postal Fund
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
Reach Out Everglades Cops Association, Inc.
Recover Tampa Bay Initiative
Recovery Clay
Red Crescent
Red Cross
Rural Neighborhoods
San Marco United Methodist Church - Jacksonville
Seabreeze Construction Services
St. John's Housing
St. John's Long Term Recovery Group
St. Vincent De Paul
Team Effort
Team Rubicon
The Brethren Disaster Ministries
The Salvation Army
United Methodist Committee On Relief
USDA
Volunteer Florida Foundation
Wesley United Methodist Church - Marco Island

For the many churches, Wesley Foundations and others not named here
who also supported this recovery – **THANK YOU!**



VOLUNTEERS

We were constantly inspired by the broad community of more than 4,100 passionate volunteers who partnered with us for the Hurricane Irma Recovery. Volunteers are the heart of this ministry, and we couldn't do what we do, without them. Volunteers served in a variety of ways, including repairing and rebuilding homes. Most of all, they offered God's hope and love to survivors.

LOCAL CHURCHES

Our local churches provided a strong network of on-going community support. They often provided weekend teams to support the week-long mission teams coming from outside the area. A total of 120 local church teams served 8,920 hours. Another 55 United Methodist and Presbyterian Churches offered gracious hospitality by housing volunteer teams in their facilities.

COLLEGE GROUPS

Many college teams from Florida and the eastern seaboard did alternative Winter and Spring Break mission trips to assist with Irma recovery. These teams included Wesley Foundations and InterVarsity teams. There were a total of 37 college teams, 483 volunteers, who served 12,440 hours.

LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS

Our long-term volunteers came for three to six months at a time doing home repairs and rebuilds. We are grateful to the NOMAD Mission Volunteers, Brethren Disaster Ministries, Mennonite Disaster Services, and World Renew Disaster Response Services. Together, these organizations provided 80 volunteer teams, 980 volunteers, who gave 24,530 hours.

MULTI-GENERATIONAL GROUPS

We were blessed to have many mission teams from around the country, with members from 14 to 80 years old! These teams often served for a week at a time, joyfully sharing their gifts and teaching new skills to team members. We had 140 multi-generational teams, 1,885 volunteers, who gave 50,715 hours.

OUR TEAM

(BEST. TEAM. EVER.)

Our team of 46 bright, passionate and highly skilled individuals, were enthusiastically committed to the mission of helping survivors recover from the devastations of Hurricane Irma.

The Hurricane Irma recovery required a large staff to work five regions (15 counties) in the state of Florida. We managed all phases of the recovery for our clients which included case management, construction management and volunteer teams to do the work. Our staff did an amazing job of sharing hope with their clients: reaching out, listening, guiding, solving problems, encouraging and empowering.

The team came from diverse backgrounds and different experiences. They committed to a 2-3 year grant-funded position, very different from a traditional job. Many felt called, some were unsure, but all stepped out in faith, believing it was where they were supposed to be, to make a difference.



Solutions

Disaster Recovery Ministry
is about identifying challenges and
developing solutions.

FINDING SOLUTIONS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Hurricane Irma recovery presented many challenges because it included a large and widespread geographic area. One of the biggest challenges was centralizing information and streamlining information sharing among staff.

Implementing online forms management for client cases, backed up daily on secure servers, improved our case managers' efficiency in processing the extensive paperwork needed for thorough case management. Case managers used laptops with touch screens, allowing clients to sign forms digitally. Remote supervisors could review files online, assess areas where case managers might need additional support, and offer timely assistance, reducing the need for frequent field visits.

Online case management was enhanced by implementing Google My Maps to plot cases, manage case progress, and track data for grant reports. This also enhanced our effectiveness in planning staff travel and placing volunteers.





CREATIVE SOLUTIONS THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

Florida Restores was the first United Methodist recovery project to include a Disaster Recovery Chaplain on staff. Recovery staff often work in isolated, non-traditional settings. Having a clergy person, dedicated to providing spiritual and emotional care for staff, was a unique, untested model.



The Chaplain designed a holistic plan that included weekly email devotions, regular staff check-ins and staff retreats, as well as opportunities to minister with clients. The Chaplain also developed the content for three devotional resources for staff and volunteers. The Chaplain's work encouraged staff, protected them against burnout, helped them set boundaries and kept them centered in the mission.



Coordinating with local United Methodist Churches and other community partners, the Chaplain offered home dedications for clients. This service celebrated the healing journey of the clients and acknowledged the completion of their recovery. When appropriate, homeowners were connected with local congregations and community partners for ongoing support.



The Chaplain was also an important member of the funding committee for the recovery, providing connection to our mission and values, and a reminder of our theological roots around issues of justice.

The Disaster Recovery Chaplain proved to be a vital addition to the success of this project, and UMCOR recognized this role as a best practice for disaster recovery.

Financials



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Thanks to the hard work and generosity of so many, our Hurricane Irma recovery project made an impressive statewide impact.

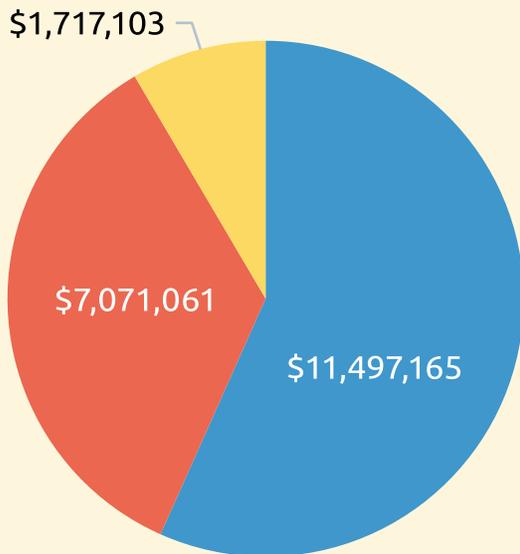
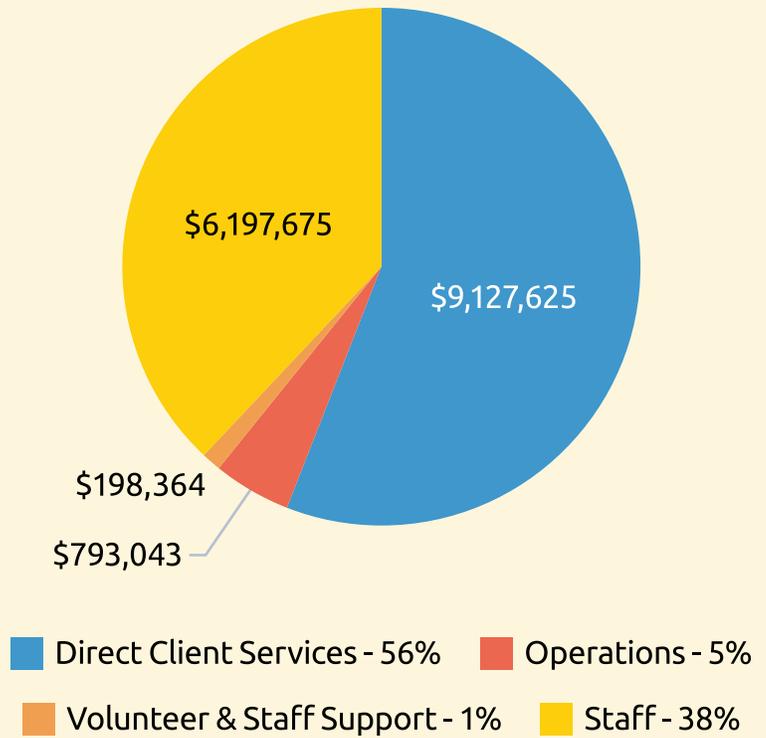
We received more funding, used more volunteers and reached more survivors than ever before.



EXPENDITURES

This graph represents all Hurricane Irma Recovery Program expenses through 9/30/2020, with remaining designated grant funding scheduled for expenditure by 12/31/2020.

Direct Client Services are expenses spent on a client's recovery (home repairs, home replacements, rental and utility assistance, furniture, etc.) to help move the client toward a stable and self-sustaining future.



■ Grants - 57% ■ Donations - 35%
 ■ Volunteer Hours - 8%

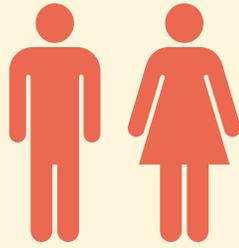
FUNDING SOURCES

Hundreds of partners from around the state and the country provided financial and/or volunteer support for Hurricane Irma Recovery. This chart illustrates that support. The value of the volunteer hours was calculated using the value of a volunteer hour from the Independent Sector during the project timeline. Note: Because of the COVID 19 Pandemic, Volunteer information is through April 2020. After that date, all work was completed by staff or contractors.

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT



Construction Teams
354



Volunteers
3,596



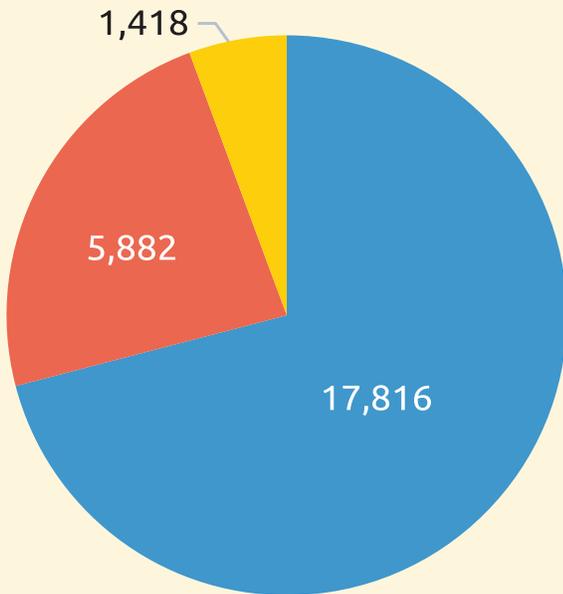
Volunteer Hours
74,950



Total Value of Labor*
\$1,717,103

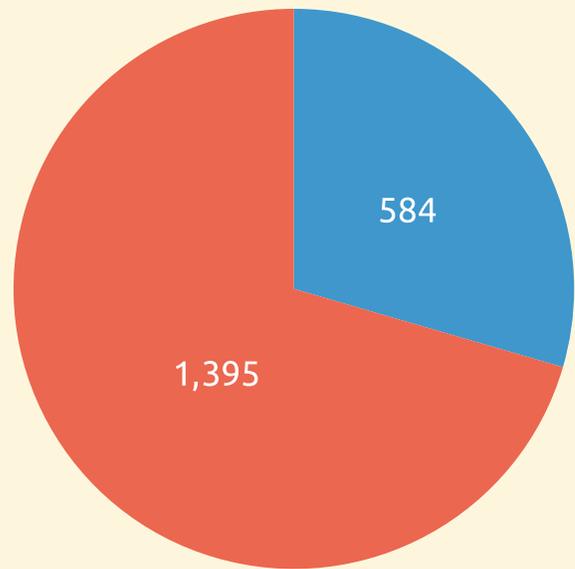
*Calculated using the value of a volunteer hour from Independent Sector for the project timeframe.
Note: Because of the COVID 19 Pandemic, Volunteer information is through April 2020. After that date, all work was completed by staff or contractors.

CASE MANAGEMENT



■ Outreach ■ Referrals
■ Cases Opened

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT



■ Homes Repaired, Replaced, Rebuilt
■ Beneficiaries

Numbers are current through September 30, 2020, and include projected numbers, based on current active cases, through the close of the project in December 2020.

Acknowledgements

THANK YOU...

To Kendra Rich for her thoughtful ideation and origin of this report.

To the rest of the core leadership team for doing the work of recovery and helping to tell the story: Maggie Armstrong, Angelica Cepeda-Martinez, Phillip Decker, Tim DuBois, Erin Frey, Eugenia Gainers, Amy Greene, Tricia Hall, Jill Hockin, Erica Lopez, Kelly Milner and Trish Warren.

To all of the Conference staff who prayed for and supported this work, especially the Offices of Financial Services, Human Resources and Ministry Protection. You managed the increased workload, unexpected challenges and the development of new methods and practices with expert care, wisdom and grace.

To Clarke Campbell-Evans whose endless patience and strong leadership helped us overcome challenges to keep the recovery moving forward.

Finally, to our funding committee who helped us develop and manage a process that facilitated good stewardship of our grants: Mark Becker, Greg Ellis, Amy Greene and Marilyn Swanson.

To God be all praise and glory!

Pam Garrison

Conference Disaster Response Coordinator

The Lord is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does.

PSALM 145:17 (NIV)





*Empowering lives, families,
and communities
impacted by disaster.*