

REBUILDING AFTER

HURRICANES HELENE AND MILTON



Catholic
Charities
USA®



COMPLETE DEVASTATION

- ▶ In a span of less than two weeks, Hurricanes Helene and Milton delivered a catastrophic one-two punch to the Southeast United States, leaving in their wake a trail of devastation and more than 230 deaths. The property damage estimates range in the tens of billions of dollars, while the lasting toll is incalculable. But the human spirit is strong, and the resilience of those served by Catholic Charities agencies – both in the seven affected states and those from throughout the national network – was almost immediately on display.

“Every meeting that we go to, generally the first question we ask, no matter where we are, is, ‘What do you need and how can we help?’”

Jesse Boeckermann, Western Region Director, Catholic Charities
Diocese of Charlotte

Expansive Generosity

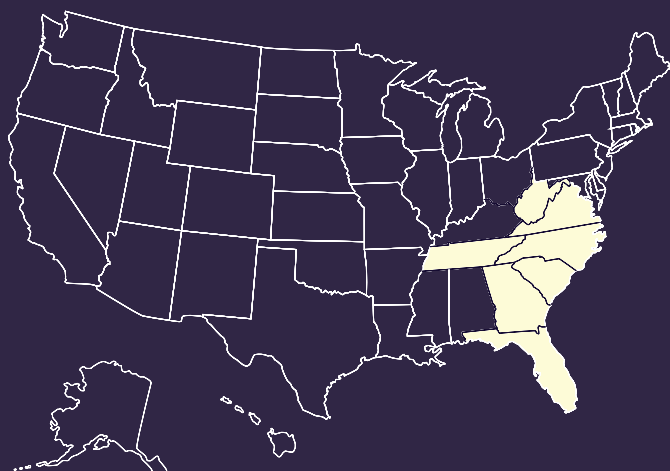
\$11M+

Funds provided directly
to impacted communities.

\$12.5M+

Worth of goods distributed
to those affected by storms.





Affected States

Long-Term Recovery Services Provided by Catholic Charities Agencies

- Home repairs and rebuilds
- Tree and debris removal
- Financial assistance
- Mental health support
- Furniture and appliance repairs
- Workforce development

CATHOLIC CHARITIES: A NETWORK RESPONSE

- Before the storms hit, Catholic Charities agencies in the areas most likely to be affected made the necessary preparations – positioning supplies for humanitarian relief, mobilizing staff and educating those in harm's way about available resources. Decisions on whether to stay or to go, which may seem like foregone conclusions for those watching from afar, are often much more complicated for those on the ground. Many in hard-hit Florida had ridden out hurricanes before, while those in western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee could never have imagined the horrors ahead. Catholic Charities agencies also responded to affected communities in Georgia, South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia.

In the immediate aftermath, Catholic Charities staff members – some of whom were impacted themselves – and staff from Catholic Charities agencies across the country sprang into action, delivering humanitarian aid, including water and food; blankets, tents and clothing; diapers, formula and other baby items; cleaning supplies; solar-powered lights; and much more. The needs of the moment dictated what had to be done, where aid should go and who could deliver it the fastest.

Catholic Charities remains committed to the long-term recovery of the communities hit by Helene and Milton, recovery that will take years. But every journey of recovery begins with a single step after the storms have passed. Here are some of those stories.

MANAGING THE UNPRECEDENTED

Catholic Charities Diocese of Charlotte

- ▶ Since Hurricane Helene barreled into western North Carolina, Catholic Charities Charlotte has served more than 10,000 survivors, many of whom lost their homes, cars and places of business. The region's mountainous terrain and rivers amplified the storm's dangerous rains, leading to catastrophic flooding and 106 deaths. For the first five weeks after Helene's landfall, staff made daily and sometimes twice-daily trips to Hendersonville and Asheville with box trucks of emergency supplies, financed by CCUSA.

"Remediation and mitigation are words that really weren't in the lexicon," said Jesse Boeckermann, Western Region Director, Catholic Charities, whose agency has historically specialized in case management. "We've never dealt with a disaster of this magnitude." Boeckermann was one of several staffers who were displaced from their flooded homes.

After responding to immediate humanitarian needs, Catholic Charities Charlotte has transitioned to providing financial assistance for housing, guiding clients through FEMA and insurance paperwork, and connecting them to home and car repair and mental health services.

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Raleigh has been a critical partner, deploying seasoned disaster case management teams and a laundry trailer, while Catholic Charities of South Carolina deployed a shower trailer for use by those who had lost their homes.





AGENCIES SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER

Catholic Charities of East Tennessee

- ▶ A hurricane settling over the Appalachian Mountains and dumping torrents of rain – cutting off remote towns when roads and bridges washed out – was unprecedented in eastern Tennessee. Communities inundated by Helene lost power, water and cell service. A low-lying textile mill, a major area employer, has remained shuttered. Nearly 800 rental homes and 1,050 owner-occupied homes were either destroyed or badly damaged.

Water, food and humanitarian aid were the priorities for Catholic Charities of East Tennessee. The agency lacked a sufficiently large vehicle to move pallets of supplies into the mountains until Catholic Charities Raleigh loaned their 16-foot box truck. Case managers from Raleigh deployed to Tennessee for several months, joined by others from Catholic Charities of Sacramento. Additional agencies offered expertise. “As a relatively new diocesan director,” said Deacon Dave Duhamel, Executive Director, “it was very heartening to see how our agencies just come together to help each other out.”

The agency has since hired three case managers and purchased its own box truck with funds provided by CCUSA. They are stabilizing clients through assistance with housing, utilities, gas and other basic needs. Duhamel has worked closely with the Knights of Columbus and Society of St. Vincent de Paul to provide ongoing services, including paying for several funerals and moving an elderly storm victim with dementia into a comfortable, safe apartment.

**“We would not be able to do what we did
without Catholic Charities USA. ”**

Deacon Dave Duhamel, Executive Director, Catholic Charities of East Tennessee

TIME TO PREPARE

Catholic Charities Diocese of St. Petersburg

- ▶ Hurricane Helene brought deadly floodwaters to Florida's Big Bend area, followed by Milton's ferocious winds, which took out electricity for weeks. Between the two storms, 35 people died in Florida and more than 12,000 homes were destroyed.

Catholic Charities St. Petersburg quickly opened two disaster recovery shelters that will eventually transition to homeless shelters. They provided food and water, cleaning supplies, rent and utility assistance, hotel nights, moving and relocation costs, furniture, tents and vehicle and fence repair. The agency has served some 13,000 people and distributed more than \$420,000 worth of humanitarian supplies. Catholic Charities of Acadiana sent three semi-trucks of supplies and its laundry truck, while Catholic Charities of Miami sent staff to manage the laundry facilities, which are still in use.

"They say it's an anomaly," to have two storms in 13 days, said St. Petersburg Executive Director Maggie Rogers. "I'm hoping that we don't ever have to go through that again. That's what we're praying for this year."



25,000+

Ready-to-eat and hot meals distributed over 7 states



50,000

Individuals served throughout the Southeast

FURNISHED WITH LOVE

A young couple who'd been staying at the disaster shelter was able to move into a new apartment after Catholic Charities St. Petersburg used funds received from CCUSA to furnish it for them. "Words can't fully capture how much we appreciate everything you and your team have done for us," said Brittany.

“With other Catholic Charities agencies, you’re lifelong friends after you go through a storm together.”

Maggie Rogers, Executive Director, Catholic Charities Diocese of St. Petersburg

BACK ON THE BUS

Before Helene hit Asheville, Malcom had been living in a renovated bus, but the storm completely destroyed his modest home. Catholic Charities Charlotte arranged for him to stay in an apartment after his FEMA housing expired. The agency replaced his bus and is restoring his housing situation to what it was before the storm rendered him homeless.

1,200+ Pallets of Disaster Supplies Distributed



Food and water



Tents, linens, blankets,
sleeping bags, tarps



Hygiene kits



Diapers, wipes
and formula



Quilts/blankets



Cleaning supplies



Winter clothing



Household items

We are grateful to the Catholic Charities network, to individual donors and to AmeriCares, Baby2Baby, Caribbean Produce, Corus International, Food for the Poor and Hilton for their generous support and donation of humanitarian supplies.



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The mission of Catholic Charities is to provide service to people, families and communities in need, to advocate for justice in social structures and to call the entire church and all people of good will to do the same.