

# VOLUNTEER & DONATION INFORMATION



## COMMUNITIES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The many neighborhood and community organizations that serve Long Beach have a reputation for stepping up and taking action when a disaster strikes anywhere in our City. Their generosity is not limited to the residents of our city; these groups have organized, collected and delivered aid to groups across the country.

In the days and weeks following a disaster is not the only time volunteers and donations are needed. The recovery from a major incident can take months or even years to complete the return to the traditional way of life for a community. Here are some suggestions on how groups, businesses or individuals can contribute to those in need.

### 1. Donations

- The need for blood increased during a disaster, give blood. The American Red Cross and other organizations have programs in place to accept your donation.
- The needs of victims change very quickly and the ability to fill those needs is best accomplished by donating cash to an established organization that you trust and designating the purpose of the donation.
- Donations of new or used products can be helpful. First contact an established relief organization that is deployed in the impacted area to determine the specific needs before collecting and donating any items. If you are considering donating a large amount of items, work directly with organizations that regularly handle large donations. The relief organization must have the resources to handle large donations or they will not reach the impact areas in a timely manner.
- Prior to delivering any items to relief organizations, make arrangements for them to accept the donation. Call and determine the best location and time to drop off items.
- Consider selling your items on an internet site and designate the proceeds to an established disaster relief organization serving the affected area.

### 2. Collecting Goods

- As previously shared, the best way to make a meaningful contribution to disaster relief is to contact an organization that is already in working in the impacted area. Contact these organizations and find out what needs to be collected. Time is a factor so collect only what is needed and deliver it as soon as you can. Collecting and donating items that are not needed slows down the response effort.

- Long Beach is an extremely diverse community. The impacted area may have special needs based on their diverse population. Ask if what you'd like to donate is needed, culturally appropriate and if relief organizations can manage the items in the proper manner. Some well-intentioned yet inappropriate product, food or used clothing donations can actually divert the disaster relief organizations away from the task at hand by requiring them spend time sorting and storing these items.
- If you would like to organize a food or clothing drive, contact an established disaster relief organization to determine what is most needed in the affected community and how to ensure the donations are properly collected.

### 3. Volunteer Responsibly

If you are interested in volunteering in the disaster area, please consider the following suggestions:

- Research and then join a well-established organization that you trust. Immediately after a disaster the operating area can become overwhelmed by the numbers of generous people who want to assist with the recovery. Affiliating with an organization that has boots on the ground can help the right people with the right skill set get to the right place to make a significant contribution.
- When working with the organization of your choice, make sure they provide you with the training to complete the tasks they are asking you to perform. Make sure you have the right personal safety equipment before responding to any incident.
- **NEVER SELF DEPLOY.** Follow the direction of your organization as well as the people leading the response efforts. Wait until it is safe to travel and your organization can provide you with the resources you will need.
- Make sure you have a place to stay and all the materials/supplies you need to take care of yourself before you are sent to the disaster area.
- **Be patient,** your skills and abilities may be needed long after the media attention has gone. Volunteer resources are just as valuable in the first days of a disaster response plan as they are in the last days of the disaster recovery plan. Your time will come and you will be able to make a difference when the time is right.

### 4. Local Volunteer Organizations

If you are interested in volunteering in the Long Beach Area, please consider the following organizations:

#### The American Red Cross



The Greater Long Beach and Rio Hondo Chapters of the American Red Cross serves more than 1.7 million people across 21 cities; Artesia, Bell Gardens, Bellflower, Carson, Cerritos, Downey, Hawaiian Gardens, La Habra Heights, La Mirada, Lakewood, Long Beach, Montebello, Norwalk, Paramount, Pico Rivera, San Pedro, Santa Fe Springs, Signal Hill, Whittier, Wilmington, Catalina Island and the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

Through the efforts of more than 800 volunteers, we provide:

- food and shelter for victims of local disasters
- training in emergency preparedness

- teach life-saving skills
- provide emergency communication for military families
- international communication to locate family members separated by disaster or warfare
- youth programs such as Safe Kids Training and Leadership Development Center Camp

All disaster relief is free thanks to the generosity of the American people and disaster volunteers respond 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to local disasters. Please visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) for additional information.

### Long Beach CERT



CERTs are formed by members of neighborhoods or workplaces who want to be better prepared for the hazards that threaten their communities. CERT programs are designed to assist communities in taking care of themselves in the aftermath of a major disaster when first responders are overwhelmed or unable to respond because of communication or transportation difficulties. As the CERT concept has taken hold across the country, however, CERTs have become much more than originally envisioned. CERTs have proven themselves to be an active and vital part of their communities' preparedness and response capability.

For example, CERTs have been used to:

- Distribute and/or install smoke alarms and batteries to the elderly and disabled.
- Assist with evacuations and traffic control.
- Promote community awareness of potential hazards and preparedness measures.
- Supplement staffing at special events, such as parades.
- Serve as participants or assistants in training exercises.

CERT members are a volunteer resource that can assist with public safety activities. Please visit <http://www.longbeachcert.org/> for additional information.

### Amateur Radio Emergency Service ARES



The Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES) consists of licensed amateurs who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment, with their local ARES leadership, for communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes.

ARES members are a volunteer resource that can assist with public safety activities. Please visit [www.arrrl.org/ares](http://www.arrrl.org/ares) for additional information.

## **5. National Volunteer Organizations**

If you are interested in volunteering, please consider the following organizations:

## Habitat for Humanity



Habitat for Humanity International brings people together to build homes, communities, and hope.

To learn more please visit: <http://habitatla.org/>

## Salvation Army



From its inception, The Salvation Army has relied heavily on volunteers who support its programs. Often referred to as "the army behind The Army," volunteers play a crucial role in response efforts during a disaster by positively impacting the lives of those involved. The Salvation Army's Emergency Disaster Services is always looking for individuals ready to make a significant contribution through supporting communities, uplifting families or serving front line responders in the wake of a crisis.

To learn more please visit: <http://disaster.salvationarmyusa.org/give/?volunteer>

## National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters



NVOAD (National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters), works with many well established organizations to help assist those that have been affected by a disaster.

For more information on NVOAD, see [www.nvoad.org](http://www.nvoad.org).

## Corporation for National Community Service



As the nation's largest granting authority for service and volunteering, CNCS plays a critical role in strengthening America's nonprofit sector and addressing our nation's challenges through service.

To learn more please visit: [www.nationalservice.gov/](http://www.nationalservice.gov/)

Visit the following website for additional Information:



**FEMA** [www.fema.gov/volunteer-donate-responsibly](http://www.fema.gov/volunteer-donate-responsibly)



<http://www.calema.ca.gov/PlanningandPreparedness/Pages/Volunteer-and-Donate.aspx>