

# US DISASTER PROGRAM

## Matching Gifts & Needs After Disaster



### Disaster response and preparedness

## INTRODUCTION

Episcopal Relief & Development uses an asset-based approach in our global programming. In the United States, Episcopal Relief & Development focuses on equipping church leaders to prepare for and to respond to disasters. This module is designed to teach Episcopal Relief & Development's disaster response methodology and some basics of the Life Cycle of a Disaster. Our hope is that participants will feel empowered to share their congregational gifts to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people in their communities.

## WHO SHOULD ATTEND THE SESSIONS?

All are welcome and encouraged to attend. Learning about asset-based methodologies has benefits that extend far beyond disaster response. It is particularly helpful to have ministry leaders and long-time church members in the room so that they can speak to the full breadth and depth of their church's gifts. Similarly, youth often have fresh and innovative ideas to contribute to the discussion.

## HOW CAN EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT HELP?

The role of Episcopal Relief & Development's US Disaster Program is to inspire, connect and equip leaders of the US Episcopal Church to prepare for hazards that might affect their communities, as well as mitigate the impact of those disasters and help vulnerable people make a full and sustained recovery. Our staff works closely with bishop-appointed Diocesan Disaster Coordinators to improve diocesan and regional resilience.

The Resource Library on Episcopal Relief & Development's website, [www.episcopalrelief.org/resourcelibrary](http://www.episcopalrelief.org/resourcelibrary), contains free, downloadable disaster training curricula as well as case studies of best practices in disaster preparedness and response.

For more information on this or other resources please contact your Diocesan Disaster Coordinator or email [usdisaster@episcopalrelief.org](mailto:usdisaster@episcopalrelief.org). We welcome your questions as well as your suggestions for resources that will support your work in disaster preparedness.



## OBJECTIVES

Identify and share congregational gifts

Introduce Episcopal Relief & Development's disaster response methodology

Discuss potential needs of vulnerable people after a disaster

Brainstorm and share potential congregational responses to a disaster

## FACILITATOR'S NOTE

This activity can be used as a stand-alone or in combination with other Episcopal Relief & Development modules as a part of a more comprehensive training. Consider opening and closing your time together in prayer.

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## MATERIALS:

Flip chart and markers  
Pens  
2 packs of sticky notes (different colors) per small group  
A volunteer to demonstrate the abundance activity

## OPENING PRAYER:

Gracious God, thank you for the many gifts that you so freely bestowed upon us. Please help us to use them, as well as the gifts of our sharp minds and tender hearts, so that we can reach out to our neighbors in times of need; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thank you goes to all of our Diocesan Disaster Coordinators and training participants whose enthusiasm and questions have helped shape this exercise:

Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina  
Episcopal Diocese of The Central Gulf Coast  
Episcopal Diocese of Central Florida  
Episcopal Diocese of The Rio Grande  
Episcopal Diocese of Olympia  
Episcopal Diocese of Texas  
Episcopal Dioceses of Western Massachusetts  
Episcopal Dioceses of Massachusetts  
Episcopal Diocese of California  
Episcopal Diocese of Hawaii  
The Episcopal Church in Colorado  
Episcopal Diocese of Wyoming  
Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota  
Episcopal Diocese of Utah  
Episcopal Diocese of Oregon  
Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey  
Episcopal Diocese of Ohio  
Episcopal Diocese of Maryland  
Episcopal Diocese of Michigan  
Episcopal Diocese of Long Island  
Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania  
Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia  
Episcopal Diocese of Missouri  
Episcopal Diocese of Arkansas  
Episcopal Diocese of Iowa  
Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan  
Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma  
Episcopal Diocese of Texas  
Episcopal Diocese of Kansas  
Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota

# I. FOCUSING ON ABUNDANCE

TIME: 10 MINUTES

## OVERVIEW

This section is an energizing role-play activity completed in pairs. The objective is to explore a gifts-oriented approach in order to shift participants' mindset from a problem or deficits framework to one that focuses on abundance and gifts. Having a gifts-oriented mindset is a cornerstone of Asset-Based Community Development. It allows people to develop a stronger sense of hope and creativity, which can be invaluable postures for disaster recovery.

## ROLE PLAY

*Facilitator: Use these or similar words to introduce this module. Feel free to adapt the language as appropriate.*

Nationally, we know that the average Episcopalian is getting older, average Sunday church attendance is going down and, in many places, diocesan staff size is shrinking. Confronted with this reality, it's easy to feel anxiety and fixate on what we lack or how things were better thirty years ago.

Frankly, sometimes we don't have everything that is needed. But, as Christians, we are called to believe in and look for God's abundance, even in the midst of undeniably difficult situations. This radical trust that we have enough is hard, so we have to practice!

To help out, I would like to invite my volunteer to join me up front. She will be playing the role of someone stuck in a deficit-based mindset. I will try and remind her of the gifts within her circumstances. This is not good pastoral care; it is simply a way to practice shifting our perspective from deficit to one of sufficiency or even abundance.

FACILITATOR: How are you doing, [Assistant]?

ASSISTANT: I'm not doing so well. You see, I just broke my leg.

FACILITATOR: Aw, that sucks, but at least you now have the time to catch up on reading all of your magazines!

ASSISTANT: Ah, but I have to travel to all of my follow-up appointments at the doctor's office.

FACILITATOR: What wonderful medical care! It's also so good that you have a bunch of church friends to help drive you to your appointments.

FACILITATOR: Sure, but all of those church people are terrible drivers. They speed and switch lanes like a racecar driver!

FACILITATOR: That is stressful. At least, you have Jesus and a rich spiritual practice that can help comfort you during those times of stress.

## FACILITATOR NOTE

The campier the scene, the better!  
This exercise works best when the participants act out the scenarios with humor.

...And scene! Now, it is your turn to try this out. Break into pairs. Select who will be person A and person B. Person A will be stuck in deficit. Person B will help reframe the scenario focusing on hidden gifts. In this scenario, Person A just lost their job. (3 minutes)

Ask participants for their reactions. What was hard about that activity? Was anything surprising?

This was a silly exercise, but it illustrates a serious concept. For instance, we can look at a city block and point out crime, poverty, food deserts and run-down buildings, but this isn't the whole story. The same block may have afterschool programs, families that love each other, hospitals, a beautiful park and neighbors who help each other out. This isn't a naïve view of the world. Gifts don't erase the challenges that we face, but they can become the foundation for how we work to address those challenges.

## FACILITATOR NOTE

**The campier the scene, the better!**  
**This exercise works best when the participants act out the scenarios with humor.**

## II. IDENTIFYING CONGREGATIONAL GIFTS

Time: 20 MINUTES

### OVERVIEW

This exercise challenges participants to identify a wide-variety of gifts of a real congregation in small groups. Participants are asked to consider diverse gifts ranging from physical assets to non-tangible attitudes and beliefs.

### THE FIVE P'S

*Facilitator: Use these or similar words to introduce this module. Feel free to adapt the language as appropriate.*

One of the things that can help us have a more abundance-focused mindset is expanding our understanding of what our gifts (or assets) are. Congregational gifts can be described using the “Five Ps”:

**PEOPLE:** Members of your congregation and people connected to your ministries

**PROPERTY:** The church building, parking lot, supplies and rectory

**PURSE:** Financial assets

**POSTURE:** Your church community’s culture, such as being outreach-oriented or its commitment to seeking and serving Christ in all people

**PROGRAM:** Ministries and activities at your church. This includes everything from Bible studies to homeless outreach ministries.

Write the Five Ps on the flip chart so that participants can reference them during the next part of this activity.

All of these categories contribute to the richness and vitality of our congregations. Let’s try out a couple of church examples. What are the gifts in the following circumstances? If you struggle, remember the previous activity.

#### AN OLDER CONGREGATION

Possible answers include: wisdom, having a ready group of volunteers because many members are retired and financial resources

#### A SMALL CONGREGATION

Possible answers include: having a core group of lay leaders and space in a building that can be rented for additional income

#### NOT OWNING A CHURCH BUILDING

Possible answers include: no maintenance costs and increased budget for outreach work

Split participants into groups of two or three people. Participants will remain in their groups for the remainder of this activity. Each person will need two different colored sticky note pads.

## FACILITATOR NOTES

A variation of this activity can be very powerful for a church or congregation. Select a large wall in a high-traffic area of your church. Lay out sticky notes, pens and an explanation of the Five Ps, and invite all to identify the gifts of your congregation. Over the course of the week (or more), individuals from different worship times and ministry participants will gradually create a mural of congregational gifts.

During the small group section, it is helpful to challenge the different groups to try and identify the greatest number of gifts. This helps build momentum and keeps the energy levels high.

Now we will practice identifying the gifts of our own churches. One person per group will take the next 10 minutes to describe their church in great detail. Share everything from your crew of coffee hour snack providers to your vast church parking lots. While they are doing this, other group members will record the church's gifts on sticky notes. Write only one gift per sticky note. The goal is to identify as many gifts as possible so that everyone finishes this activity with a large pile of sticky notes.

If the person describing their church begins to complain or focus on deficits, practice what we did in our earlier activity and remind them to look for the gifts in their difficult situation.

As participants work, circulate among the groups and offer your assistance. About seven minutes into the activity, ask the participants to review the Five Ps and see if they are missing any of the categories of gifts from their piles of sticky notes.

Ask participants how that went. What was surprising?

### III. INTRO TO ASSET-BASED DISASTER RESPONSES

Time: 15 MINUTES

#### OVERVIEW

Now that participants are equipped with a more gifts-oriented mindset, this section will introduce Asset-Based Disaster Responses and explore how congregational gifts can be put to use (and misuse) after a disaster.

*Facilitator: Use these or similar words to introduce this module. Feel free to adapt the language as appropriate. DISTRIBUTE HANDOUT #1*

At its most basic level, Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) is a way to build on the gifts of a community to improve the community. The most powerful disaster responses emerge when the gifts of the church match the needs of the community. This seems simple, but gifts and needs can be misaligned. Churches can act from their gifts, but there may not be a need for those gifts. For example, a church may have a knitting circle that is famous for their thermal scarves. Thermal scarves are absolutely a gift of this church; however, if a disaster happens in August in the south, thermal scarves are unlikely to be in high demand.

Conversely, there may be a strong need in the community, but the church may not be gifted in ways to reach that need. After a storm, there may be many people who desperately need volunteers with heavy machinery to remove debris, but if none of the parishioners have prior experience and no one has access to heavy machinery, they will not be the most productive or happy volunteer group.

The goal in responding to disasters effectively is to find where gifts and needs overlap. In order to respond to disasters effectively, you first need to identify the needs in your community.

Episcopal Relief & Development supports dioceses and churches all across the country who are leveraging their congregational gifts to meet the needs of their neighbors post-disaster. Here are just a few examples of how other Episcopal Churches have used their gifts to respond to disasters:

Provided temporary shelter after an apartment fire using their gifts of a warm building, clothing drive donations, and their focus on outreach ministry.

Created a federal form brigade using their gifts of strong interfaith relationships, organizing skills, cell phones and knowledge of available federal benefits.

Expanded a feeding ministry using their gifts of an active feeding ministry, strong social media presence and hospitality.

Invite the participants to ask any questions and share reactions.

For more examples of Episcopal Churches meeting the needs of their community, check out Episcopal Relief & Development's Resource Library.

#### FACILITATOR NOTE

It's worth noting that you shouldn't feel pressured to try and address every need that emerges after a disaster. There are a host of specialized needs and a wide variety of organizations that assist people in meeting those needs after an event. The Venn diagram in handout 1 really looks more complex, like the one in Handout 3.

## IV. MATCHING GIFTS WITH POTENTIAL NEEDS

Time: 30 MINUTES

### OVERVIEW

During this exercise, you will ask participants to brainstorm potential needs different points in time after a disaster. This can be challenging if participants haven't personally been through a disaster. Encourage them to brainstorm broadly and not to get too caught up in the specifics. After they have finished brainstorming, participants will look for places of synergy between the gifts and needs they have identified.

### THREE PHASES OF A DISASTER

*Facilitator:* Hang three flip chart pages, labeled RESCUE, RELIEF and RECOVERY, respectively, at the front of the room. Each group of participants will need a new pack of sticky notes in a different color.

Imagine that a disaster has struck your church. Floodwaters rose quickly, causing structural damage to homes and business. There were five fatalities, and many peoples' lives and livelihoods have been upended.

Now we are going to walk through possible needs in the community during three phases during the Life Cycle of a Disaster: Rescue, Relief and Recovery. Try to focus on the needs of people who may be more vulnerable to disasters than others.

**RESCUE:** Rescue is the period of time immediately after a disaster where first responders (e.g. local fire, police and emergency medical services) attempt to contain or minimize damage and save lives.

What are some potential needs during rescue?  
Have participants answer in the plenary group.  
Record responses on the flip chart labeled RESCUE.  
Possible answers include: Safety, medical care, electricity, etc.

What should church people do during rescue?  
Possible answers include: Pray. Stay safe. Communicate with others when possible. It is important to emphasize that rescue efforts should be left to first responders.  
Episcopalians will have plenty of opportunities to contribute to recovery efforts later on.

**RELIEF:** During relief, community members and responders create many temporary solutions to address the disaster damage. This is typically what people think of when they imagine disaster response.

In your groups, brainstorm potential needs during relief.  
Have participants brainstorm in small groups or pairs and write potential needs on sticky notes. Use one sticky note for each need.

## FACILITATOR NOTES

Feel free to adapt this scenario so that it better fits your context. However, avoid using the most recent disaster your community may have experienced. Too often, disaster planning rehearses the last disaster that occurred but fails to prepare for other potential crises.

Be sure to encourage participants to include potential needs for populations who may be more statistically vulnerable (e.g. poor, elderly, formerly incarcerated, parents of young children, non-English speakers, people with disabilities, undocumented communities, etc.). Members of these groups may have specific post-disaster needs and may fall through the cracks of traditional post-disaster recovery systems.



Possible answers include: food, clothing, shelter, water, childcare, warming and cooling shelters, spiritual and emotional care, access to prescription medications, income assistance, electricity to charge phones and power computers, etc.

Invite participants to share potential needs in plenary.  
Record their responses on the flip chart sheet labeled RELIEF.  
Participants may create additional need sticky notes if desired.

**RECOVERY:** Individuals and communities work to find more permanent solutions to disaster damage. People begin to find their “new normal.” Disaster recovery may take many years or even decades.

In your small groups, brainstorm potential needs in a community during recovery. Have participants write potential needs on sticky notes. Use one sticky note for each need.

Invite participants to share potential needs in plenary.  
Record their responses on the flip chart labeled RECOVERY.  
Possible answers include: rebuilding assistance or new housing, childcare, emotional support, income assistance, new jobs, help with contractors, care-for-caregiver support, assistance with FEMA and insurance forms, etc.

In your small groups, go back through your sticky notes of church gifts and match them to the potential needs sticky notes that you just generated. Where could this real church help out? Look for places of synergy where the potential needs you identified could be paired with the gifts of your congregation.

It is important to note that your church will not need to meet every need. Other organizations and faith groups will also be helping out with disaster recovery and may have gifts that better align with those needs.

While participants are working, circulate and help them think of matches.

After five minutes, have each group report back one gift and need pair using the following form: “[CHURCH NAME] in [LOCATION] can use [GIFT] to meet [NEED].”

If you would like, take some time and brainstorm organizations that may help meet other needs after a disaster. These may include: other outreach organizations like shelters and pantries, local first responders, interfaith groups and state/local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs) or Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COADs). These are great organizations to build relationships with as you prepare to respond after a disaster.

DISTRIBUTE HANDOUT #2.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Time: 5 MINUTES

Ask for any final questions or comments. If time allows, this is a good time to facilitate a conversation about next steps.

### SUMMARIZE THE FOLLOWING KEY TAKEAWAYS:

Episcopalians have gifts! Lots of them.

Other denominations have set disaster response activities such as case management or debris removal. Episcopal churches often take a more individualized approach. Our process is to leverage existing ministries to meet unmet needs in the community. This means that each disaster response can be very different.

Needs change over the course of the disaster. Be sure to keep checking in with folks who are affected by disasters and ask what they need.

The two strongest indicators that predict whether or not a church will respond after a disaster are: an awareness of congregational gifts & limitations and a willingness to try. Don't hesitate to help out!

Disaster preparedness planning will help improve the quality of disaster responses. Check out preparedness materials in Episcopal Relief & Development's [Resource Library](#) to assist you with planning.

*Thank the group for their hard work. Point out that disaster preparedness is an ongoing and incremental process. Assure them that their efforts will help boost the resilience of their church community.*

End with the Lord's Prayer.

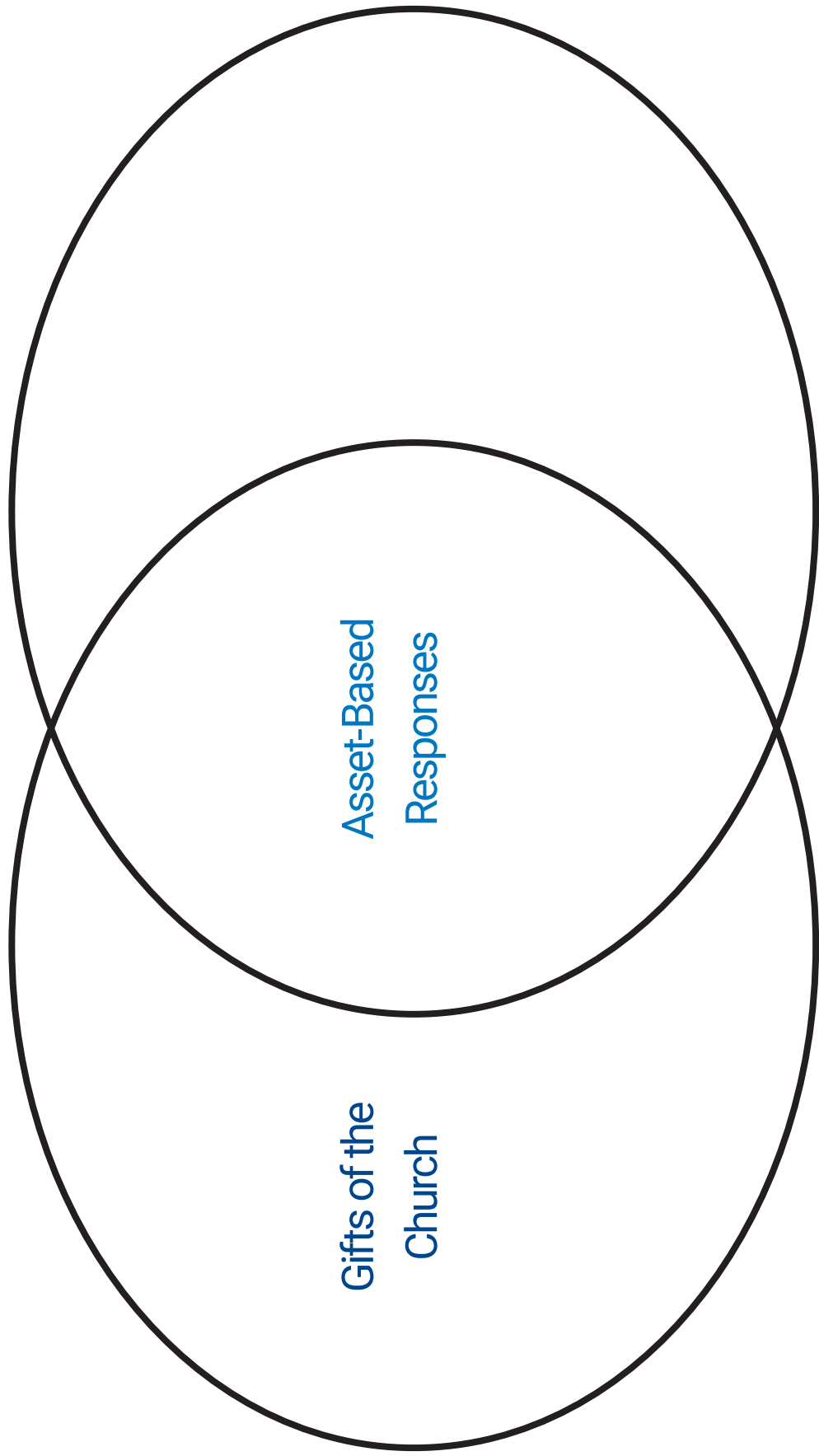
After you finish this module, you can take encourage participants to take additional steps to prepare for disasters. Here are some places to start:

Learn about other ways you can prepare for disasters at [episcopalrelief.org/preparedness](http://episcopalrelief.org/preparedness)

Connect with your Diocesan Disaster Coordinator

Build emergency kits as a congregation using A Season of Resilience worship bulletin inserts

Work as a committee to complete a congregational preparedness plan, using Episcopal Relief & Development's templates available in the Resource Library





**PREPAREDNESS:** Continued efforts to anticipate, respond to and recover from possible disasters. Preparedness activities should be ongoing.

**IMPACT:** An event (natural or man-made) occurs that outstrips the capacity of the local community to respond.

**RESCUE:** Rescue is the period of time right after a disaster where first responders, e.g. local fire, police and emergency medical services, attempt to contain or minimize damage and save lives.

Power is often out. Utility companies may cut power to ensure safety.

Debris is visible. If possible, road crews begin to remove debris.

Local community members, including churches, community agencies and others, provide emergency food and housing. Affected individuals may move to emergency shelters.

The National Guard may be called up to assist.

Most schools and businesses are closed.

**RELIEF:** During relief, people create temporary solutions to meet immediate needs, such as shelters and mass feeding programs.

Local road crews and utility workers continue their work.

Additional workers from around the country arrive to begin to clean up and restore power.

Red Cross and other organizations open shelters and distribute food.

Schools and many businesses remain closed.

Insurance Adjustors are on site and people begin applying for insurance claims.

People may apply for government funding through FEMA to help pay for rebuilding.

Churches often act individually to meet immediate needs such as meals, phone and computer charging, spiritual and emotional support, housing and other needs.

**SHORT TERM RECOVERY:** Individuals and communities work to find more permanent solutions to disaster damage and begin rebuilding.

Roads have been cleared, and power and utilities have been restored to residents whose homes weren't damaged.

People in shelters are transitioned to motels and apartments.

Undamaged schools and businesses reopen.

Some people begin to receive insurance, loans and government aid.

Donations continue to pour in, but the contributions are not always what is needed.

Relief groups are leaving and local long term recovery groups begin to form.

**LONG TERM RECOVERY:** People begin to find their "new normal." Disaster recovery may take many years.

Residents begin to transition to FEMA-funded temporary housing, some may return to their homes. Others move away.

Prolonged job loss from closed businesses combined with increased housing costs prompts an increased need for social services.

Some people are hiring contractors and rebuilding their homes using insurance, FEMA funds, loans and savings.

Individuals may need continued outside help, disaster case management and/or continue to have unmet needs.

Outside volunteers arrive to help repair and rebuild homes.

Mental health issues may surface for some, particularly around anniversary events.

Churches and organizations begin to work together to form more coordinated disaster responses.

