

What We Do – Episcopal Relief & Development's Strategy for Disaster Relief & Response

Episcopal Relief & Development partners with faith and community leaders before, during and after disasters to advance lasting change in communities affected by injustice, poverty, disaster and climate change.

Before: Our research-driven programs enable communities to be better prepared when disaster hits.

During: We are here for you and those affected by disasters, helping discern assets, working with other local agencies to coordinate response and fundraising and identifying areas where support is immediately needed.

After: Supporting the relief and recovery efforts of any community following a disaster takes a long time. We continue to build connections between local church and faith community leaders, ministry partners, bishops and provinces to help realize recovery and revitalization following a disaster event.

Most disasters have three distinct, sometimes overlapping phases: rescue, relief and recovery. Understanding each phase guides our choices about response and recovery efforts and will also help you give the right support at the right time.

1. **The Rescue Phase** is typically up to two weeks long, and the focus is on saving lives and securing property. This work is generally done by the police, fire departments and other government agencies. These groups have equipment that can clear roads and debris and restore power. They also maintain specialized systems for mass distribution and storage.
2. **The Relief Phase** follows, typically lasting up to a few months. Depending on the scale of the disaster, during this phase, we partner with local churches, reaching out to those in need of assistance and helping them assess what needs to be done. We then help Faith Leaders coordinate with a number of other organizations, securing the resources necessary for the long-term recovery phase.
3. **The Recovery Phase.** During recovery, the emphasis shifts to repairing houses and buildings and returning survivors to self-sufficiency. Finally, out-of-town volunteers are often welcomed, and the community knows what kinds of items they need and can receive. The challenge of the recovery phase is that most television cameras have moved on, but the human suffering has grown. The church excels in this phase because we are part of the communities that have been impacted, and the relationships we've built even before a disaster remain in place for the years it will take to reach a new normal.

Inspired by our faith and in collaboration with local experts, we provide resources and programming that focus on shared learning and ensure our support is purpose-driven, compassionate, effective and respectful of the dignity of all human beings. Together, we strengthen local leadership and global connections.

We define measurable objectives for each program and establish key data points to track. With that information, we monitor and assess program effectiveness. We share results with our partners to evaluate success and identify areas for improvement. Holding ourselves to these standards has allowed us to provide effective care to more than 49 million people in the last 10 years, even in highly challenging contexts.