



Continuity in Crisis:

Strengthening Community by Empowering Nonprofits for Disaster Recovery

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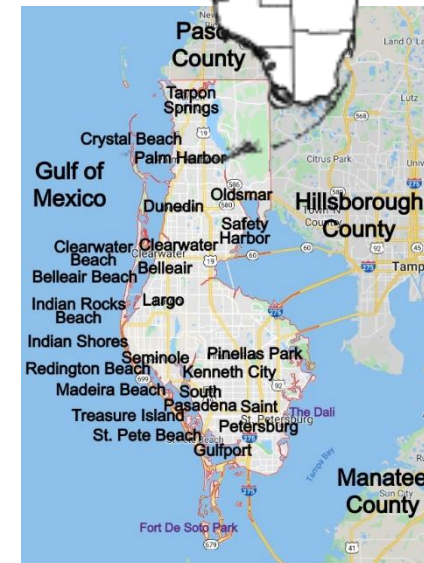
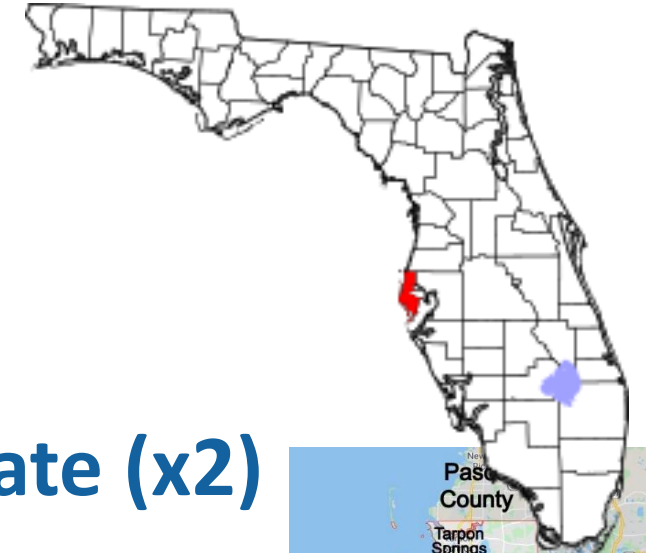
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Pinellas County by the Numbers

- 280 square miles
- 588 miles of coastline
- Over 400 bridges
- Most densely populated county in the state (x2)
- 45+ COC providers
- Just under 1 million people
- 67% of the County is in an evac zone





**Why are people experiencing
homelessness homeless?**



Homelessness Defined by HUD:

- HUD defines homelessness as:
 - **Category 1: Literally Homeless? (§ 578.3)**
 - Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:
 - Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation; **or**
 - Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs); **or**
 - Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.
 - **Category 2: Imminent Risk of Homelessness (§ 578.3)**
 - An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:
 - Residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;
 - No subsequent residence has been identified; *and*
 - The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.



Role of Community Agencies

- Meet everyday needs
- Respond to personal disasters
 - Homelessness (shelters),
 - Food insecurities (food banks/pantries),
 - Mental health crisis (therapy/case management programs),
 - Sobriety (programs, groups),
 - Medical (clinics, hospitals)
- All of these programs are needed post disaster and can often be treated as subject matter experts on recovery.



The Role of Emergency Management

- **Disaster:**
 - Planning
 - Response
 - Recovery
- **Collaboration is key**
- **How can a community service providers integrate into EM?**
- **Expand network & resources (include in prep and planning)**





Why...

- **Disaster can strike at any moment.**
- **Disaster does not discriminate.**
- **Disaster has a greater impact on vulnerable populations.**
- **Lack of resources and correct information can make a situation more stressful.**

Why...

People Matter!

- **Vulnerability of population**
 - **Homelessness is an emergency in and of itself.**
 - **People with a disability are 2-4x more likely to be injured, or die, in a disaster.**
 - **Access to technology and communications differs.**
 - **Perception of risk and proper planning.**

If the messaging to the community is “prepare and stay indoors” what does that look like for those who are unsheltered or with little resources?





Why:

- **Impact of critical infrastructure**
 - transportation/access basic needs like food and shelter
- **Impact on critical services**
 - hospital, treatment services
- **Returning to normal/routine**
 - outreach, day service centers
- **But what if routine isn't possible?**
 - The shelter is closed
 - Buses are out
 - Power is out
 - Volunteers are gone
 - The day center can't staff the bathrooms/showers.
 - Day respite, libraries, are closed.



HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS



MAKE A PLAN



BUILD A KIT



STAY INFORMED

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS CHECK LIST



KNOW YOUR RISK

It's important to determine and understand your risk. If your home is on the coast, you may experience storm surge, flooding & rainfall, extreme winds and rip currents. If you're inland, you may experience tornadoes, power outages, flooding & rainfall and strong winds.



HAVE AN EVACUATION PLAN

Having an evacuation plan is essential for hurricane preparedness. A few things needed for your plan: know your evacuation zone, plan for your pets, have a go-bag for supplies, plan several routes, follow any evacuation orders.



BUILD A KIT

Whether you are sheltering-in-place or evacuating, you will need a kit of supplies. This kit may include: water & non-perishable food, full gas tanks, cash on hand, medicine, batteries, chargers, radio.



CHECK YOUR INSURANCE COVERAGE

While preparing for hurricane season, it is important to call your insurance provider for a check up on your insurance. Check with your agent, know your policy, consider flood insurance, and keep documents handy.



CREATE A PLAN

Before an impending hurricane occurs, make time to write a plan to aid your family. A plan may include: a contact list, critical documents and at least one contact outside of impact area. Be sure to include your neighbor and share your plan.



SECURE YOUR HOME

When a hurricane is identified, it is important to secure your home. This may include: cover windows, secure all doors, secure loose outdoor items, trim trees and move vehicles to safe location.

TOP 10 DISASTER PREPAREDNESS TIPS

USE THESE TIPS TO HELP KEEP YOUR FAMILY SAFE IN DANGEROUS CONDITIONS



1 Prepare your Finances with CRCU



2 Gather All Important Documents



3 Protect Your Identity



4 Verify Your Home Insurance Coverage



5 Keep Important Numbers & Websites



6 Develop a Family Disaster Plan



7 Create a Home Inventory



8 Create a Disaster Supply Kit



9 Know How to Secure Your Home



10 Fill Up - Gas and Cash



Hurricane & Storm Preparedness Checklist

Hurricane season along the Eastern and Mid-Atlantic seaboard traditionally starts on June 1st and continues through November 30th every year. Those who live in the area should be thinking about what they can do to make sure that they are prepared for any weather scenario that Mother Nature unleashes upon us.

INSIDE YOUR HOME

- Invest in a NOAA Energy Weather Radio
- Pack an Emergency Readiness Kit for each member of your family
- Ensure that you have a whole house or standby generator
- If you're not evacuating, turn your refrigerator up to the highest setting in case of power outages
- Turn off the gas in your home to avoid any disaster from carbon monoxide poisoning
- If you have a basement, unplug appliances, water heaters, and remove or elevate anything you can to avoid water damage

Pack an emergency readiness kit

- Non-perishable food
- Flashlight
- Batteries
- Water
- Hand sanitizer
- Blankets
- Clean clothing
- Paper plates, plastic utensils and cups
- Pillows
- Any medications

OUTDOOR PREPARATIONS

- Make sure your gutters are being cleaned regularly
- Have a roof inspection done
- Consult a tree care specialist to make sure nearby trees won't fall on your house
- Put outdoor furniture in your garage or basement
- Bring garbage cans into your garage or other protected area
- Download FEMA's "Guide to Hurricane Preparedness"

Listen to weather advisories and heed warnings!

Sign up for local alerts. Download emergency apps from NOAA and the Red Cross.

Send the text message **HURRICANE** to **43362 (AFEMA)** to be notified of safety tips and other important information.

THUNDERSTORMS AND LIGHTNING



The combination of thunderstorms and lightning is another dangerous threat to homeowners. Take precautions to safeguard your house and your family members before the storm.

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS WEEK 2025

TAKE ACTION TODAY

1

Consider your threats:

- storm surge
- tornadoes
- rip currents
- damaging winds
- flooding



2

Make a plan & begin preparing now, before a storm



3



Have multiple ways to receive weather alerts

4

Know what to do before, during & after a storm



FloridaDisaster.org/Guide



Core Challenges in Storm Preparedness for Vulnerable Populations



- **Barriers:**
 - Transportation needs
 - Varied communication
 - Perceived risk
 - Messaging platforms (TV, radio, text, apps)
 - Language barriers
 - Reluctance to enter shelters
- **Challenges for providers:**
 - Limited resources (goods and people)
 - Inconsistent coordination & experience
 - Program/facility vulnerabilities
 - Locations
 - Property age/condition
 - Funding



Now What?



- **Mass trainings targeted to these providers**
- **Special needs shelter augmentation**
- **Contract requirements (staffing ratios of EM shelters)**
- **Started coordinated evacuation of shelters**
 - **COOP guidance resources**
 - **Transportation**
- **Animal services**
- **Invitations to the “table” (seats in eoc, voad, committees, workgroups)**

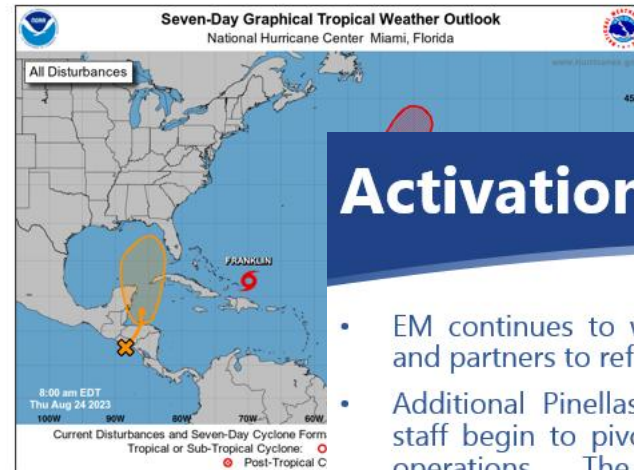


Training:

Activation Timeline – 7, 5, 4 Days Pre



- EOC is constantly monitoring.
- Recommend <https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/> for Tropical Weather Outlook updates every 6 hours during Hurricane Season.
- EM develops Best, Mid, and Worst-Case Scenarios (BMW) based on dozens of factors with Executive Policy Group (EPG), EOC Command, and General Staff (C&G)
- Will hold meeting with partner agencies. Especially if time could be lost due to weekends, holidays, etc.



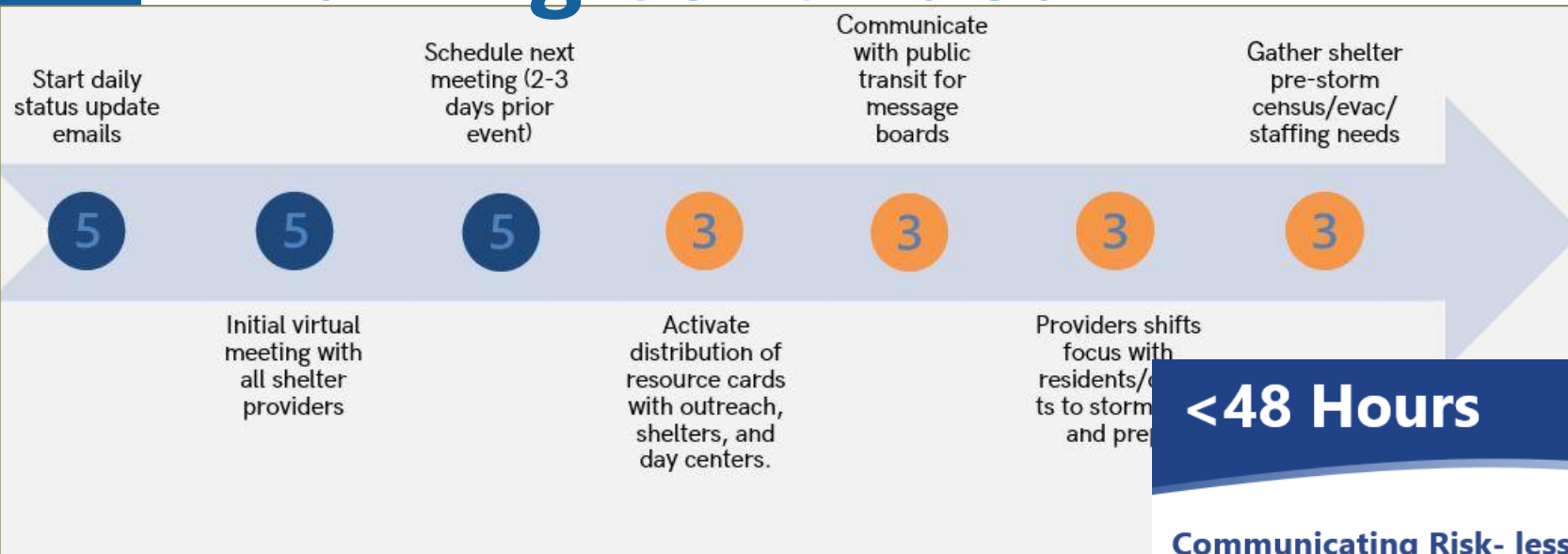
Activation Timeline – 4-3 Days Pre

- EM continues to work with EPG, C&G, and partners to refine the BMW.
- Additional Pinellas County department staff begin to pivot to storm response operations. The Human Services department has full participation and typically staffs shelters, the CIC, and EOC desk positions.
- Supplies moved and staged to shelters.
- Shelters prepare for opening based on timelines with PC, PCSB, EMS, FDOH, and LEO staffing.
- Homeless provider touch base starts via call and email.





Training Continued:



<48 Hours

5 3 [Alarm] [Funnel] [Sun]

Pinellas County

Communicating Risk- less focus on cone and more focus on potential hazards

Start recurring daily virtual meetings with all homeless providers.

- Participation in these is vitally important.
- Stay informed!

Confirm census and evacuation needs of homeless shelters.

- General population
- Special needs
- Communicate hurricane shelter location
- Coordinate transportation



Maintain daily status emails through storm event.

- Participation in these is vitally important
- Connect to facts, not rumors



5 3 [Alarm] [Funnel] [Sun]

Time is the one resource you cannot get more of.
 Once a storm is threatening Pinellas County, there will be a limited amount of time for you to get ready, get set and protect yourself from impact. This guide will help you determine your risk, know what to do and what to expect.



Special Needs Augmentation:

Pinellas County

Quick Evacuation Shelter Triage Guide for Homeless Providers

Refer to General Population or Pet-Friendly Shelter if the resident:

- Is **medically stable** and **manages their own medications**.
- Does **not** require **electrically powered life-sustaining medical devices**.
- Can **walk independently** or **uses mobility aids unassisted**.
- Has **mild or controlled psychiatric conditions**.
- Does **not require refrigeration for medications**.
- Requires **no assistance when toileting**.

Evacuation Reminders:
Service animals may access any shelter.

Residents without qualifying special medical needs who have pets must go to a **Pet-Friendly Shelter**.

Pets are not allowed inside **Special Needs Shelters**. Pinellas County Animal Services will care for the pets of Special Needs Shelter residents during their stay.

Notify POC the total # for transport for **both General Population/Pet-Friendly Shelters** and **Special Needs Shelters**:

- # of Total residents
- # of wheelchair dependent residents
- # of Pets/Service Animals

Clients should bring their medical devices, medical supplies, and any necessary sheltering items with them when evacuating to a shelter.

Refer to Special Needs Shelter (SpNds) if the resident:

- Requires **significant mobility assistance** including wheelchair, walker, crutches, or cane **and** needs assistance often from staff.
- Requires **electrically powered life-sustaining medical devices or equipment**, including:
 - CPAP/BiPAP -Nebulizer -Oxygen Concentrator
 - Feeding Pump -Cardiac Monitor -Electric Wheelchair
- Requires **supplemental oxygen** (0-4 L/min).
- Requires **assistance to take their medication or basic wound care** (med respite).
- **Diagnosed with cognitive or memory impairments** (e.g., Alzheimer's, Dementia, TBI) and may:
 - o Wander or become disoriented
 - o Need supervision or reminders
- Has a **psychiatric disorder needing monitoring**. (not a danger to self/others)
- Has **controlled seizures and needs assistance with their medication**.
- Requires **refrigeration for medications**.
- Has an **ostomy, catheter, or incontinence and needs assistance with the devices or toileting**.

For urgent needs during an evacuation, call the **EOC Operations Desk at: 727-453-4362**

5/29/25



Contract Language:

Emergency, Disaster, or Critical Event Response

Community partners are critical to effective community response in a disaster. The CONTRACTOR must effectively prepare their organization for continuity of services as necessary prior, during, and post-disaster. The COUNTY reserves the right to request services under this agreement be temporarily adjusted during an emergency to respond to community needs as agreed upon by the Parties.

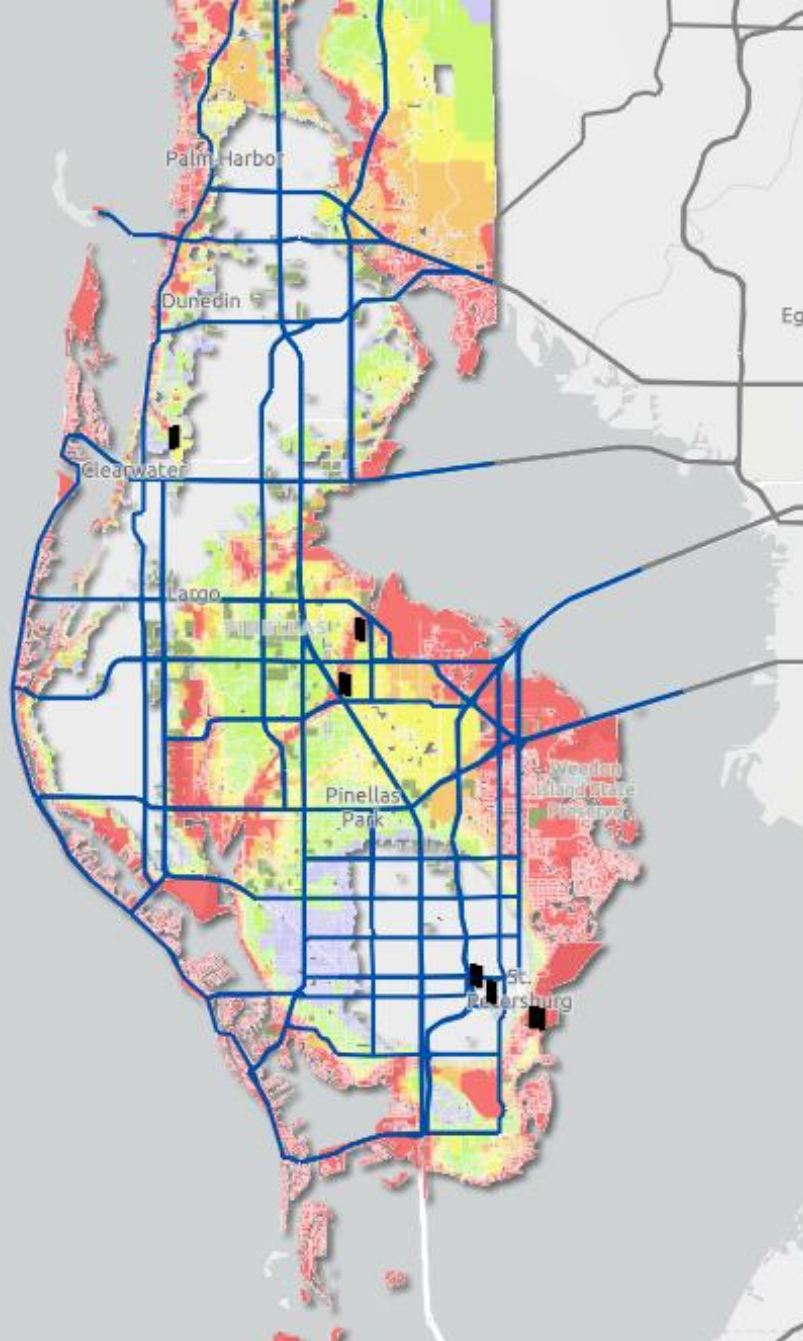
- i. The CONTRACTOR shall maintain, and review annually, a Continuity of Operations Plan/Disaster Response Plan (COOP) and submit a copy within thirty (30) calendar days of execution of this Agreement and upon review and/or revision. Should the CONTRACTOR not have a COOP at the time of execution of this Agreement, the CONTRACTOR shall develop and submit a COOP to the COUNTY within 180 calendar days of the effective date of this Agreement and within thirty (30) calendar days of any subsequent review and/or revisions during the term of this agreement
- ii. The COUNTY agrees to continue funding this Agreement for a period of at least sixty (60) days following an initial State of Emergency declaration for Pinellas County by the State of Florida or by the Board of County Commissioners, provided the program addresses needs for disaster response and recovery efforts as directed by the COUNTY, unless otherwise indicated by a superseding authority such as state or federal government or licensing body. This period may be extended within the current contract period at the discretion of the Human Services Director.
- iii. If the CONTRACTOR is unwilling to perform the emergency duties as described in this Section, payments made in accordance with Emergency, Disaster, or Critical Event Response Section b above may be withheld at the direction of the Director of Human Services until operations continue.
- iv. The CONTRACTOR will track and maintain detailed operational records when activated.
- v. CONTRACTOR shall work with the COUNTY, through its Human Services and Emergency Management Departments, to prepare and respond in the event of an emergency, disaster, or critical event response.
 - a. In the event of a facility evacuation, CONTRACTOR will contact the County's Human Services Department Emergency Manager or Designee to determine best disaster shelter location to evacuate to and indicate and coordinate if transportation support is needed.
 - b. In the event of a facility evacuation, CONTRACTOR agrees to provide staff to serve in the disaster shelter as a support to the shelter occupancy at a ratio of one (1) staff person for every twelve (12) hours for the first 15-100 clients, two (2) staff for every twelve (12) hours for 101-200 clients, three (3) staff for every twelve (12) hours for 201-300 clients, and four (4) staff for every twelve (12) hours for 300+ clients evacuated to any one location. This requirement applied to the total shelter occupancy at the time of evacuation and is not limited by program enrollment or funding source.
 - c. In the event of any emergency which is expected to impact contractor's client population or ability to operate, CONTRACTOR agrees to participate in regular emergency management calls as requested by the COUNTY to share information and updates on service population and facility operations.
 - d. During an emergency recovery period, CONTRACTOR agrees to provide recovery services, as available. The COUNTY will seek to leverage the contracted skills and services of the contractor, as appropriate or applicable; however, other duties may be assigned as required by the County for response. This may include reassignment of County funded staff and resources under the agreement or other dedicated contractor assistance to aid with community response.



Coordinated Evacuations:

Pinellas Homeless Shelters & the Unsheltered:

- 7 homeless emergency shelters, 900+ people, 4 in A/B evac and 3 in no evac.
- 2 DV shelters, multiple reentry programs, transitional, and permanent housing for formerly homeless utilized by 900+ individuals.
- PIT identified 650+ individuals that are unsheltered.
- Most with few evacuation resources (money/friends/family/vehicles)
- 1000+ need access to shelter in the event of a level A evacuation who are experiencing homelessness. (1400+ when evac. issued for B)



Pinellas Hope

Homeless Emergency Shelter

- 150 tents
- 156 Permanent Supportive Housing units
- 96 “Hope Cottages”

All essentially in the swamp...Mandatory Evac Zone A.





Permanent Supportive Housing

Built between 2009-2016



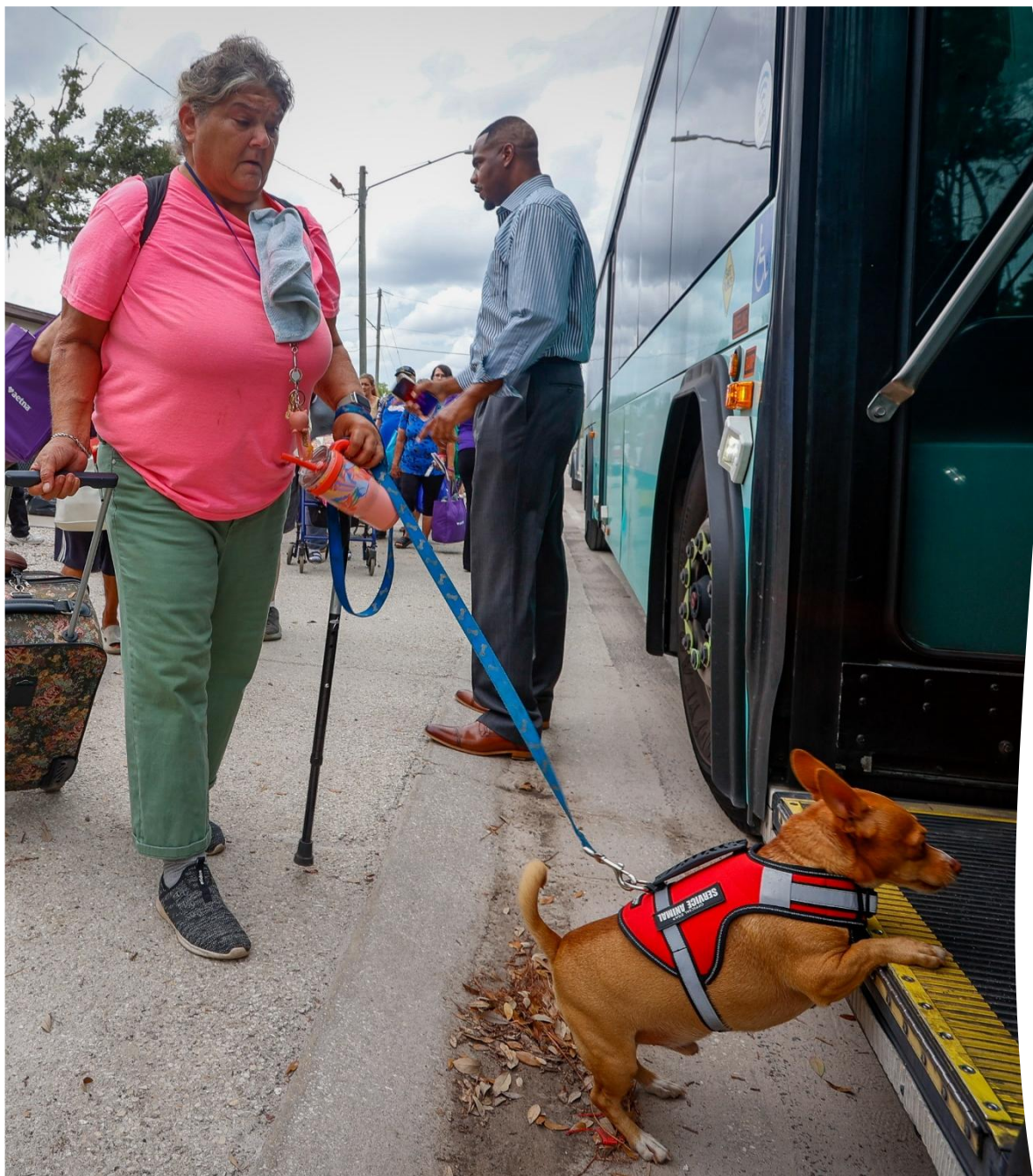
Hope Cottages





Coordinated evacuation in place:

- Coordinated preseason training and support through out.
- Coordinated response with all shelter providers and communication evacuation orders and mass transportation.
- Site evacuates together.
- Had previously experienced multiple evacuations.



Communities Must Have or Offer COOP Planning Resources



- **Start with a basic plan:**
 - **Contact List** – staff, volunteers, key partners, emergency management.
 - **Essential Services** – what must continue no matter what.
 - **Alternate Facilities** – backup locations or partner spaces.
 - **Power Plan** – how to function without electricity.
 - **Communication Tree** – how to stay in touch with staff and clients.
 - **Decision Authority** – who can act if leadership is unavailable.



Testing, Training, and Improving

- A plan isn't helpful unless it's practiced.
 - Just like a fire drill, it must be reviewed and practiced to be effective.
- Conduct quick and regular tests/drills:
 - What if we lose power?
 - Where would we evacuate clients if our facility wasn't safe to shelter in place?
- Review annually with new contacts, sites, and lessons learned.
- Use each event as a learning opportunity to build a stronger, more resilient network of organizations.





Agency Training Discussion:

- Define who's in charge if leadership is unavailable.
- More than one set of keys or responsible party.
- Choose how you'll communicate (group text, call tree, radio).
- Encourage staff to have personal plans and how agency can support.
- Clearly defined staff expectations for storm response, including pay.
- Considerations for augmented programing: safety, communications, gas...
- Keep updated staff and partner contact lists.



Reconnecting with Clients After the Storm

- Help clients reconnect to housing, healthcare, and benefits.
- Communicate where services are available.
- Coordinate with County Emergency Management, VOAD, and Human Services for recovery.



When Facilities are Damaged

Ask the question: Where could you operate if your facility is temporarily uninhabitable/inaccessible?

- Have alternative sites identified (church, partner agency, community center).
- Create mutual aid agreements to share space or supplies (partnerships with similar programs in other communities).
- Keep go-kits or pre-staged supplies for rapid evacuation.
 - If your population would relocate to another site, think about the supplies/services you need and the logistics of transporting necessary supplies.



- **EM shelter operations is not up to the public. What about for small storms or other unplanned disasters?**
- **For smaller storms where can the most vulnerable go?**
- **What about specifically the unsheltered/homeless in our community?**

“While the rest of us are preparing, there’s literally nothing for [the unsheltered] to do until it gets decided whether or not they will have shelters,”

-Cathy Bryant, Director of Operations Streets of Paradise



2024 Hurricanes

- Debby
- Helene
- Milton

Risk shelters were closing (schools)

- Pinellas Hope couldn't access their property
- Property presented many hazards
 - Standing water
 - Washed away foundations
 - Uprooted trees
 - No electricity or running water







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What hadn't been considered with previous planning and activations was the long-term impact of a substantial damage storm. (Post disaster COOP)

Joe Pondolfino





Recovery Sheltering for Homeless Emergency Shelter

Catholic Charities, Pinellas County, and the Diocese of St. Petersburg pulled together resources to create a recovery shelter at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church, Clearwater.

- EOC helped with:
 - Transportation from the evacuation center to the new temporary shelter.
 - Shower and Laundry Trailers.
 - Portable toilet facilities.

Catholic Charities relocated staff to provide the same 24/7 services to residents.

“During these extraordinary times, our call to serve is more critical than ever. We were happy we could accommodate Catholic Charities’ request. Our mission is help reduce homelessness and housing instability, Pinellas Hope is an important tool helping us achieve that goal. We are pleased to be able to support Catholic Charities as the shelter recovers from back-to-back hurricanes.”

-Rev. Msgr. Robert Morris, pastor of St. Catherine of Siena



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Temp Shelter:

Pros:

- Quick set up by staff
- Warm welcome from parishioners/volunteers
- Clients contributed keeping things running smooth
- Rapid delivery of shower, laundry, restroom trailers
- Medical care provided by Catholic Charities USA and EVARA Health (doctors, nurses, specialists)
- Volunteers/Donations
- Food Services: World Central Kitchen, Operation BBQ Relief



Temp Shelter:

Cons:

- Shower, laundry, restroom trailers confusion
- Communication/complaints from community/city
 - Continued for full 50 days of shelter operations
- Uncertainty on length of stay and funding for recovery
- Stress on staff: several staff going through their own storm recovery
- Volunteers/Donations





Short Term Recovery Needs

- Tree removal
- Gravel and road work
- Rebuild platforms
- Replace tents
- Replace vehicles, golf carts, lawn mowers



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VOAD & LTRG

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Partners That Participated in Recovery

- Catholic Charities USA
- Knights of Columbus
- G.A. Nichols Construction
- Multiple Church Volunteers
- Tree Services
- Our Clients
- Pinellas County
- City of Pinellas Park
- City of Largo
- Operation BBQ Relief
- World Central Kitchen
- Homeless Leadership Alliance
- Neighbors



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Long Term:

- \$800,000 drainage project.
- Accessibility concerns including new sidewalks.
- \$200,000 in new roof.
- \$2.6 mil in additional repairs
 - Shoring up washed-out foundations on buildings.
 - Generators for PSH units.
 - Main drive mostly washed out, need upgrades for emergency vehicles.
 - Ongoing maintenance of tents/platforms





Q&A / Discussion



Thank You

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