



Charlie Crist
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Media Advisory

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VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS AID IN THE 2009 SEVERE WEATHER RESPONSE

~ Volunteer agencies still making a difference for citizens during and after disaster~

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – As flood waters continue to rise, volunteer agencies including the American Red Cross and The Salvation Army act quickly to release critical supplies and organize shelters in North Florida. Florida's many volunteer organizations and state agencies continue to support those affected by rising flood waters. Community-based organizations throughout the state are experiencing lower-than-normal levels of financial and commodities contributions.

"If you give now, everyone benefits," said Volunteer Florida CEO Wendy Spencer. "Donating cash and non-perishable food items now gives disaster relief agencies the ability to respond to this and future disasters quickly, which is Governor Crist's priority."

The Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service (Volunteer Florida) reminds everyone that now is an excellent time to contribute cash and goods toward recovery efforts for this and future disasters. Volunteer Florida's Web site, www.VolunteerFloridaDisaster.org, provides a list of disaster relief organizations that need your financial support now. Please consider the following as you formulate plans to donate money and/or goods:

Financial Contributions are Critical and Effective

Cash donations help avoid the labor and expense of sorting, packing, transporting and distributing donated goods. In addition, voluntary relief agencies can use cash to meet disaster survivors' specific needs quickly.

Donate Locally for Statewide Relief

Local organizations are the place to donate food and household items. Organizations including Florida's food banks (www.fafb.org), Goodwill stores statewide, church food banks and local nonprofits have the ability to channel your contributions to disaster survivors, where they are needed the most.

Donate to an Experienced Disaster Relief Organization

Relief agencies prefer the versatility of cash donations; however, experienced disaster relief organizations frequently have the infrastructure in place to store and distribute donated goods. To prevent waste, donations of goods should be made only to agencies that have requested specific items.

For additional information on the severe weather conditions and the State Emergency Response Team, visit the Florida Division of Emergency Management at: www.FloridaDisaster.org.

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