



Press Office
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
500 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20472

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Three Ways To Help After Hurricane Maria

WASHINGTON – In the wake of a disaster, Americans have always come together with compassion and courage to ask how they can help survivors. For Hurricane Maria, there are three ways that the public can leverage the expertise and experience of non-profit, faith- and community-based organizations and private sector partners to most effectively and efficiently help provide support for survivors in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and ensure that an individual contribution – whether financial donation or personal volunteerism – is carried out responsibly.

The fastest way to help – cash is best

The most effective means to support recovery of communities affected by Hurricane Maria is to donate money to trusted voluntary-, faith- and community-based charitable organizations. This gives these organizations the ability to purchase what survivors need right now. In addition, when these organizations purchase goods or services locally, they pump money back into the local and regional economy, helping businesses recover faster.

The National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) list trusted organizations receiving donations, many of which are already coordinating relief and response efforts in the Caribbean. To make a cash donation directly to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, visit www.unitedforpuertorico.com. You may also make financial donations to a [National VOAD member organization](#) to help voluntary or charitable organizations continue to provide services to Hurricane Maria survivors.

Donating Goods

It is important to remember unsolicited donated goods (e.g., clothing, miscellaneous household items, and mixed or perishable foodstuffs) require voluntary agencies to redirect valuable resources away from providing services to sort, package, transport, warehouse, and distribute items that may not meet the needs of disaster survivors.

To responsibly donate goods, the NVOAD website has information on non-profit organizations accepting or registering individual and corporate in-kind donations [here](#).

Volunteering

Anyone seeking an opportunity to get involved in response and recovery operations underway is encouraged to volunteer with local and nationally known organizations. A list of volunteer websites is available at www.nvoad.org.

Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands ask that volunteers not self-deploy, as unexpected

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arrival in affected communities creates an additional burden for first responders. Volunteer registration for Hurricane Maria can be conducted [here](#) for Puerto Rico and [here](#) for the U.S. Virgin Islands.

To register as an affiliated volunteer with a voluntary or charitable organization, visit the [National VOAD](#) for a list of partners active in disaster. Alternatively, you may register to volunteer [here](#) for partner organizations to reach out to you.

Patience is paramount, and the need for volunteers endures. Recovery activities associated with Hurricane Maria will require volunteer engagement for many months and years to come, and the help of many will be required.