

Both requests and volunteers vital for Hurricane Harvey recovery

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Two-way communication is vital as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship launches the long process of repairing or replacing homes and churches harmed by Hurricane Harvey.

Churches and individuals whose properties were damaged by the storm need to record their requests for help, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship recovery leaders reported. Likewise, church groups and individuals willing to serve along the Texas Gulf Coast need to make their availability known.

CBF has created two forms—one for requesting assistance and one for volunteering to help—available on its website, www.cbf.net.

Churches and individuals who need help have been urged to complete a CBF [volunteer request form](#). This form will provide the information CBF recovery personnel need to post the request and channel the appropriate group or groups to meet each need.

Similarly, churches, groups and individuals who would like to help Harvey's victims should visit the CBF [Volunteer Page](#), which lists recovery projects in need of volunteer help. At the bottom of that page, a large "Volunteer" button provides a link to the form volunteers complete to initiate the process.

CBF disaster relief and recovery has been in operation since immediately following the hurricane. Soon after the wind stopped, volunteers headed to the Corpus Christi/rural Coastal Bend area to assess damage and begin

lining up aid. And as soon as floodwaters began to recede, volunteers from churches in the Houston/Beaumont area began helping members and neighbors rebound. More recently, groups from Louisiana—beneficiaries of flood support from Texas last year—and groups from Texas journeyed into the region to begin recovery.

“In areas like Houston, where flooding was our main issue, the teams usually are working on removing wet sheetrock, flooring and ruined furniture or appliances,” reported Rick McClatchy, field coordinator for CBF-Texas. “In rural areas, where wind damage was the main issue, the teams are removing debris and fallen trees, and making temporary repairs on the roofs.”

“We are not yet spending money on permanent repairs, waiting to see if homeowners are receiving insurance settlements or FEMA help,” he added. “We are sure there are families who will not get help from either. Those families will need the materials we purchase with our funds.”

Also, churches in Corpus Christi and the rural Coastal Bend area will receive recovery aid, thanks to a large initial gift from an anonymous donor, he said. CBF will coordinate church repair/rebuilding teams and cooperate with other groups to ensure the churches receive support they need.

A small platoon of workers is guiding the CBF recovery effort:

- **Anyra Cano**, a CBF-Texas staff member, is coordinating the matches between churches and individuals who need help and volunteers who will assist them.
- **Butch** and **Nell Green**, CBF field personnel based in Houston, are coordinating efforts from a base at South Main Baptist Church in Houston. Several congregations in the area are opening their facilities to provide housing for recovery volunteers.

- **Jorge Zapata**, associate coordinator of CBF-Texas, and **Diann Berry**, CBF field personnel, are focusing coordination on rural Coastal Bend and Corpus Christi, collaborating with churches in the area for volunteer lodging.
- **Alan Williams**, the CBF national disaster recovery coordinator, provides overall support as well as links to federal and national non-profit disaster-recovery organizations.
- Also, **Jesse Rincones**, executive director of Convencion, the Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas, is coordinating that organization's endeavors closely with CBF workers in the region.

CBF personnel also are maintaining ongoing conversation with Texas Baptist Men/Baptist General Convention of Texas disaster recovery staff.