

#5: Community Service – Help Your Neighbor

Once you and your family are prepared, directly help individual family members or friends who are especially vulnerable and need help preparing, surviving, and recovering from hurricanes. Be particularly generous with your time and resources to help those with financial limitations and to help senior citizens you know. A disproportionate number of fatalities in recent hurricanes have occurred among our senior citizens.

You can also help your broader community before, during, and after disasters. Volunteers are invaluable resources in every community, in many different capacities. Find an organization in your community, and participate in a class, training, or discussion. Affiliate with the organization before disaster strikes.

Local nonprofits, faith-based organizations, schools, and civic groups are all great places to begin your search. Volunteer your time to an organization. There are many ways to help your community, including delivering food to older adults or organizing your own community project. Consider any special skills you may be able to offer.

Take training in CPR and basic first aid, as well as other hazard-specific training. A financial contribution or gift to a recognized nonprofit

disaster relief organization is always an effective way to support disaster recovery, and even small amounts can make a big difference.

Here are some options to get you started to support community disaster resilience:

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program. Join your local CERT program (ready.gov/community-emergency-response-team). CERT programs are typically sponsored, affiliated, or created in partnership with a local fire department, law enforcement agency, or emergency management agency. Get CERT trained in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations.

Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. Find a volunteer opportunity with your state Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) (nvoad.org, “How to Help”). National VOAD is an association of organizations that mitigate and lessen the impact of disasters.

Youth Preparedness. Do not forget the crucial role youth play in disaster preparedness. Youth Preparedness at ready.gov/kids has resources to integrate children and youth into family and community disaster preparedness.

