



Daily BRIEF

Hurricane Helene Response Update



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2024

TODAY'S GBDR & MISSION GEORGIA UPDATE:

New FAQs have been added to the document as well as a new Christian Index story.

All five sites will be operational for feeding today. Sites have the ability to serve 40,000-50,000 meals daily. Additional sites are being considered as resources become available. Reports will begin coming in from sites today, so we should have feeding and work order response numbers tomorrow.

Church and ministry staff assessments as of 10/2/2024:

- 136 Churches have been contacted
- 35 Churches have been identified as "impacted" and assessed
- 17 Pastors or Ministry Staff have been identified as "impacted" and assessed

The city of Augusta is currently under a boil water order. Pray for the city, water supplies to be available, and for the GBDR team who is distributing water today.

FAQ:

UPDATED WHAT IS GEORGIA BAPTIST DISASTER RELIEF DOING TO RESPONSE AND SERVE THE AFFECTED COMMUNITIES?

GBDR is deploying all resources at its disposal to the areas most impacted by Hurricane Helene. Partnership with other states, the American Red Cross, and Salvation Army are essential to meet the extensive needs of these communities. The five sites include:

Valdosta: Northside Baptist Church
 200 E Park Ave, Valdosta
 Pastor: Robbie Foster/912-251-9510
 White Hat: John Pearce
 Public Phone: 1-800-806-6940

Alma: First Baptist Alma
 201 N. Church St, Alma
 Pastor: Ron Sweett/256-499-4373
 White Hat: Thomas Nix
 Cell Phone: 601-572-9538 (No Public Phone)

Augusta: Fleming Baptist Church
 3027 Peach Orchard Road, Augusta
 White Hat: Toby Tucker
 Public Phone: 573-418-7793

Statesboro: Southbridge Community Church
 12373 U.S. Highway 301, Statesboro
 White Hat: Felton Floyd
 Public Phone: 770-853-1339

Vidalia: Vidalia First Baptist
 107 E. 2nd Street, Vidalia
 Pastor: Chad Ritchie/912-293-1383
 White Hat: Jim Croome
 Public Phone: 770-853-4410

GBDR's primary services include feeding, chainsaw/tree removal, and tarping. Once completely set up, shower services will also be available at all five locations.

WHEN WILL EACH SITE BE READY FOR RESPONSE?

Each site is expected to be fully functional no later than Wednesday, October 2. Sites are set up but are waiting on food deliveries to begin meal preparation and distribution.

IS IT COMMON TO PARTNER WITH OTHER STATES AND NON-PROFITS?

Absolutely. The other states help us scale our response based on the extensive impact of Hurricane Helene. Non-profits such as American Red Cross and The Salvation Army serve specific roles in the response. For instance, GBDR will set up kitchens and prepare meals, ARC and SA will distribute the meals throughout the communities.

WHERE IS THE CENTRAL MANAGEMENT OF GBDR'S RESPONSE?

An Incident Management Team (IMT) is serving out of the GBMB office in Suwanee. All questions and communication flows from there to each site.

WHAT CAN A CHURCH OR INDIVIDUAL DO TO HELP IN THE NEAR TERM?

First, be patient. The process of responding to disasters of this magnitude is slow and methodical. Teams like ours serve under the direction of federal and state entities who determined the accessibility and safety for all involved. Flexibility is key as the situation on the ground changes often.

Mobilizing volunteers and sending supplies is not preferred. The systems and structures are not in place to receive, manage, store, or deploy products such as cleaning supplies, diapers, clothing, furniture, etc. These items often end up in warehouses and landfills when the response is completed.

GBDR is prepared to utilize small numbers of walk-up volunteers at the five sites for tasks that do not require training or credentials, but they are not prepared for large numbers or church groups.

In the near term, the five sites will receive bottled water, sports drinks, and prepackaged prepared foods. Please do not send food that requires refrigeration or preparation.

Collecting gift cards and providing them to the GBDR sites is also an excellent way to support the response. Stores such as Walmart and grocery stores are best to help meet the broad needs.

WHAT CAN A CHURCH OR INDIVIDUAL DO TO HELP IN THE LONG RUN?

Churches can prepare for long-term support for churches that will need it. We know churches are the center of the community and often serve as the hub for responses such as these. The sooner a church is back to normal, the sooner they can serve their community.

After this initial stage of assessment, we will know churches that need repairs and long-term financial help. It typically takes more than one church to help them recover. We will help coordinate partnerships between churches.

HOW ARE WE ASSISTING CHURCHES AND MINISTRY LEADERS AFFECTED BY THE STORM?

Funds have been allocated through Mission Georgia to provide for the repairs required to affected Georgia Baptist churches and homes of ministry staffs. Specifically, these funds will be used to at least partially pay insurance deductibles if damages are extensive enough that a claim would be necessary.

A GBMB Assessment Team is deployed throughout the affected area traveling from church to church to assess

the impact on their properties. The team is organized by associations and working diligently to attend to the needs of each church as quickly as possible.

The Assessment Team is gathering important details about the condition of their properties, their insurance policies, and the potential of long-term need. That information is shared with our team to determine how we can support them financially.

HOW CAN DONATIONS BE MADE?

- Georgia Baptist churches may give through ga.sbcworkspace.com (iGo). A Mission Georgia-Storm Response fund has been added to their giving options. This route allows churches to make electronic fund transfers.
- Gifts from churches or individuals may also be made to Georgia Baptist Disaster Relief or Mission Georgia. Links to giving to either of those can be found on the home page of gabaptist.org and on missiongeorgia.org. These options allow for credit cards only. *Any links you share publicly through social media should go through this channel.*

NEW WHAT ABOUT THE CHURCH THAT IS NOT GOING TO FILE AN INSURANCE CLAIM BUT HAS REPAIRS THAT REQUIRE ASSISTANCE?

Our desire is to provide assistance where it is needed. As we understand the needs of the churches in the affected area, we will be able to determine the amount we can distribute per affected church.

NEW HOW ARE ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONARIES INVOLVED IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS?

Our Field Assessment team is intentionally connecting with AMS as they go from area to area. Where AMS desire to partner with us in the assessment process, they are joining with us. In some cases AMS are initiating their own responses.

AMS that require assistance in the affected areas may contact one of the GBDR response sites.

NEW ARE AMS INCLUDED IN THE ASSESSMENT FOR PERSONAL NEEDS AND DAMAGE TO THEIR HOMES?

Yes. They may contact Joy Stevens at jstevens@gabaptist.org to request an assessment.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- That the gospel would be spread and people would come to faith as they are loved and served
- Comfort for families who have lost loved ones and others who still do not know the status of their family members
- For everyone impacted through loss of homes, precious belongings, and more
- Wisdom for decision-makers who are navigating the complexity of this response
- Safety for everyone responding and serving during the recovery
- For power to be restored to communities, especially in the county areas

RECENT STORIES FROM THE CHRISTIAN INDEX:

- [Georgia Baptists allocate \\$1M for direct support of churches affected by Hurricane Helene \(10/1/2024\)](#)
- [Georgia Baptists respond to Helene with support for churches and individuals \(9/30/2024\)](#)
- [Hurricane Helene tears deadly and destructive path through Georgia \(09/27/2024\)](#)