

ISSUE BRIEF

National Service Responds to the Gulf Coast Hurricanes



Since August 2005, the Corporation for National and Community Service has provided more than \$130 million worth of resources to Gulf Coast states recovering from the devastating series of hurricanes. Working in cooperation with the Red Cross, FEMA, and local and state authorities, nearly 92,000 national service volunteers have contributed more than 3.5 million hours to the relief, recovery, and rebuilding effort. They also have coordinated an additional 260,000 community volunteers. Activities have included supporting shelter operations and housing placement; establishing call centers and warehousing sites; assisting with case work and benefits coordination; setting up school and youth programs; blue roofing, debris removal, mucking out homes, and construction of new homes for low-income families. As a result of its experience with hurricane relief and recovery, the Corporation has established a number of new procedures to provide more effective and timely response to disasters under authority of FEMA mission assignments. As of August 2007, trained AmeriCorps teams have been deployed under mission assignments to declared major disasters to respond to winter ice storms, tornados, and flooding and to assist in the recovery effort, including running the volunteer base camp in the tornado-struck Kansas town of Greensburg. The Corporation continues to shift its resources where possible to support a variety of disaster preparedness and response activities.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE ON DISASTERS:

In June 2007, the Corporation's Board of Directors charged the agency's CEO to work with the Office of Management and Budget to add a new strategic initiative on disaster preparedness and relief to the plan that guides the agency through the year 2010.

SENIOR CORPS: More than 17,000 Senior Corps volunteers have served in disaster relief efforts, providing food and shelter, coordinating distribution of donated goods, managing community volunteers, and more.

AMERICORPS STATE AND NATIONAL:

More than 85 grantee programs of AmeriCorps State and National, collectively representing more than

6,400 AmeriCorps members have provided nearly 1 million hours in hurricane relief and recovery assistance in the Gulf region, many through FEMA mission assignments. The Corporation also provided more than \$66.6 million in additional funds to bring thousands of additional AmeriCorps members to the Gulf region through fiscal year 2009.

AMERICORPS NCCC: More than 2,900 AmeriCorps NCCC members have served on more than 500 separate disaster services projects in the Gulf Coast region since September 2005, in coordination with such groups as the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the various state service commissions. In all,

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NCCC members have contributed more than 1.4 million hours of service, valued at \$26.4 million. They have assisted 2.9 million people, trained and supervised more than 185,000 community volunteers, completed nearly 13,000 damage assessments, refurbished more than 6,500 homes, put tarps on thousands of homes, served 1.3 million meals, and distributed more than 2,200 tons of food.

AMERICORPS VISTA: More than 420 full-time AmeriCorps VISTA members have served in the Gulf Coast, building the capacity of nonprofit organizations and helping low-income people out of poverty. In addition, through its Summer Associate Program, VISTA sent 125 members to the New Orleans area to staff free or low-cost summer camps for thousands of children that are operated by community organizations still recovering from Hurricane Katrina.

LEARN AND SERVE AMERICA: Tens of thousands of students supported by Learn and Serve America raised funds and items needed for hurricane relief, assembled and distributed disaster relief kits, and traveled to the Gulf region to help in the recovery effort.

CHALLENGE GRANT PROGRAM: The Corporation revised its 2005 Challenge Grant competition to focus on disaster relief, resulting in the approval of \$4 million to six multi-state projects to recruit nearly 72,000 volunteers, with an emphasis on baby boomers.

'SKILLED SERVICE IN THE GULF' GRANTS:

In June 2007, the Corporation announced that Habitat for Humanity International, Xavier University of Louisiana, and Rebuilding Together were selected to receive awards totaling \$900,000 to engage skilled volunteers in providing disaster recovery assistance to the Gulf states. The skilled construction volunteers will lead lesser-skilled volunteers and handle the most challenging aspects of rebuilding.

NATIONAL RESPONSE PLAN: The Corporation continues to work with the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA on their redrafting of the National Response Plan, noting how national service programs can provide additional value in the areas of volunteer management, mass care, and infrastructure support.

TIES TO DISASTER ORGANIZATIONS: In late January 2007, the Corporation signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster to enable smarter, faster cooperation between the Corporation and the group's members, including Catholic Charities, American Red Cross, Volunteers of America and the Salvation Army.

DISASTER INSTITUTE: In May 2007, the Corporation hosted a national Disaster Institute to help state service commissions and AmeriCorps grantees become more active in state preparedness and response.

ABOUT THE CORPORATION: The Corporation for National and Community Service improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. Each year, the Corporation provides opportunities for 2 million Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve their communities and country through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America. Together with the USA Freedom Corps, the Corporation is working to build a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility in America.

MORE INFORMATION: For general information about the Corporation for National and Community Service and its programs, visit www.nationalservice.gov or call 202-606-5000.

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