

Volunteering (For Parishes)

In order to be more prepared for the next disaster, the Diocese of Galveston-Houston is urging parishes to develop a “talent” bank of parishioners who would be willing to provide assistance during times of disaster. The following is a list of types of skills needed:

- Cleanout
 - Emergency Babysitting
 - Have boat that could be used for emergency evacuation purposes
 - Have truck that can be used during evacuation/ clean-up
 - Bilingual (Spanish, Vietnamese, etc...)
 - Can provide temporary housing
 - Will donate non-perishable food/bottled water
 - Will provide hot meals or covered dishes for a family
 - First Aid/CPR Certified
 - Can provide professional counseling services (LSW, LPC, etc...)
 - Can provide skilled/professional rebuilding assistance (construction, roofing, plumbing).
 - Can donate blood
 - Will pray for/with victims
 - Fluent in Sign Language
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- The Talent Bank Registry form is listed. Please keep a binder or create a database of volunteers in the parish office.

 - Send one copy of completed volunteer forms to the Catholic Charities Volunteer Coordinator, P. O. Box 66508, Houston, Texas 77266 for inclusion in the diocesan volunteer database. (Sample form provided in the Forms section at the back of the manual – Form 6-B).

 - Screen volunteers and match them with the right task. This is not only important to the tasks at hand when an emergency strikes, but also limits the parish’s liability. You do not want to match a parishioner with a heart condition to move heavy debris in the scorching sun.

 - Host a training session for your volunteers with an emphasis on family and parish preparedness. Invite American Red Cross staff to cover First AID and CPR procedures.

Activating The Volunteers

- ❑ The Volunteer Coordinator will call volunteers to action once an assessment has been made of the needs.
- ❑ **Family** – Volunteers and their families must first be prepared to respond to their own needs, as they will not be able to assist others otherwise. (**All Volunteers must have their Family Disaster Plan in place**).
- ❑ **Parish** – Volunteers will respond to the parish and its geographic area after the family has been addressed.
- ❑ **Deanery or Outside Parish** – Some disasters overwhelm a small parish but are not big enough to necessitate a Diocesan-wide response. One of the goals of the Diocesan Disaster Plan is to pair parishes so they can help each other during these difficult times.
- ❑ **Diocesan** – Some disasters may require a Diocesan-wide effort. Certain volunteers may be specialized in certain talents that are required at a parish outside of the Deanery. Will volunteers be willing to provide assistance to a parish in another part of the Diocese?
- ❑ **Community** – Some disasters may affect the entire community. Instead of duplicating disaster efforts provided by the Red Cross, Salvation Army, or other Churches, the Citizens Volunteer Corps of Harris County has asked to be the lead agency in coordinating volunteer efforts across the community. The Diocese may ask parishes to “loan” their volunteers out to this agency to facilitate a faster recovery during a disaster. Will your parish volunteers be willing to reach out and assist?
- ❑ **Long-term** – Some disasters, like Tropical Storm Allison, require long-term recovery efforts, sometimes as long as three to five years. Volunteers who specialize in construction work are critically needed for long-term efforts. Would the volunteers be willing to provide long-term assistance?