

HOPE
— IS ON —
THE WAY



THE SALVATION ARMY SOUTHERN TERRITORY
EMERGENCY DISASTER SERVICES
2024 SERVICE REPORT

THANK YOU

In the wake of 2024's devastating hurricane season, The Salvation Army's Southern Territory provided aid to many of our neighbors and survivors across the southeast United States.

While our hearts break for those affected, I am inspired by the communities who came together to help their neighbors. Seeing Salvation Army disaster workers and mobile kitchens delivering hot meals and cold drinks and working with first responders and emergency managers makes me proud that we can be a part of these efforts to make a difference in so many lives.

Of course, none of our work would be possible without the support of our volunteers and donors. It is your generosity that keeps us on the front lines and enables us to serve others. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for the positive impact you have made in the lives of those recovering from disasters.

Commissioner Kelly Igleheart





2024 RESPONSE STATISTICS



820,764 SERVED MEALS
60,011 MEAL BOXES

426,789 SNACKS
442,737 DRINKS



75,821 EMOTIONAL AND
SPIRITUAL CARE
CONTACTS

SERVICE TIME
1,763 PERSONNEL
99,078 HOURS



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
13,191 GIFT CARDS
570,625 IN-KIND ITEMS

HOPE IS ON THE WAY

William Booth once said, “The Salvation Army is a place of hope. When every other light is extinguished, and every other star has gone down, this one gleam shines steadily and clearly out in the darkened sky: ‘If I could only get to The Salvation Army, they will do something for me.’”

The Salvation Army began offering Emergency Disaster Services after the Galveston hurricane in September 1900. With the city destroyed and thousands dead, The National Commander deployed officers from across the country into Galveston to help feed and shelter the thousands of survivors while also providing much needed emotional and spiritual support. In a time when many had lost all sources of light, the hope William Both spoke about was on the way to gleam brightly in Galveston.

For over 120 years, The Salvation Army Emergency Disaster Services has been that light of hope to shine steady for survivors, no matter the type of disaster. With “Hope is on the Way” proudly displayed on their visage, EDS canteens and volunteers provide an anchor and a source of comfort as necessary as the beverages, snacks, meals, and recovery supplies they also distribute.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.

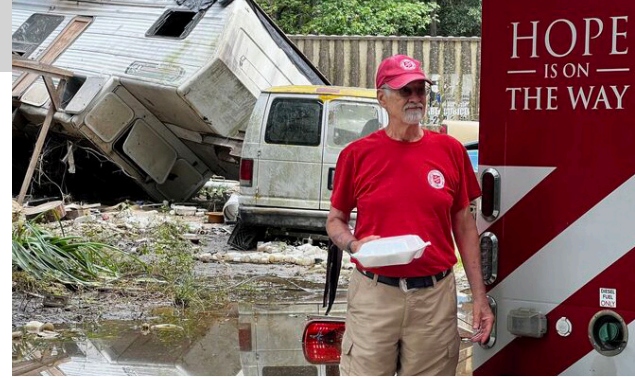
SPRING STORMS

April and May saw several severe weather activities, culminating in multiple tornado outbreaks in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas. Additionally, Texas saw catastrophic Flooding in the southeast of the state. The divisions were quick to mobilize teams and begin providing meals, snacks, water, and emotional and spiritual care in affected areas.

In small towns desolated by the fury of a tornado, The Salvation Army established fixed feeding sites with resources for the community. Some residents were simply without power, while others were aiding family members who had lost everything. Michelle, a grateful community member, stopped for a meal at a Salvation Army feeding site. A team member offered a prayer, which Michelle gladly accepted. Later, Michelle expressed her deep appreciation for the prayer and offered hugs of her own, underscoring the impact of The Salvation Army's presence and compassion.

In Texas, Lieutenant James Guzman and his team served meals at a community distribution point where a group of community members collected lunches for flooded neighbors and transported them via golf carts. "I was one of the lucky ones. Many of my neighbors are gutting their ground floors today, while living upstairs without any power," said one of the residents helping transport food.

"The flooding came within inches of reaching my house and so it's the least I can do to help. I used to be in the military and have great respect for The Salvation Army and always give at the red kettle each Christmas. It's at times like this that you realize what The Salvation Army is all about and all they do to help."



"When you see the destruction like this, it's just an honor and a privilege to come in and encourage people when they are at their lowest. I'm so thankful we can hold their hands and share hugs with them."

Isaiah Stegall (Tulsa Area Command)





EARLY HURRICANES

The 2024 hurricane season was predicted to be harsh, and it began early and with a bang. In early July, Hurricane Beryl made landfall on the gulf coast of Texas, caused widespread flooding, and left more than 2 million customers without power during the brutal Texas summer heat. Salvation Army teams were quick on the ground, providing meals and much needed cold drinks and ice to grateful residents seeking respite from the unflinching heat.

Then, in early August, Hurricane Debby made landfall in Florida and Georgia before entering the Atlantic Ocean and making a second landfall in North Carolina. Teams were established across all three divisions to respond to needs of the local communities. “We continue to assess and evaluate the situation,” said Major Jason Smith, Incident Commander for The Salvation Army of Georgia’s Incident Management Team. “Our team is working closely with local agencies to continually assess needs and redeploy resources as required to support the most severely affected areas.”

“With the extent of the damage and lack of transportation, many people can't access help. It's a blessing that The Salvation Army can bring food directly to their neighborhoods, allowing families to stay fed and safe.”

Marchelle Hoskins (Morgan City, LA)



Early September saw the landfall of Hurricane Francine on the coast of Louisiana, hitting many of the same areas beleaguered by the previous years' hurricanes. In areas still recovering, the impact of The Salvation Army extends far beyond immediate relief. For Ella Lee Darce and her daughter Crystal Gillespie, the organization has been a pillar of support through multiple generations, providing crucial help during some of their family's most challenging moments, including Hurricane Katrina. “I know when I donate to The Salvation Army it's coming back to me because time and time again, when devastation hits, it's The Salvation Army that comes through to help.”



HURRICANE HELENE

Hurricane Helene made landfall in Florida's big bend as a Category 4 storm. Helene's large size led to widespread damage with 10 of the 15 states in the Southern Territory impacted in some way. Jeff Jellerts, Territorial Disaster Coordinator for The Salvation Army Southern Territory spoke on the magnitude of Helene's path before landfall. "This hurricane is more than 500 miles across and will impact as many as eight states within our territory. In my more than 20 years of disaster experience, I can't think of a time when such a large area was at risk and The Salvation Army could be called to support so many people."

Florida big bend residents found themselves dealing with their third major hurricane in 13 months. Jennifer, who is still living in a FEMA trailer after Hurricane Idalia destroyed her home last year, broke down in tears as she walked up to the Salvation Army team. "I can't believe we are going through this again," she whispered. "How is this even real?" After receiving a hug, meal kits, and the comfort of knowing she was safe, Jennifer continued. "The Salvation Army is what pulled me through Hurricane Idalia. I knew if I could find you again, and I would be okay."

Residents in Asheville and the surrounding areas in North Carolina faced a level of devastation few could even begin to comprehend when swollen rivers overflowed their banks, caused mudslides, and washed away roads, and in some cases, entire communities. Many mountain areas were completely inaccessible, some for weeks. Others, while accessible via four wheelers or bikes, were covered with mud and debris from receded flood waters, making it difficult to bring in even basic necessities.

The Salvation Army was on hand as soon as each area was cleared for entry, ready to provide hot meals, drinks, and basic comforts. "We are very appreciative of The



"No matter what, as soon as we can, we're coming...and offering a prayer and sharing a little love. I don't know if everybody feels love, but I want to do that and bring hope...we do this because we love it. It's our calling."

Captain Jim Dillingham (Brunswick, GA Corps)





Salvation Army,” says Pastor Richard Hicks, pastor of Dillingham Presbyterian Church which stands at the base of one such mountain community. “People ride down from the mountains on their four-wheelers, grab enough food for their whole family, and deliver meals to others in need.”

Emotional and Spiritual Care, always a mainstay in Salvation Army disaster operations, became even more critical in the face of so much trauma. Captain Keisha McMullin remarked, “The community isn’t the only thing that a storm destroys. It also destroys hope. People can’t see how they’re going to come back from this. ESC can restore that hope, it can remind survivors that God is with them, that they will make it through these trying times.”



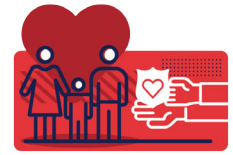
42,045 MEAL BOXES
452,175 SERVED MEALS

220,611 SNACKS
207,512 DRINKS



44,211 EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL CARE CONNECTIONS

609 PERSONNEL
53,225 HOURS



HURRICANE MILTON

While parts of Florida were still dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, Hurricane Milton made landfall on the west coast and made its way across the state, producing additional tornadoes and severe flooding as it went.

The Salvation Army established multiple incident commands to respond in affected areas, expanding services as new areas became accessible. The roads were littered with fallen trees and debris, with some still impassable as crews worked tirelessly to clear the way.

Florida summer heat made days without power miserable, and a cold drink and a cup of ice were often just as welcome as a hot meal. The beach side community of Bonnie Lake was cut off from the outside world by flood waters. Residents used discarded pallets to create makeshift sidewalks to check in on one-another, and a number of homes were still accessible only by boat.

Many in the community felt forgotten and detached with no ability to leave or to have supplies brought in. Salvation Army crews were received with sincere appreciation, tears, and gratitude at “being found.” “What mercy God has given us, it has been a few days since our last hot meal.” “God sent us angels with the Salvation Army.” “The food you brought gave us a taste of comfort we haven’t had since before the storm.”

Among the many impacted by the storm was a gentleman named Shelby. EDS team members received word that Shelby was without food or transportation. Concerned for his well-being, they made their way to his home to provide him with hot meals and other resources. As they spoke with Shelby, the team noticed his shoes were worn through with holes.



“It’s just wonderful because you know you want to give back to people. It’s not about you. It’s about them. I’m on the ground helping individual people, and that brings me a lot of peace and comfort.”

Lonnie (Ocala, FL)





They left and purchased new shoes for Shelby, determined to meet this immediate need that they knew would make a difference in his day-to-day life. “I didn’t expect them to come back,” Shelby shared. “But they came back with two pairs of shoes.” For a man who had lost so much, it was a gesture that spoke volumes. “The fact that they were willing to help me so quickly is nice. I’m not used to that. At least not without requiring something in return.”

Whether feeding the hungry, offering a cold drink, or providing much needed emotional and spiritual care, The Salvation Army’s commitment goes beyond just meeting physical needs. Each member of the EDS team provides comfort and hope to people who are struggling to get back to normal.



10,632 MEAL BOXES
167,803 SERVED MEALS

106,079 SNACKS
81,459 DRINKS



**13,039 EMOTIONAL
AND SPIRITUAL CARE
CONNECTIONS**

139 PERSONNEL
16,152 HOURS



TRAINING

In 2024, The Salvation Army Southern Territory hosted over 170 EDS classes and trained just over 2,000 students, all while responding to fires, floods, tornadoes, mass casualty events, and several hurricanes. Three divisions hosted training summits this year, gathering participants from across their states to meet for a weekend of classes, workshops, and awards. In addition to supporting divisional training efforts, Territorial EDS has been busy behind the scenes working to refine and expand the Southern Territory's disaster training program. As a result, the Public Information Officer course received a significant update and revision, with the new version successfully piloted in both the Florida and Kentucky, Tennessee divisions.

During the territory's annual EDS professionals meeting, General Secretaries, Divisional EDS Directors, and selected EDS staff conducted a large-scale tabletop exercise simulating an all-hands-on-deck response to a significant disaster event; an exercise put to the test with the devastating landfall of both hurricanes Helene and Milton later in the year.

2024 was also a year of professional development for our EDS training staff. Five instructors received their professional emergency management certifications through the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM). These designations are marks of distinction for any professional emergency manager, attesting to the skills, experience, training, and professional expertise of the recipient.



**57 ACTIVE TRAINERS
ACROSS 8 DIVISIONS**



EQUIPMENT

Personnel need a comfortable place to sleep when they are deployed away from home. Thanks to the generosity and creativity of Embassy Specialty Vehicles, we added two new bunkhouses to our fleet of personnel support equipment. Located in Florida and Texas, these climate-controlled bunkhouses are designed to house 12 people. Individual bunks are equipped with privacy curtains, a personal fan, reading light, outlets, and a shelf for important items. They are the perfect place for our disaster workers to rest and rejuvenate so they can be at their best when helping others.

Under the 2022 IMPACT Grant from the Lilly Endowment, The Salvation Army Southern Territory commissioned Embassy Specialty Vehicles to produce 16 new mobile feeding units, with two allocated to each of its eight divisions. This year, four of these units have been completed and are now operational in Clay County, Florida; Gainesville, Georgia; Fayetteville, Arkansas; and Jackson, Mississippi. Each unit is equipped with Starlink Communication Systems, providing disaster survivors and responders with Wi-Fi connectivity in addition to hot meals.

The Arkansas and Oklahoma (AOK) Division acquired a new mobile command center, also made possible by a grant from the Lilly Endowment, to assist with managing



smaller, disasters that often occur in rural and secluded areas in the division. The unit provides meeting and respite space, in a temperature controlled environment, for Salvation Army staff and partner agencies. Equipped with a Starlink satellite system, responding teams have access to internet and cellular capabilities quickly. This mobile unit is easy to deploy and have on site within a matter of hours. In 2024, just a month after acquiring the unit, it was deployed to Barnsdall, Oklahoma in response to spring tornadoes. Equipped with a Starlink satellite system, responding teams have access to internet and cellular capabilities quickly.

On the other side of the territory in the North and South Carolina Division (NSC), a mechanical support trailer was purchased to assist with maintaining mobile feeding units and specialized equipment during response operations. This trailer allows a mechanic to be fully self-contained when deployed. More importantly, it stores all the tools and equipment necessary to keep the fleet of Salvation Army equipment operational and is equipped to haul a UTV. Deployed to Hurricane Helene, first in Florida, then in North Carolina, the unit and mechanic were invaluable to supporting our service delivery and base camp operations.



..... SOUTHERN TERRITORY

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..... ALABAMA, LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPPI DIVISION

The ALM Division has had a very productive year. In September, the division responded in coastal Louisiana after Hurricane Francine affected areas still recovering from previous year's storms. Teams from ALM were deployed to Georgia and North Carolina to assist with response for Hurricane Helene. In addition to response efforts, the division was able to add a brand new 53-foot refrigerated trailer, a 75kw generator, and a rapid response unit (RRU) to their fleet.

Finally, ALM held several training sessions throughout the year, including participation in a 'Mission Impact Conference' in Jackson, Mississippi where dozens of individuals received advanced training to prepare for deployment as members of incident management teams.



..... ARKANSAS AND OKLAHOMA DIVISION

Between winter storms, multiple tornado outbreaks, and prairie fires, the disaster teams in the Arkansas Oklahoma division had many opportunities to respond to neighbors in need. It was a record-breaking year for weather related disasters, with November setting the record for the most tornado activity in Oklahoma for the month. We appreciate all our donors whose support enabled us to assist residents with immediate disaster services and to continue providing financial assistance during recovery. With partners across the division, we were happy to continue long term recovery assistance as part of several long-term recovery groups in Arkansas and Oklahoma.



..... FLORIDA DIVISION

In June, the FLA EDS department and divisional leadership conducted a table-top exercise, facilitated by a local emergency manager, to focus on response if multiple hurricanes impacted Florida. Days following the exercise, Hurricane Debby made landfall, and the FLA EDS team quickly mobilized to respond. While that response was short, it prepared the Division for what was to come later in the season.

When Hurricane Helene made landfall, just miles from where Debby had landed, the FLA Division was prepared to immediately respond with an Incident Management Team from within the Division and a second IMT from Texas along with the personnel and mobile feeding units to respond in those affected communities.

With response to Helene still underway, the Division pivoted to ensure an adequate response would be possible for Hurricane Milton. This storm made landfall near the Tampa Bay area again causing devastating storm surge along the coast. Then, record setting rainfall caused flooding along the lakes, rivers, and tributaries affecting even more communities. The FLA Division established three Incident Commands, one from within the Division, another from Texas, and the third from the Eastern Territory along with many disaster workers and mobile feeding units.

While the table-top exercise tested our ability to respond to multiple disasters, no one anticipated actually being in that situation. Taking steps to address challenges found during exercising, allowed the Division to meet the needs of affected communities in an efficient and effective manner. The Florida Division is indebted to all of the personnel and resources from across the country and Canada that came to support our response.



..... GEORGIA DIVISION

The Georgia Division responded to Tropical Storm Debby in early August after a foot of rainfall caused flooding in coastal areas. Then, Hurricane Helene devastated portions of the state, necessitating an extended response. After a shooting at a Winder, GA high school, the county called upon The Salvation Army to provide meal support for first responders and emotional and spiritual care for the community in the week following the event. The division also received a new rapid response unit (RRU) generously donated by FedEx which was immediately put into use for this year's active hurricane season.



..... KENTUCKY AND TENNESSEE DIVISION

In 2024, the KT Division responded swiftly and compassionately to several significant natural disasters. On April 3, after a devastating tornado caused widespread damage across six counties in North Central Kentucky, our Emergency Disaster Services team deployed to provide meal kits, cleanup kits, hydration, and emotional and spiritual care to those affected. On May 8, an EF3 tornado struck Columbia, Tennessee, causing extensive structural damage and power outages, and our team once again mobilized to deliver critical resources and support. Later, on May 27, two deadly tornadoes tore through Western Kentucky, impacting some of the same areas affected by the Heartland outbreak in December 2021. In response, our team provided meals, hygiene kits, cleanup kits, and emotional and spiritual care to the devastated.



..... NORTH AND SOUTH CAROLINA DIVISION

The NSC Division monitored various incidents throughout the year, responding locally as part of the community's established human services network of agencies and organizations. Tropical Storm Debby prompted flooding in various areas across the two states, and mass feeding support was provided to first responders and others in temporary shelters in three South Carolina counties. The division continues to respond to the devastation in the Asheville and mountain areas caused by Hurricane Helene.



..... POTOMAC DIVISION

The Potomac Division responded to storm needs in West Virginia and Virginia. Tornadoes, flash and river flooding and high winds ripped through both states, resulting in disaster declarations for 40 counties. The storm destroyed homes, ravaged water treatment plants, isolated communities, and caused two deaths. In partnership with local authorities and VOAD members, The Salvation Army was able to immediately provide feeding assistance.

As operations transitioned to recovery, assistance included feeding, emergency housing, and utility assistance. In total, the PMC Division provided 15,829 meals, drinks and snacks to impacted families. Much of this food went to vulnerable populations. A further \$3783 has been provided in housing and utility assistance to help families not end up on the street while trying to recover their properties.

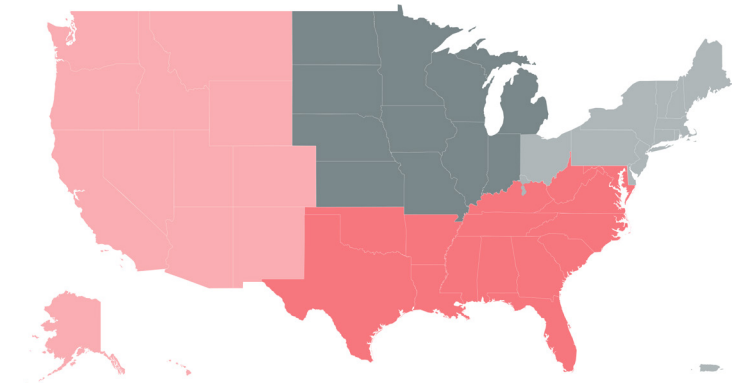


..... TEXAS DIVISION

The Texas Division had an active year responding to six disasters within the division, including the "million acre" Panhandle Wildfire, SE Texas mass flooding and Derecho events, two tornado events, and Hurricane Beryl, providing more than 141,000 hot meals, 105,000 drinks, and 33,000 snacks. Hundreds of "comfort care" kits were distributed to fire fighters combating the Panhandle wildfire. And most importantly, more than 15,500 emotional and spiritual contacts were made.

The Texas Division utilized its partnerships with Long-Term Recovery Groups, County Officials, and/or local community members to provide alternative housing solutions, home rebuilds or significant home repairs for individuals and families.

The division also focused on increasing its capacity for disaster response through Disaster training. This year alone, 29 training classes were provided to 495 students in total. Texas Division EDS is also working to find innovative ways to improve volunteer recruitment, management, and retention.





SUPPORTERS

When donors support disaster relief efforts, the impact creates a ripple that benefits a larger number of disaster survivors. These collaborations were essential in our ability to respond to disasters this year. We are deeply grateful to our supporters, both named and anonymous, for their commitment to serving communities in times of crisis. Your kindness will make a lasting impact, help to rebuild communities, and restore hope. Thank you for your unwavering support!

COMCAST NBC UNIVERSAL

Donated \$50,000 for disaster relief efforts.

DELTA AIRLINES

Contributed 3 million charitable mile for deployment of trained disaster personnel.

ELDER'S ACE HARDWARE

Activated a round-up at the register and a donation campaign across four states.

FEDEX

Provided charitable shipping for disaster supplies delivered to affected communities.

FOOD FOR GOOD

Deployed 10,000 nutrient-rich, shelf-stable snack kits for Hurricane Helene relief.

GRAY MEDIA

Launched nationwide media blitz and raised nearly \$500,000 in crucial relief funds.

LAMAR ADVERTISING

Donated digital billboard space, raising awareness and funding for relief efforts.

LOWES

Contributed over \$100,000 for relief efforts and survivors in the hardest hit areas.

MID-WEST FOOD BANK

Deployed over 37,000 food boxes for a family of four for up to four days.

POLARIS

Donated UTVs and generators to enhance disaster relief capabilities in remote areas.

SINCLAIR BROADCAST GROUP

Initiated a media campaign and raised over \$300,000 for disaster relief efforts.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST DISASTER RELIEF (SBDR)

Provided over 619,978 hot meals during response to Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

UPS

Provided charitable shipping for disaster supplies delivered to affected communities.

WALMART INC.

Contributed \$125,000 and thousands of cases of bottled water for relief efforts.

LONG TERM RECOVERY

There is always a flurry of activity immediately following a disaster, but after the camera crews and many relief organizations have gone home, families are left wondering, “What’s next?” The damage and loss are felt immediately, but the true impact can require incredible resources and years of recovery efforts. This is one of many reasons The Salvation Army puts a focus on the full life cycle of disaster recovery and not just immediate response. For these communities help is not only on the way, help is here to stay.

After a major disaster, coordination of resources can be one of the biggest challenges. The Salvation Army often joins together with government, non-profit and community partners to identify disaster-related unmet needs and coordinate pooled resources to assist individuals with recovery. Seeing the need for staff with specialized expertise in this area, The Salvation Army sought and received funding for a dedicated Long-Term Recovery Specialist. This dedicated specialist works to support existing and future long term recovery efforts in the Southern Territory. She focuses on evaluation, training and implementation of best practices during and after emergencies, positioning The Salvation Army as a leader in long term recovery at the local and national levels.

The Salvation Army provided long term recovery assistance in Florida, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, Louisiana in 2024, providing financial assistance to individuals who would have otherwise been unable to recover from disasters impacting them.



H PE – IS ON – THE WAY

SUPPORT EMERGENCY DISASTER SERVICES:

helpsalvationarmy.org

1-800-SAL-ARMY (1-800-725-2769)

PO BOX 1959, Atlanta, GA 30301

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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