



Mississippi United Methodist Disaster Response and Katrina Recovery

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Volunteer Work Team Guidebook

1: Contents

- 2: A Note from MS UM Disaster Response
- 3: Introduction & Short History
- 4: Leadership Responsibilities
- 5: Costs/ Donations
- 6: Mission Trip Overview
- 7: Required Application Forms
- 8: Time Schedule for Planning a Mission Trip
- 9: Directory
- Form 1: Volunteer Form
- Form 2: Skills Sheet
- Appendix: Safe Sanctuary Policy

2: A Note from Mississippi UM Disaster Response

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your interest and support of our Katrina Recovery efforts on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. We continue to rely on volunteers to make our ministry here possible. Volunteer work teams from around the country have graced us with their presence and service in our midst.

We are currently transitioning from a crisis mindset to a long-term recovery plan. To that end, it is necessary for us to introduce new policies which will help us provide a better mission experience for volunteer teams as well as care for the needs of our staff and homeowners.

Please note that we are asking Volunteer Teams to arrive on Sunday evenings and depart on Saturday mornings. This allows our Site Coordinators to rest and prepare for the next week of teams. It also creates a better rhythm for our camp life. We do not send work teams out on Saturdays or Sundays. We want our Site Coordinators and homeowners to honor Sunday as a day of worship and rest. In addition with reduced staff, it is no longer manageable for us to supply work orders to teams not staying in one of our Camp Sites.

It also has become necessary that the fifteen dollar (\$15) per person per day donation is no longer optional. This required fee will cover food and lodging costs at our camps.

As you read through the rest of this packet we hope you will prayerfully consider joining us in our work as we minister on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. We look forward to serving God with you.

Grace and Peace,

Beth Dean
Volunteer & Site Coordinator

Robert Sharp
Executive Director

3: Introduction & History

Brief History- By the Numbers

Hurricane Katrina started out modestly on August 23rd, 2005 in the Bahamas as a tropical wave that emerged from the remnants of a tropical depression that had been in the Caribbean. It gradually grew into the season's eleventh named storm and fourth hurricane prior to making landfall in South Florida. It came ashore as a minimal hurricane with maximum sustained winds of 80 mph, and gusts up to 95 mph. After quickly crossing Southern Florida, Katrina emerged again over water in the Southeastern Gulf of Mexico near the Florida Keys, and strengthened to the 2005 season's third major hurricane before reorganizing into the most powerful storm in the Central Gulf since Hurricane Camille, and third Category Five Hurricane in as many years with winds as high as 175 mph, and a minimum central pressure of 902 mb, or 26.64 inches of Hg. It became the fourth most powerful hurricane of all time.

Homes impacted in six southern-most counties

Hancock - 10,900 destroyed; 3,600 major damage; 1,800 minor damage

Harrison - 29,970 destroyed; 15,470 major damage; 31,905 minor damage

Pearl River - 900 destroyed; 2,000 major damage; 7,700 minor damage

Stone - 220 destroyed; 440 major damage; 2,600 minor damage

Jackson - 23,250 destroyed; 16,250 major damage; 8,600 minor damage

George - 140 destroyed; 700 major damage; 700 minor damage

Not just numbers, but lives...

- More than 1,300 deaths, 230 in Mississippi
- 500,000+ FEMA registrations in Mississippi alone
- More than 100,000 Mississippians left living in FEMA trailers
- 200,000+ homes damaged
- 65,000 homes totally destroyed
- 34% of homes in Jackson and Harrison counties severely damaged or destroyed
- 70% of homes in Hancock County severely damaged or destroyed

The Early Response

No one was prepared for a storm of this magnitude. But the church stepped up.

The Local Church - Immediately after landfall local churches in Mississippi stepped up to “be the church” in an unprecedented way. Suffering devastating losses themselves, congregations began to assist neighbors. Congregations served as:

- Red Cross shelters, housing thousands of evacuees
- Feeding centers, serving hundreds of thousands of meals during the first month
- Distribution points for relief materials, delivering water, food, clothes, blankets, and just about everything else to tens of thousands of neighbors in need
- Host sites for volunteers from around the country, hosting thousands of volunteers working in the surrounding communities

The Mississippi Conference and UMCOR - While local churches were working feverishly on the front lines, the Mississippi Annual Conference, with aid from United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), was working to meet immediate needs while simultaneously putting in place a long-term recovery structure.

- Bishop Hope Morgan Ward immediately requested assistance from UMCOR
- UMCOR sent \$7M worth of health kits, flood buckets, water, etc., directly from the Sager Brown Depot
- UMCOR consultants came to Mississippi and spread out across the state, offering advice and assistance
- The conference quickly put in place a Disaster Response Center with a call center in Meridian
- The conference secured warehouse space and began purchasing equipment to move supplies
- The conference began to receive shipments of aid and coordinate distribution

- The conference began putting in place what would become our Katrina Recovery Team

The First Year: Building a 747 in Mid-Flight

As the conference, local churches, and UMCOR moved forward, the Katrina Recovery Team began to develop.

- UMCOR has granted over \$12M to our Mississippi recovery efforts
- We have setup a staff, including case managers, regional coordinators, construction coordinators, host site coordinators and a resource coordinator.
- We began installing/constructing six host sites where volunteer teams could stay throughout our long-term response.
- We began purchasing equipment to work across hundreds of square miles.
- We began purchasing hundreds of thousands of dollars of building materials for families impacted by the storm.
- We began coordinating the placement of Volunteers in Mission from around the country.
- We began working with other long-term recovery groups and faith-based organizations.

Moving Forward: A Long Road Ahead

Our Team Goals

- Restore persons who lack resources to safe, permanent homes as soon as possible.
- *Be attentive to and, where possible, address spiritual, emotional, and other needs of these persons.*
- Affirm, encourage, and offer support to local churches in the recovery effort.
- Organize and deploy volunteers to maximize recovery to extend beyond what congregations can accomplish on their own.
- Partner with other organizations where possible to enhance efforts.
- Tell the story; keep people abreast of the amazing work being done by local churches and United Methodist volunteers.

Our Continuing Plans

Our focus going forward is three-fold: complete the construction of our mission camps, raise more funds for continued efforts, and find ways to continue the amazing response of volunteers from around the country.

Mission Camps

We currently have three camps functioning on the Mississippi Coast. They are located in Waveland, Vancleave, and Gulfport. Some of our camps continue to be temporarily located within local churches. Multi-purpose buildings are being built to help us move out of local churches as well as equip us to respond more quickly in the future.

Raising funds:

We do not use UMCOR funds to pay for the ongoing support of our camps, nor do we use UMCOR funds (with the exception of one special grant) to build our camps. We believe that we must use as much of these funds as possible on direct assistance.

Focusing on Volunteers

Mississippi United Methodist churches and camps have hosted more than 30,000 volunteers over the last year, creating millions of dollars worth of homeowner savings for communities in Mississippi. We know that the key to our continued response is keeping the flow of volunteers coming to our state.

Our Katrina Response Team is focused on creating the best experience possible for volunteers and developing camps in a way to meet volunteers' needs. We are committed to providing:

- Comfortable, sturdy bunks
- Fellowship space

- Meals
- Staff persons whose whole focus is to make sure volunteer teams have a fruitful experience

We are continually looking for better processes and better ways to structure our operations to meet the changing needs on the ground. Here are some areas we have improved:

- New showers and restroom facilities
- Better orientation for teams
- Better-prepared staff
- Easier access to building materials
- Better communication before the trip
- Better coordination of work assignments by host site coordinators
- Better communication with UMVIM coordinators, mission coordinators, and pastors around the country
- More focused effort on communicating with persons around the country that stimulate volunteer work
- Restructuring of organization to help meet needs

Who will Teams help in Mississippi?

The Mississippi United Methodist Katrina Response is attempting to return as many people as possible to safe, sanitary, and secure homes. The following priorities and criteria guide our work:

- Single parents with minor children in the home
- Large families where usual financial aid will not be enough
- Disabled persons
- Elderly persons

In addition, families/clients must meet these criteria:

- Home owners (no rental or commercial properties)
- Primary residences (no second homes)
- Persons under-assisted by other means

Safe, sanitary, and secure

Because there are so many impacted homes and we wish to help as many as possible, we have decided to focus on getting persons into safe, sanitary, and secure homes. We try to use our funds to get families to a point where they can move back into the home and perhaps continue the recovery process on their own.

This might include replacing a roof, hanging sheetrock, installing certain appliances considered as necessary, plumbing, electrical work, etc. Each case is different, but the goal is always the same - get the family back into a safe, sanitary, and secure home.

Top Ten List-

Ten things every team leader must know to insure a fruitful trip!

10) **Be Flexible**

Expect delays and challenges along the way. A disaster is named a disaster for a reason

9) Distinguish Task from Purpose

Task may be repairing a roof, but purpose is to bring hope and be a living expression of God's love!

8) Give everyone a chance to participate

Prayers, Payers, and Players- not all can come on the trip, but some can pray and others can support your team financially.

7) **Be Flexible**

6) Encourage realistic expectations

Our accommodations are nice and clean, but certainly not the Hilton.

5) Listen to your host

Your Host may do things that do not seem to make sense to you. Listen to your host. He or she has a perspective that you do not.

4) **Be Flexible**

3) Assemble a manageable team

15 persons, with one skilled person for every 4 unskilled, works well. This is not absolute of course!

2) Communicate clearly with host prior to trip- take initiative!

You will be provided your hosts contact info once you are scheduled. They will call you at least 30 days prior to your trip, but if you have questions, don't hesitate to call.

1) ***Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape***

4: Leadership Responsibilities

Mississippi UM Disaster Response camps welcome volunteer work teams and individuals. We host ecumenical groups, youth, college, and adult teams as well as church, district, and conference teams.

We expect team leaders will meet with their team members several times before arriving for a work trip. We expect team leaders to be the primary contact person for a team.

We ask that all youth teams adhere to our Safe Sanctuary guidelines. A youth is a person who is between the ages of fourteen (14) and eighteen (18). Persons under the age of fourteen will not be allowed to participate on mission trips for MS UM Disaster Response.

Youth will be invited to make trips to Mississippi to work with our Katrina response in a ratio of 1:3, meaning one adult for every 3 youth. In this case, to qualify as an adult, the person must be 25 years of age or older.

Please see Appendix: Safe Sanctuary Guidelines.

5: Costs

Mississippi UM Disaster Response offers a one-week mission experience that begins Sunday evening and ends Saturday morning.

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are provided by the camp Monday through Friday. Teams are responsible for their own meals on Sunday prior to arriving at the camp.

Due to the changing nature of our recovery work, each of the Disaster Response camps now requires a fifteen dollar (\$15) donation per person per day to operate the camp. This figure includes lodging costs and food. In addition, these donations also cover the cost of one MS UM Disaster Response t-shirt per person. (Additional t-shirts cost \$10 each.) Since donations keep our camps self-sustaining, we are able to better meet the needs of the homeowners we assist.

It is not necessary to send the donation prior to your trip. Simply bring **ONE** check made out to the camp you are attending and turn it in when you arrive.

Food Services:

Breakfast and Dinner are served at each Camp Site location. Volunteer work teams pack sandwich lunches to take with them to their work sites. Since we are living and working in community, we ask that all teams eat meals together. Teams can choose to eat dinner one night at a local restaurant, but must notify the camp the day before doing so.

Camp Love	At Camp Love, volunteer teams need to bring one or two people willing to assist with meal preparation. Volunteers have access to the kitchen. Menu planning and grocery shopping are handled by the Host Site Coordinator.
Camp Gulfside	At Camp Gulfside, volunteer teams need to bring one or two people willing to assist with meal preparation. Volunteers have access to the kitchen. Menu planning and grocery shopping are handled by the Host Site Coordinator.
Camp Hope	At Camp Hope, cooks from Vancleave UMC serve by providing breakfast and dinner for volunteer teams. Volunteer teams may still choose to bring people who are willing to work in the kitchen. Menu planning and grocery shopping are handled by the Vancleave UMC.

Sleeping Facilities:

Each camp has restroom and shower facilities.

Camp Love	Camp Love is a new, large multipurpose building, containing dormitories with bunk beds. Volunteers will need to provide their own bed linens. There are no co-ed rooms.
Camp Gulfside	Camp Gulfside is a 6,000 sq ft modular structure with multiple rooms, each holding 2 – 4 sets of bunk beds. Volunteers will need to provide their own bed linens. There are no co-ed rooms.
Camp Hope	Camp Hope is a new, large multipurpose building, containing dormitories with bunk beds. Bed linens are provided by Camp Hope. There is a room for women and another for men. There are no co-ed rooms.

Donations toward Direct Assistance:

Mississippi UM Disaster Response does have limited resources and appreciates donations toward the direct assistance of homeowners. There are a number of ways to donate.

1. Bring funds and purchase materials for the site you are working on. This helps allows us to lower our material costs and assist more homeowners. We also have a limited number of people on staff that can assist your team. Teams can use their funds to purchase small items for the jobsite instead of waiting for our staff to purchase and deliver these items.
2. Donate money directly to the Mississippi United Methodist Disaster Response (Designated “For Recovery”). This goes toward purchasing materials and supplies for homeowners. These funds are also used to hire contractors as needed for the jobsite. You may also adopt a homeowner and donate funds to assist in the completion of their homes. We will set up an account to purchase items for that specific homeowner. If there is a balance remaining once they are in their home, we will use it to assist another homeowner.
3. Also, it is helpful to have donations of paper products for restrooms and kitchen areas. Call your camp to find out what paper products are needed.
4. If you see that there is a particular tool that we do not have—buy it and leave it behind. This allows other teams to complete projects long after you leave.

6: Mission Trip Overview

Mission trips through Mississippi UM Disaster Response begin on Sunday evening and end on Saturday morning. It is mandatory that teams be present at the Orientation on Sunday evening. Teams depart on Saturday morning. The arrival and departure days allow us to facilitate work schedules and care for our Host Site Coordinators. Sunday arrival and Saturday departure at a particular camp can only be changed for special circumstances with the approval of the Volunteer Coordinator and Host Site Coordinators of that camp.

Teams serve at their work sites Monday through Friday. We DO NOT work on Saturdays or Sundays.

Our work is almost entirely home repair and rebuilding. Even four years after the storm, we still have hundreds of home projects to complete. However, the initial clean up is done, and our projects, for the most part, require persons with some experience and skill in construction work. Possible work projects could include roofing, flooring, putting up sheetrock, etc. Sometimes work projects involve plumbing or electrical work.

We ask for a 1 to 4 ratio of skilled workers to non skilled workers. Because we are working on so many projects at any given time, we do not have the staff to provide supervision at each worksite. It is the skilled people on your team that will need to direct the work of the general helpers. Without the skilled people, your general helpers will be

left without supervision and leadership, which will not make for an efficient or enjoyable trip. A skilled volunteer can be anyone from a good handyman or woman to a licensed professional. If you can be handed a work assignment and take it on without supervision, you are skilled.

Volunteer teams will be responsible for their own transportation to and from worksites while serving through our camps.

Each camp has devotions everyday. In most cases, volunteers are asked to lead devotions.

Volunteer teams may choose to do some sight-seeing and touring of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. In this case, teams need to notify the camp the day prior to their sight-seeing. Teams must notify the Host Site Facilitator the day prior if they are eating out.

7: Required Application Forms

Volunteer Form

This form is to be completed by the team leader and submitted to the Mississippi UM Disaster Response office in Biloxi by fax (228) 374-2067 or email (disastercenter@meridianumc.org). Team leaders may also call the Volunteer Coordinator at the office and supply the information for this form by phone. Teams will not be scheduled or confirmed without this form.

Teams will be scheduled in the order that the Volunteer Forms are received.

Skills Sheet

This form is to be completed by the team leader and submitted to the Camp Site as soon as possible and no later than one month prior to arrival. This form will be used by the Host Site Coordinator to match teams to appropriate jobs.

The Following Forms are provided in the Confirmation Packet received after registering a team:

Participant Liability Release Form

Each adult volunteer must complete this form. The team leader should collect these forms and turn them in to the Host Site Coordinator upon arrival.

Medical Information Form

Each adult volunteer must complete this form. The team leader should collect these forms and keep them on hand during the trip.

Liability Release Form for Youth Group Leaders

Each youth team leader must complete this form and turn it in to the Host Site Coordinator upon arrival.

Liability Release Form for Youth

Each youth volunteer must fill out this form and have it signed by his/her parent or legal guardian. The team leader should collect these forms and turn them in to the Host Site Coordinator upon arrival.

Medical Release Form for Minors

Each youth volunteer must fill out this form and have it notarized. The team leader should collect these forms and keep them on hand during the trip.

Optional UMVIM Accident Insurance

Insurance coverage is important and required for all volunteers. Team members should check their own health and accident policies to verify that they will be covered on the trip. If they need or desire additional coverage, it can be obtained from either of the sources below. For further information, please visit <http://gbgm-umc.org/vim/umvimmap.htm>. This will lead to your Jurisdiction and info on how to purchase insurance for the trip. Accident insurance coverage may be purchased from either one. The UMVIM insurance is optional but not required for a mission trip with Mississippi UM Disaster Response.

8: Time Schedule for Planning a Mission Trip

Making a Reservation

If you decide to serve with us, please determine the size of your team and several possible dates for a trip. We encourage you to select dates several months in advance. You can check available dates on our website. Go to www.mississippi-umc.org and click on the link "You Can Help Heal Hearts and Homes." The Camp Site calendars are on this page. They are updated on a regular basis.

Fill out a Volunteer Form and submit it to the Volunteer Coordinator in the main office either by fax or email. If the dates you selected are available, you will receive an email confirmation within the week. If the dates you selected are not available, you will receive a phone call or email from the Volunteer Coordinator to discuss other options.

Your trip is confirmed when you receive a confirmation email from the Volunteer Coordinator and your team appears on the website calendar.

Prior to arrival

Before you arrive to your Camp Site, you must submit the Skills Sheet for your team to the Host Site Coordinator at your Camp. This must be done as soon as possible and no later than one month prior to the trip.

If the number of people on your team changes, please notify the Volunteer Coordinator or your Site Coordinator. You will not be able to increase the number of people on your team without approval from the Volunteer Coordinator.

If you must cancel your reservation, please notify the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible. This will allow us to open up the space for other teams.

Arrival

Please check in at your camp between 5 and 7 PM on Sunday. If you are going to be late, please contact your Host Site Coordinator. The Orientation meeting will be Sunday night. This meeting introduces your team to the week and it is important that all members attend. Please eat dinner on your own prior to Orientation.

9: Mississippi United Methodist Disaster Response Directory

	Phone	Email	Fax	Mailing Address
Mississippi UM Disaster Response Main Office & Volunteer Coordinator	866-435-7091	disastercenter@meridianumc.org	228-374-2067	1400 Leggett Drive Biloxi, MS 39530
Camp Love	228-539-9332	mississippirdro@bellsouth.net	228-539-9328	13183 John Clark Road Building C Gulfport, MS 39503
Camp Hope	228-826-5968	camphope@bellsouth.net	228-826-9992	13624 Hwy 57 Vancleave, MS 39565
Camp Gulfside	228-463-8951	campgulfside@bellsouth.net	228-463-8952	950 S. Beach Road Waveland, MS 39576
Robert Sharp, Executive Director	228-234-3387	rsharp@datasync.com	228-374-2067	1400 Leggett Drive Biloxi, MS 39530



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MISSISSIPPI UM DISASTER RESPONSE VOLUNTEER FORM

In order to schedule a trip, please fill out this form and return it to our Disaster Response Volunteer Coordinator, either by email or fax. You can also call in your information on our toll free line.

Date Submitted _____

Individual ___ Group ___ Total # of volunteers _____ Contact Name: _____

Church/Organization: _____

Denomination/Group: _____ Jurisdiction _____ District/Conference _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State,
Zip: _____

Phone: Home: () _____ Work: () _____ Cell: () _____

FAX: () _____ E-Mail _____

If known: #Youth _____ #Adults _____
 #Male _____ #Female _____

Available Dates: Arrival _____ Departure _____ Working _____

Housing Request? (Have you been on a previous trip? Do you have a specific area you would like to work in?)

If your requested location is not available, are you open to working at another camp or local church? _____

Office Use Only

Site Assignment _____

Leader Notified _____ email _____ phone _____ date _____

Site Information Sent _____ email _____ snail mail _____ date _____

Notes:



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**Safe Sanctuary Guidelines
For Mission Work Connected with MS UM Disaster Response**

1. The definition of “youth” for the guidelines purposes is a person under eighteen (18) years of age and at least fourteen (14) years of age. Persons under the age of 14 *will not* be allowed to participate on mission trips for Katrina Recovery in Mississippi.
2. Youth will be allowed to make trips to Mississippi to work with our Katrina response in a ratio of 1:3, meaning one adult for every 3 youth. To qualify as an adult, the person must be 25 years of age or older.
3. While on the trip, one adult will not be alone with a youth unless the adult is a parent of the youth.
4. It is recommended that youth and adults do not share rooms. However, use of dorm rooms with a combination of youth and adults is acceptable when:
 - a. Persons sharing the room are of the same gender.
 - b. There are at least two non- related adults and two youth per room.
5. There will be separate sleeping areas for males and for females for all conference-sponsored mission teams. ‘Conference-Sponsored’ will be defined as teams that schedule their trip with Mississippi Conference Disaster Response Center, Biloxi, MS.
6. Shower times will be scheduled separately for youth and for adults in order to prevent adults and youth showering together in facilities with open shower areas.
7. When a conference-sponsored team has both male and female youth members, there must be at least two males and two females accompanying the youth on the team.
8. During each conference-sponsored mission trip, there will be at least two adults at each work site. It is recommended that these adults be unrelated. This is to assure safety in case of an accident. Youth teams should never be left alone at a work site.
9. All employees and long term volunteers connected with the Katrina Response shall undergo a background check. Long term Volunteers will be defined as those volunteers sponsored by the Ms Conference and staying more two weeks.
10. All youth must have a medical release form and release of liability signed by parent and notarized to be on the conference-sponsored team. These forms are provided in our Volunteer Packet.
11. For all conference-sponsored teams, the team leader will be given the option of purchasing General Board of Global Ministries supplemental accident insurance or South Eastern Jurisdiction UMVIM Insurance for each team member. Information for this insurance is provided in our volunteer packet.
12. **No youth team member will be allowed to be alone with an adult from the Host Mission Site during the mission.** This includes host pastors, congregation members, homeowners, clients of mission agencies, etc. Likewise, an adult team member is not to be alone with a youth from the Host Mission Site.
13. All male and female adult team members need to have a “buddy” system at the site at all times. It is recommended that these adults be unrelated. It is critical that we leave no team member alone to protect them from harm.
14. These guidelines will be available on webpage and part of our orientation for new employees.