



# **Building Bridges: Empowering Communities with Coordinated Disaster Support**

**Webinar – September 25, 2025**

# Introduction and Overview

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**BILL TWOMEY**

ACCG DIRECTOR OF  
COUNTY CONSULTING SERVICES

*MODERATOR*

# Henry County Case Study – Locust Grove Tornadoes

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**CHERI HOBSON-MATTHEWS**

HENRY COUNTY MANAGER



# Henry County Volunteer Organizations Active During Disasters

**Cheri Hobson-Matthews**  
**County Manager**

25 September 2025





# Case Study - January 12, 2023 Tornadoes

On January 12, 2023, an early-season tornado outbreak impacted the Southeastern United States. A total of 42 tornadoes were confirmed by the National Weather Service (NWS) over a period of 15+ hours.

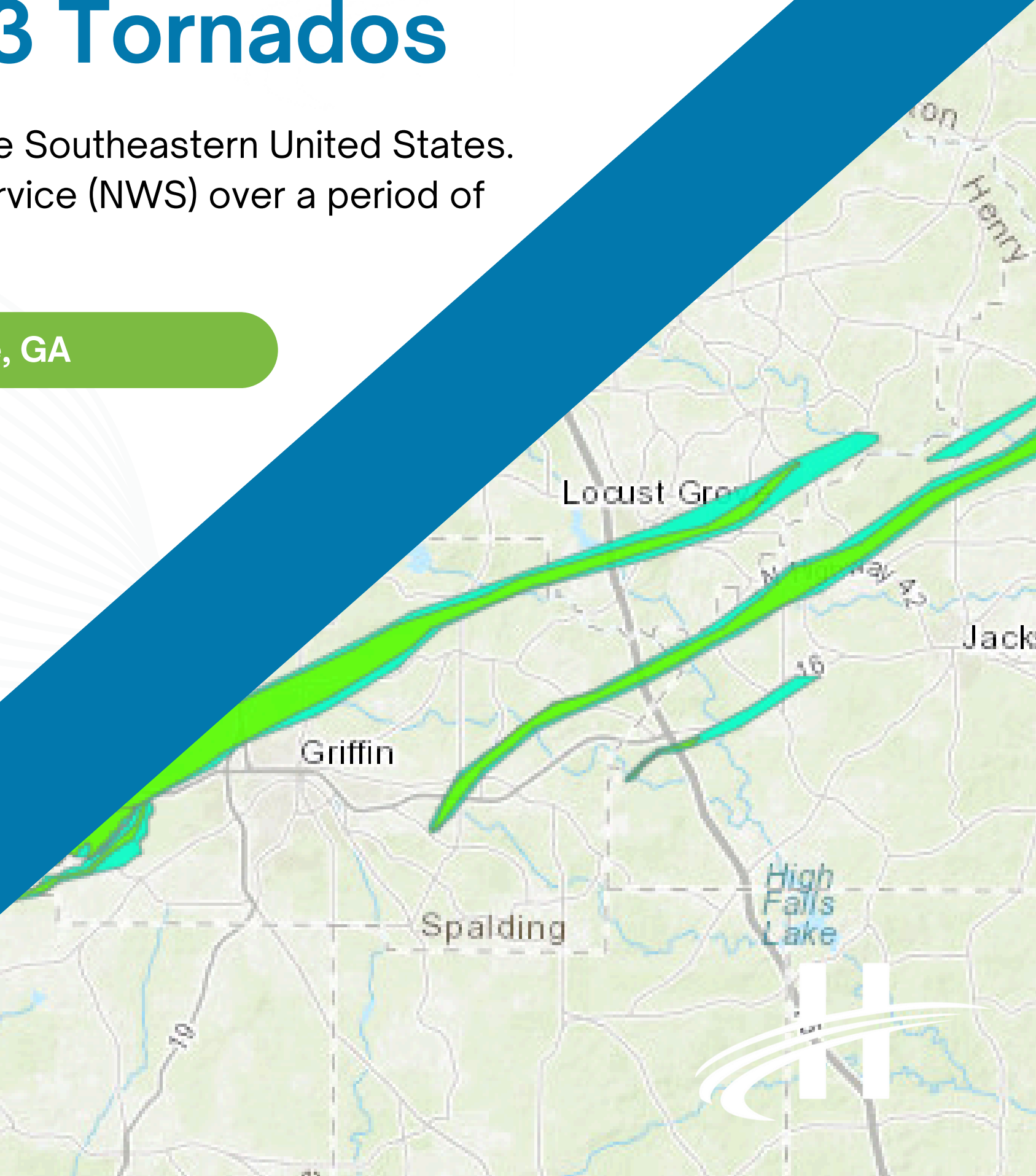
The storm moved in a Northeastern track into Locust Grove, GA

## Context

Griffin, Georgia, part of Spalding County to the Southwest of Henry County, was impacted by four separate tornadoes in a span of 10 minutes. The maximum rating was an EF3 with maximum winds reported at 155 mph.

## Impacts

Significant impacts were felt across the County, but the City of Locust Grove received the majority of the damage. Indian Creek Mobile Home Community in particular sustained severe damage.



# Disaster Relief Center

In order to meet the needs of displaced and impacted citizen's Henry County opened the Locust Grove Recreation Center as a Disaster Relief Center. Resources such as Verizon's Disaster Response Team, mobile showers, bathrooms, and washer and dryers were centrally located near the areas with significant damage.



**Shelter**



**Verizon**



**Washers**

**Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD's) such as the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army were critical in supporting community needs.**



# Mobile Kitchen

## Power Grid

The infrastructure of Indian Creek Mobile Home Community and the surrounding area was severely damaged from the storms. Initial timelines estimated full power restoration to take several weeks if not months. Indian Creek was essentially taken off of the power grid. As a low-income community, this especially impacted day-to-day life.



## Salvation Army

To support the community during the initial recovery phase, the Salvation Army partnered with Henry County to provide 2 hot meals per day to anyone in need. A mobile kitchen was utilized to bring the meals to the area where transportation was also severely limited due to impacts from the storm.





# Community Involvement

## Debris Cleanup



Relevant Church was a key component in assisting with private property debris cleanup. Due to the larger impacts to the City of Griffin, resources were funneled to the greatest need.

## Elected Officials



Helped coordinate community groups and volunteers and funnel them to the proper channels to assist in the aftermath of the storm.



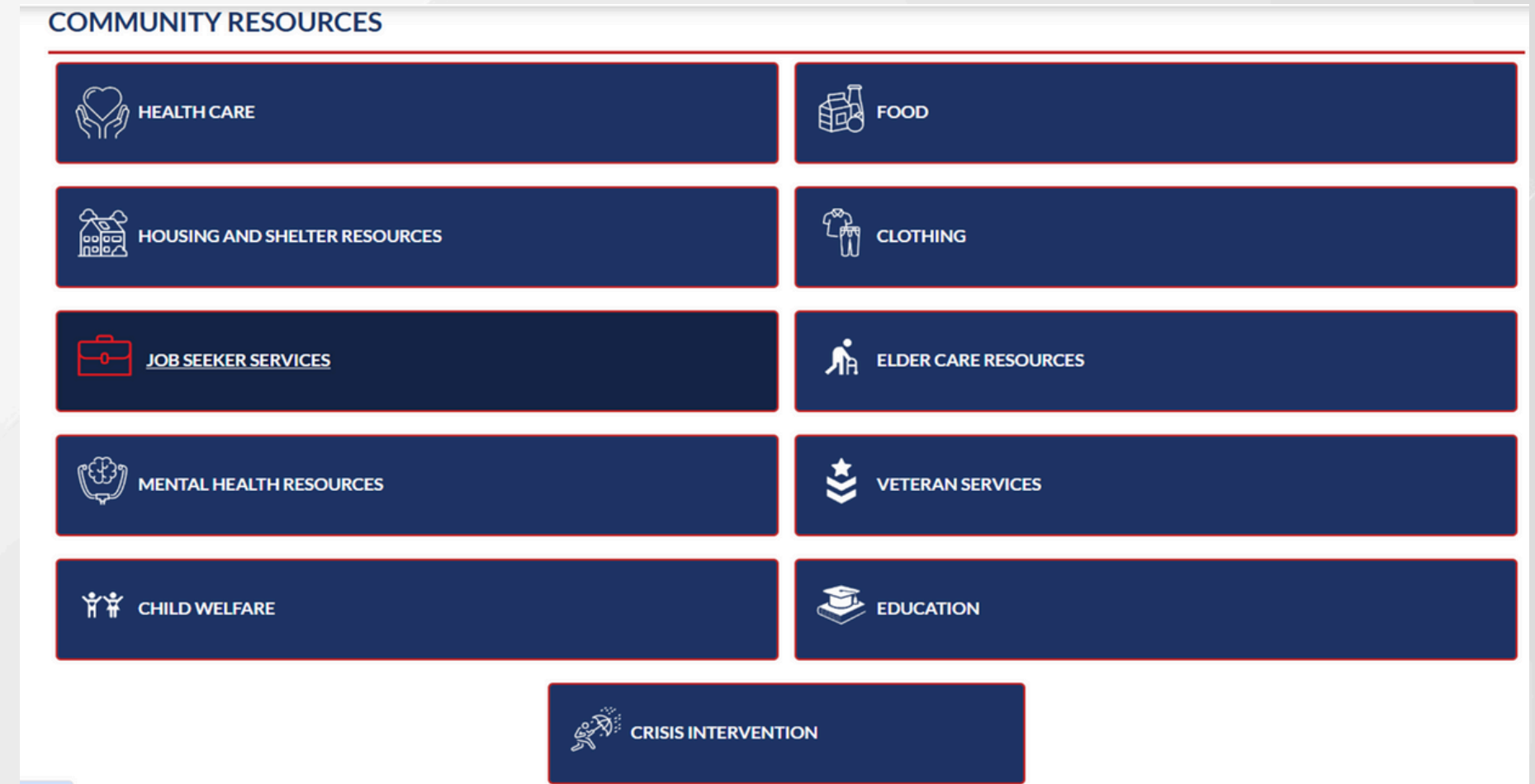
# Henry County VOAD and Community Resources Department

## Website and Mobile App

- Dedicated website for coordinated entry
- One-stop shop for all community resources
- Demonstrated the need for a Henry County specific VOAD



SCAN ME







# Questions?



[www.henrycountyga.gov](http://www.henrycountyga.gov)



# Overview of VOADs and Long-term Recovery Groups

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**LANITA LLOYD**

GEORGIA VOAD PRESIDENT

# National VOAD History

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**1969** Hurricane Camille hit Gulf Coast. Nonprofits rushed in to help with little communication or coordination resulting in a mixture of duplication of efforts and gaps in service.

Leading national organizations convened and formed National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) to reduce delivery gaps and duplications and resolve conflicts among agencies.

**1975** National VOAD begins forming State VOADs

**Today** NVOAD has a 100+ national members, 55 state/territory members, a full-time national staff, full board, and member subcommittees.

# Georgia VOAD Mission



Georgia VOAD is a network of voluntary organizations working together to encourage more efficient service delivery to people affected by disasters in the State of Georgia. Georgia VOAD achieves this by facilitating effective **cooperation, coordination, communication, and collaboration** at all community levels, and by providing a platform to foster partnerships among non-profit and faith-based organizations, the private sector, and government agencies.



# Achieving the 4 C's

## Cooperation, Coordination, Communication, Collaboration



**Georgia VOAD is NOT operational but is made up of independent organizations who are operational and provide services and resources to impacted communities.**



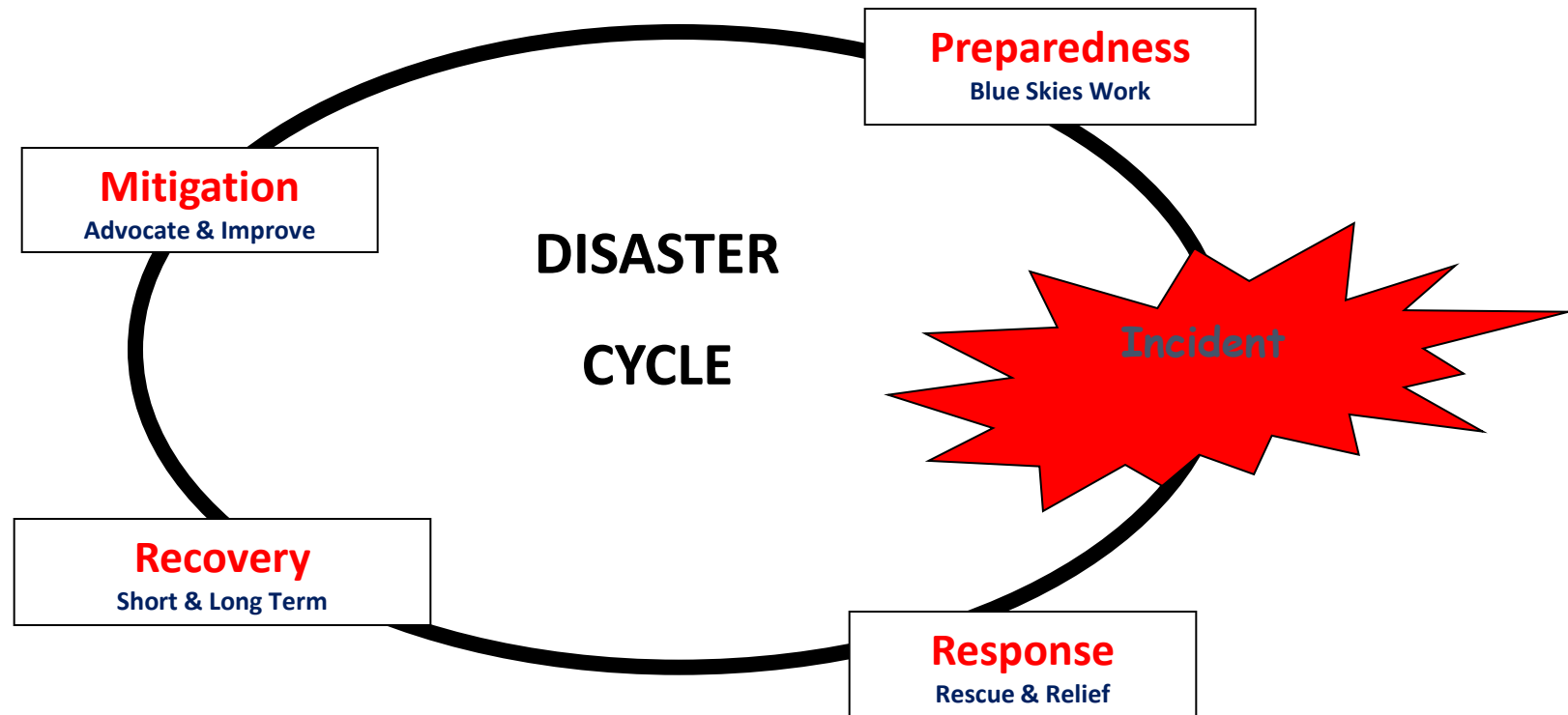
**Georgia VOAD facilitates the 4 C's among member organizations and the broader emergency community through:**

Regular meetings & conference calls  
Education and Trainings for members  
Coordination with Emergency Management  
Publications – Website / email communications

# Georgia VOAD Members

- American Red Cross
- Adventist Community Services
- Angel Flight Soars
- Atlanta Community Food Bank
- Baby2Baby
- Billy Graham Evangelical Association/Samaritans Purse
- Bulloch VOAD
- Convoy of Hope
- Coastal Empire Disaster Recovery Committee (CEDRC)
- North Georgia Conference, United Methodist Church
- Friends of Disabled Adults & Children
- Georgia Baptist Disaster Relief
- Georgia Food Bank Association
- HOPE Animal-Assisted Crisis Response (AACR)
- HOPE Worldwide
- Inspiritus
- ITDRC
- Lutheran Disaster Response
- MAP International
- Mercy Chefs
- Operation BBQ Relief
- Operation Blessing
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
- Rebuilding Hope
- South Georgia United Methodist Church
- SW Georgia COAD
- Team Rubicon USA
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter - Day Saints
- The Salvation Army, Georgia Division, Emergency Disaster Services
- Unity in Disasters
- United Way of Greater Atlanta 2-1-1
- World Renew Disaster Response Services
- MORE!

# Phases of a Disaster





# Georgia VOAD Member Services

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Advocacy

Bulk Distribution

Case Management

Child Care

Clean-Up and Rebuilding

Community Disaster Education

Community Outreach

Counseling

Damage Assessment

Debris Removal

Donations Management

Elder Care

Emergency Repairs

Emergency Assistance

Financial Assistance

Financial Planning

Funeral Services

Health Care

Health & Welfare Inquiries

Mass Care (Food, Shelter, etc.)

Mental Health Services

Mitigation Planning

Mobile Feeding

Organizational Mentoring

Pastoral Care

Pet Care

Radio Communication Services

Relocation Services

Resource Coordination

Sanitation Services

Special Needs

Technical Assistance

Training

Translation Services

Transportation Services

Volunteer Coordination

Warehouse Management

# Local Voluntary Groups

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**Local VOAD:** A community-based group of nonprofit, faith-based, and other voluntary organizations that come together to help prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters focusing on a local level, such as a county or another specific local geographical area.

**Long-term Recovery Group (LTRG) or Community Unmet Needs Group:** Comprised of local voluntary, faith-based and community organizations that join together to:

- Identify the disaster-related unmet needs of individuals and households impacted by disasters.
- Coordinate the delivery of resources to assist in the recovery of individuals and households impacted by disasters.

## Local Voluntary Groups

- Directly associated with local Emergency Management Agency
- Organizes dependent on the need of jurisdiction
- Provides services year-round assistance during all phases of disaster
- Operational

## Long-Term Recovery Groups

- Collaborates with local Emergency Management Agency and is community led
- Forms & disbands following a disaster
- Provides Long-Term Recovery – has specific timeline and mission
- Operational

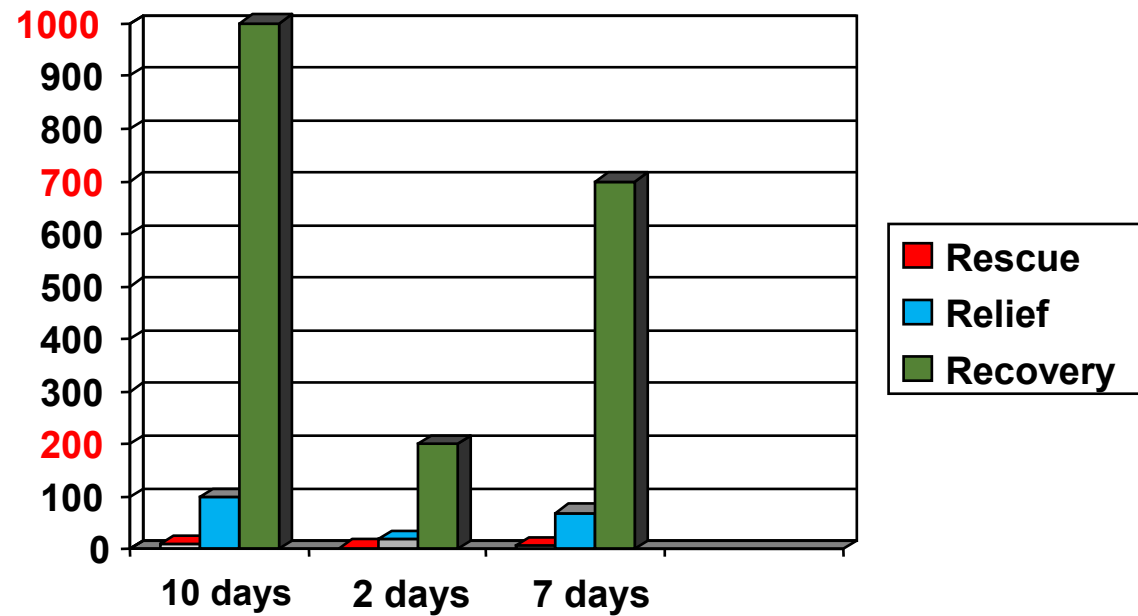
# Psychologic Effects of Disaster



# How Long Will Long-Term Recovery Last?

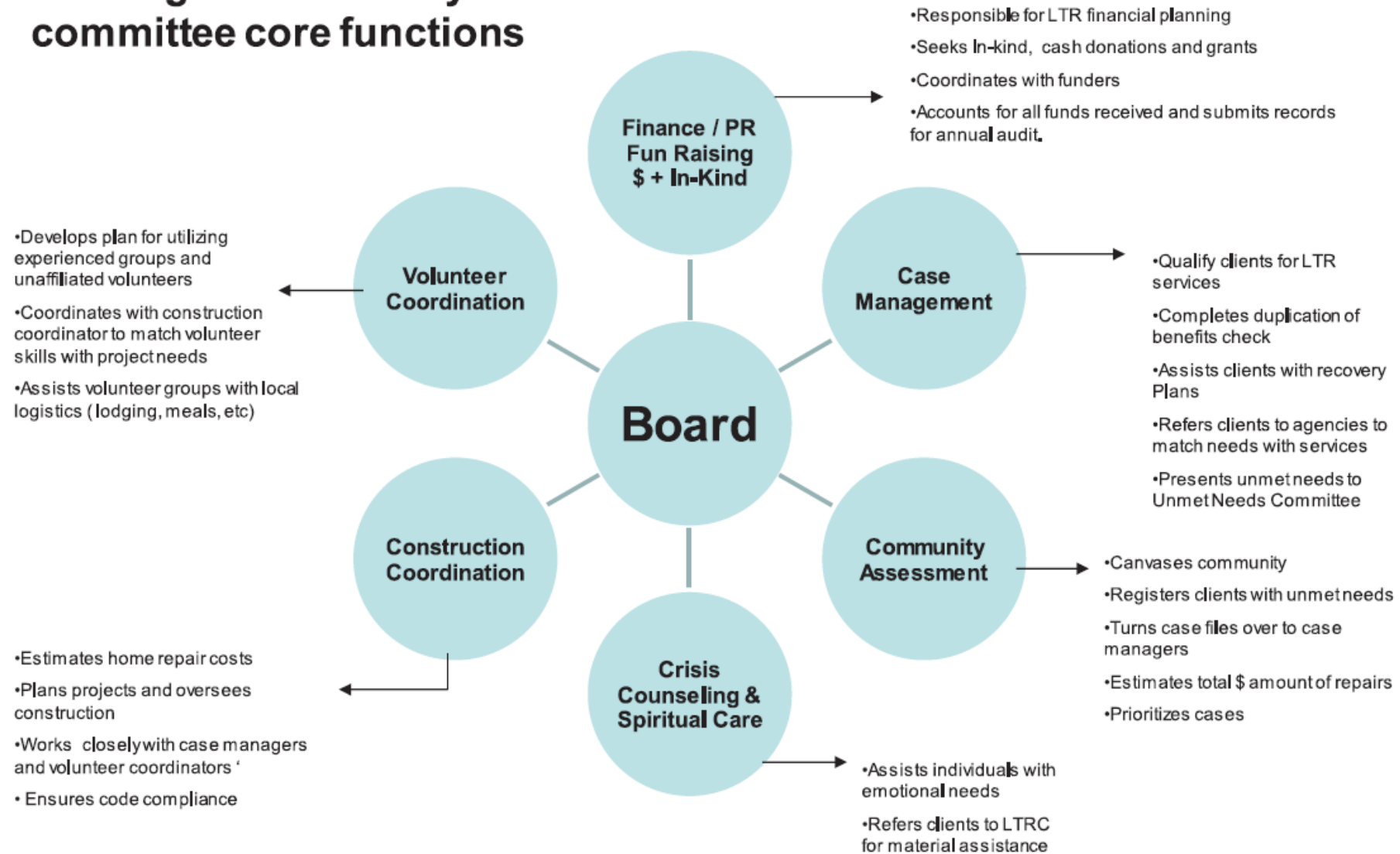
## “Rule of 10”

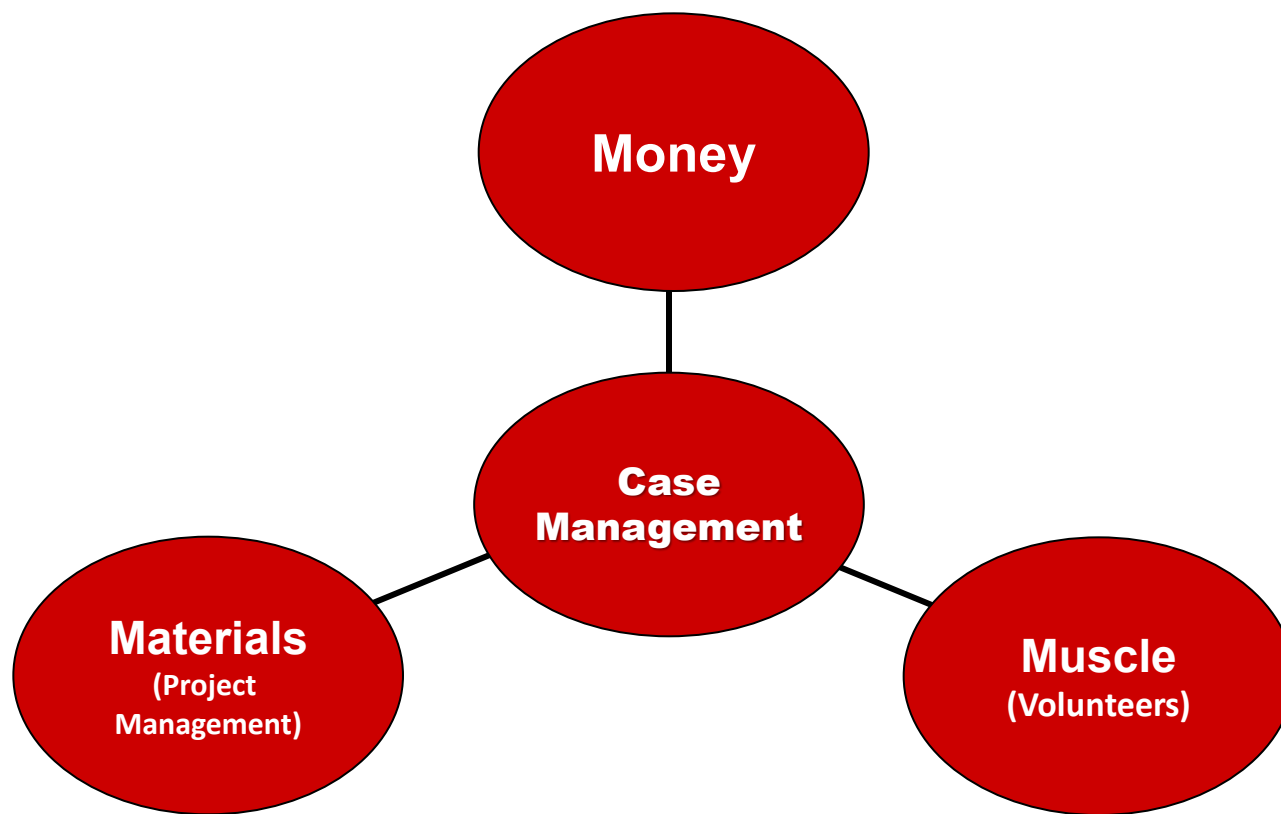
Rescue = X days, Relief = 10(X) days,  
Recovery = 10[10(x)] days





# Long term recovery committee core functions





# Who Should Participate?

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- Community Services
- Social and Human Services
- Businesses
- Municipal Government
- Tribal Entities
- Voluntary Agencies
- Churches
- Faith Based Organizations
- Civic Groups
- Mental Health Providers

# GA VOAD's Role

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- Assistance with **formation** of local groups
- **Ongoing support** as the community groups work through their processes
- **Liaison to NVOAD** for resources
- Assistance in **phasing out** of the disaster work

# Emergency Management Collaboration

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**ASHLEY TYE**

LOWNDES COUNTY  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY DIRECTOR



# Keys to Successful Partnerships

- **EMA Director = Single Point of Contact**
  - Streamlines coordination; reduces confusion for volunteers and county officials.
- **Plan for Volunteer Logistics**
  - Lodging, meals, showers, fuel, and safe staging areas must be built into county plans.
- **Regular Coordination Meetings**
  - EMA provides VOADs updates on county priorities
  - VOADs share information on available resources, capabilities, activities, and “ground truth”
  - Helps to identify unmet needs early



# Lessons from the Field



## Challenges

- Uneven VOAD capacity across counties (some strong, some limited).
- Managing public expectations: VOADs supplement, not replace, county services.
- Volunteer support needs (housing, sanitation, fuel) can strain local resources if not pre-planned.



## Opportunities

- Strong Coordination = Strong Outcomes:
  - Idalia showed the value of regular VOAD–EMA meetings.
- County Leaders Can Help:
  - Supporting Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs) ensures sustainability.
- VOADs as Force Multipliers:
  - Fill gaps in debris cleanup, case management, and unmet needs, especially for vulnerable populations.

# Long-Term Recovery Groups

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**JAY MULLINS**

COASTAL EMPIRE DISASTER RECOVERY  
COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# Coastal Empire Disaster Recovery Committee

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Coastal Empire Disaster  
Recovery Committee

# Coastal Empire Disaster Recovery Committee

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*To alleviate the impact to people in our community, the Coastal Empire Disaster Recovery Committee serves as a collaborative organization to prepare for, assist with, and recover from disasters.*



# THERE IS NO "I" IN CEDRC



Over the Moon Diaper Bank



SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA



United Way  
of the Coastal Empire



# CEDRC History

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Chatham County COAD

Hurricane Matthew – 2016

Hurricane Irma – 2017

Red Cross Grant – 2018

Nonprofit Status – 2019



# CEDRC History



85

84

83

82

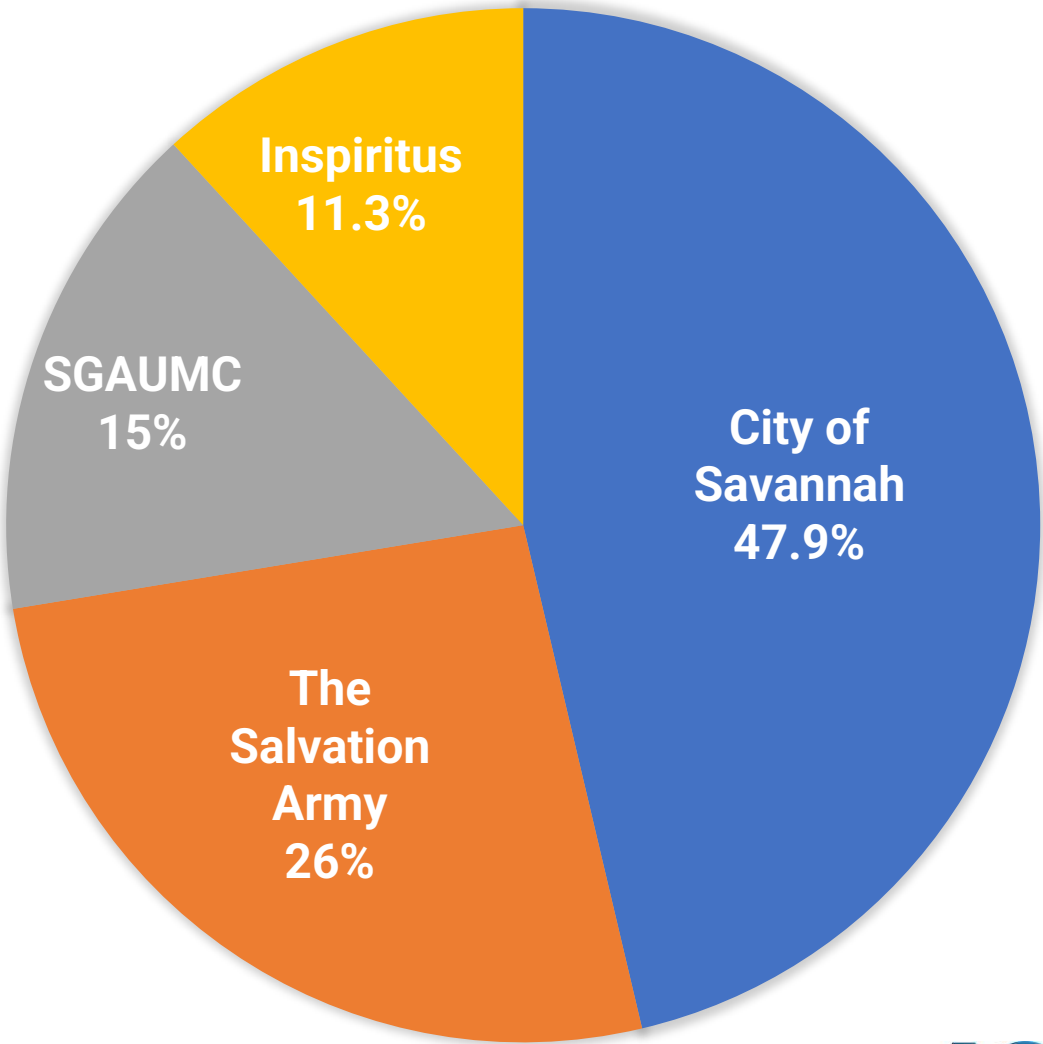
81



# By the Numbers

## AGENCY CASES COMPLETED

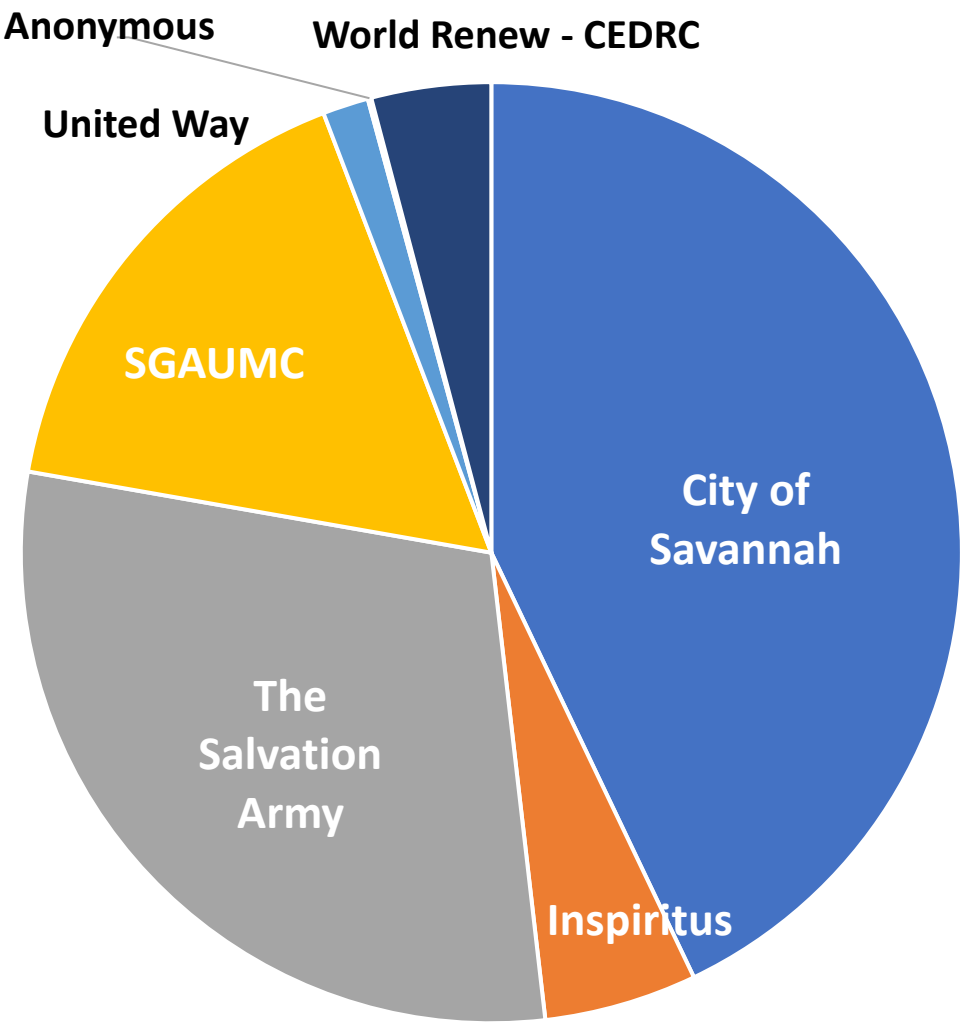
City of Savannah	102
The Salvation Army	55
SGAUMC	32
Inspiritus	24
TOTAL	213



# By the Numbers

## DIRECT FUNDING BY AGENCY

City of Savannah	\$583,901
Inspiritus	\$68,175
The Salvation Army	\$384,178
SGAUMC	\$213,299
United Way	\$20,450
Anonymous	\$1,550
World Renew - CEDRC	\$53,368
TOTAL	\$1,298,104



# Continuous Collaboration

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- Monthly Meetings as Board of Directors
- Monthly Member Organization Meetings
- GAVOAD Member



# CEDRC Currently

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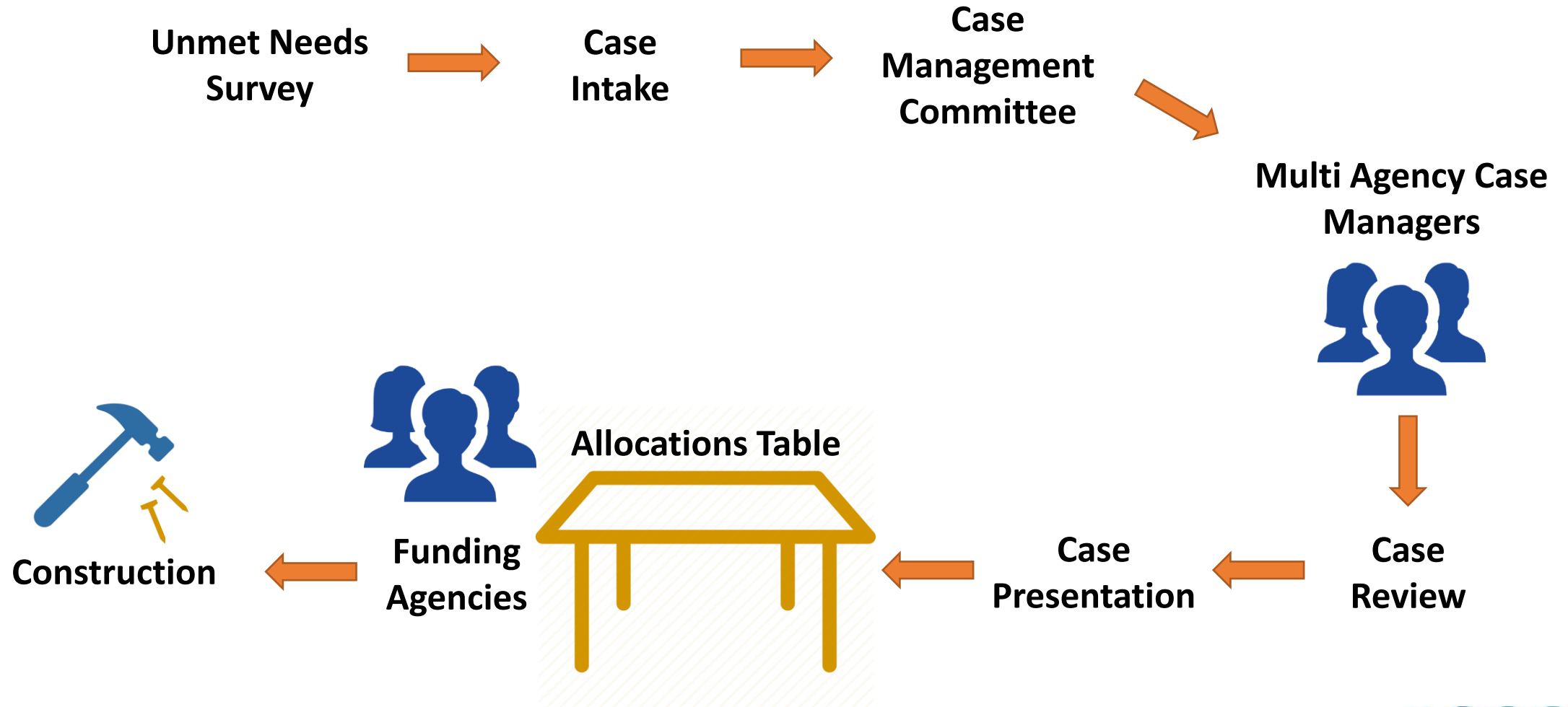
Multi-County LTRG

# Long-Term Recovery Project

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- Funded by American Red Cross
- Hurricane Helene funding
- Four Counties Served (Bryan, Chatham, Effingham, Liberty)

# Case Management Process



# Contact

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Coastal Empire  
Disaster Recovery Committee

[cedrcga@gmail.com](mailto:cedrcga@gmail.com)

[www.cedrcga.org](http://www.cedrcga.org)

[facebook.com/cedrcga](https://facebook.com/cedrcga)  
[@Cedrc\\_ga](https://twitter.com/Cedrc_ga)

# GEMA/HS Recovery Department Overview

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**STELLA KIM**

GEMA/HS COMMUNITY RECOVERY  
DEPARTMENT MANAGER



# Georgia Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency



## Community Recovery Department

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Stella Kim  
Community Recovery Department Manager



# Georgia Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency

## Community Recovery

### Mass Care Support

Assists ESF 6 and Dept of Human Services with evacuation, emergency sheltering and feeding.

### Individual Assistance

Federal Program that offers assistance to individuals & households in the community.

### Community Partnerships

Liaison between state and volunteer agencies during disasters to address unmet needs, volunteer and donations management.





# Georgia Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency

## Georgia VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster)

Statewide network of orgs who collaborate, communicate, coordinate and cooperate.

35+  
member  
orgs

**HOPE**  
Animal-Assisted  
Crisis Response



## Local VOAD or COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disaster)

Local network of partner organizations who plan for and lead the coordination of volunteer and donations following a disaster.



## Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs)

Cooperative body of local partners formed following a disaster that works to directly assist and families and individuals in recovery.





# Georgia Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency

## How do they help?

**Nonprofit and faith-based organizations can provide immediate emergency assistance and longer-term recovery assistance.**

Advocacy	Financial Assistance	Relocation Services
Bulk Distribution	Financial Planning	Resource Coordination
Case Management	Funeral Services	<u>Sheltering</u>
Child Care	Health Care	Sanitation Services
Clean-Up and Rebuilding	Health & Welfare Inquiries	Special Needs
<u>Clothing + Sanitation Items</u>	<u>Mass Care</u>	Technical Assistance
Community Outreach	<u>Mental Health Services</u>	<u>Translation Services</u>
Counseling	Mitigation Planning	Transportation Services
Damage Assessment	<u>Mobile Feeding</u>	Volunteer Coordination
Debris Removal	Organizational Mentoring	Warehouse Management
Donations Management	<u>Pastoral Care</u>	
Elder Care	Pet Care	
<u>Emergency Rapid Repairs</u>	Radio Comm. Services	



# Georgia Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency

## Avoiding the Second Disaster

Plans matter when it comes to maximizing volunteer impact and managing unsolicited donations and spontaneous volunteers.



This or  
That?





# Georgia Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency

## HEARTS GEORGIA

Committed Support, Safe Shelter

Georgia's first non-congregate sheltering program supporting unhoused survivors for up to 6 months. 455 households and over 1,300 individuals sheltered in hotel/motels and/or travel trailers.



Georgia's largest Disaster Case Management Program award of over \$22 million and hiring nearly 100 case manager to support 63 counties



Coordinating long-term recovery groups with local county stakeholders and officials. 6 LTRGs operational, 5 in development, and 10 interested.



- Hurricane Michael: Completed all 20 county Disaster Recovery & Redevelopment Plans
- January Tornadoes – Awarded nearly 1 million
- Hurricane Helene/Debby/Idalia – Awarded 3.9 Million





# Questions?

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**Stella Kim, Department Manager**

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# Questions?

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**THANK YOU!**