



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Community Economic Development



Rural Development Helps Assist with Hurricane Irma Efforts



Outline Of Need: In September Hurricane Irma made a direct hit to Florida’s coast as a category 4 storm, spreading much destruction throughout the state. There were massive power outages, communities and homes were flooded and some of these structures were destroyed. Businesses were lost, and many roadways remained closed due to an enormous amount of debris.

How Rural Development Helped: In addition to putting out special emergency communications and instructions to all programs on how to best aid those affected, USDA Rural Development was also able to assist by manning Disaster Recover Centers throughout the state.

A Disaster Recovery Center is a readily accessible facility or mobile office where survivors may go for information about our programs or other disaster assistance programs, and to ask questions related to their case. Emergency Preparedness, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), volunteer groups and other agencies are at the centers to answer questions

about disaster assistance and low-interest disaster loans for homeowners, renters and businesses. They can also help survivors apply for federal disaster assistance.

The Results: Many people coming into the Disaster Recovery Centers have lost everything. It is very important to be sensitive to their plights, as well as to provide options for assistance.

Champions Gate Area Director, Catrina Southall answered the call for help in Hillsborough County, one of the 9 counties serviced by her office. Ms. Southall set up shop at Hillsborough County Community College (at the Regent) and answered many questions related to USDA Rural Development programs, including the 504 Home Repair Loan Program. Concerted field service efforts like these play a big part in helping hurricane survivors realize assistance possibilities available through RD.

Fast Facts

Program: USDA Rural Development Community Economic Development and General RD Programs Outreach

Date: September 28th 2017

Investment: RD Staff hours and set-up to help with recovery efforts.

Congressional District: Congressman Richard Nugent, District 11

Partners: FEMA, SBA, Red Cross

Demographics: Hillsborough County

Impact: Information and resources provided for home repair loans



Southall assists the public at a FEMA Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) located in Hillsborough County, FL