

Tennessee Valley Hurricane Relief Resource Fair
A Summary of Needs Inventory

Compiled by
Department of Social Work
Alabama A & M University
October 27, 2005

Introduction

On October 20, 2005, evacuees of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita completed a Needs Inventory with the assistance of twenty-three community and student social work volunteers.

The needs assessment was spearheaded by the Church Hurricane Relief Task Force, comprised of representatives of the faith community and service agencies in Huntsville-Madison County. Its purpose was to two fold: 1) to determine the current needs of evacuees, and 2) to connect them with available resources within the community.

Household Composition

A total of 97 evacuees completed the needs inventory. Of this number 15 were single adults. The remaining families included 85 minor children.

Temporary Residence

There were 21 evacuees living in hotels/motels, 6 living in trailers at Monte Sano Park, 16 living with relatives/friends, 23 in houses or apartments.

Most evacuees are planning to remain in Huntsville or its surrounding communities. There were 12 evacuees who want to return to their home state or elsewhere, and 2 were undecided.

Current Needs

Evacuees were asked to check the items below to identify their needs. Social workers interviewed them to add more detail to the items checked.

<u>29</u> Food/prepared meals	<u>62</u> Furniture	<u>10</u> School supplies
<u>54</u> Clothing	<u>19</u> Counseling	<u>65</u> Dental or eye care
<u>38</u> Finding House/Apt.	<u>48</u> Finding a job	<u>39</u> Toiletries
<u>31</u> Help with deposits	<u>56</u> Medical care	<u>50</u> Movie or event passes
<u>14</u> Child care	<u>42</u> Prescriptions	<u>26</u> Recreation activities
Transportation	<u>11</u> School concerns	<u>17</u> Spiritual
<u>36</u> Need a car		
<u>20</u> Auto Repair	<u>15</u> Grieving/depressed	<u>42</u> Household goods
<u>3</u> Ride to school work or shopping	<u>16</u> Light hauling service	<u>37</u> Paper goods

1 Shuttle passes

64 Gift gas card

44 Cleaning products

25 Laundromat services

___ Other, please specify

Grill to cook outside

Help with SBA paperwork

Cell phone minutes

Winter clothing

Trouble getting approved for Medicaid

3 Have not received the initial money from FEMA

Urgent medical, dental and vision needs include the following:

Asthma treatment and nebulizer

Diabetic needs, e.g. pills, insulin, testing supplies

Heart medication urgently needed

Ear doctor ASAP

Dental pain, broken partial

Baby with digestive disorder and club foot - needs doctor

Prenatal care

Sleep apnea, liver disease, autoimmune disease

22 Social work volunteer to connect you with resources for all needs or concerns.

3 Authorization to release information not signed

Employment skills

Research attorney, in private practice 15 years

Realtor, 15 years of experience

Certified dental radiologist

Business owner in management and sales

Major Needs

1. Medical, dental and vision care, including prescriptions is a major need among evacuees. Many have Medicaid and need to be connected with appropriate providers. Some have no insurance coverage, but can qualify for temporary Medicaid by applying at the Madison County Health Department or Central North Health Care.

2. Another major need among evacuees is warm clothing. Many of the inventories included size. Evacuees without transportation need assistance to connect with church clothing closets and other community providers.

3. Transportation is a major need. Twenty (20) evacuees have a car that needs repairs. An estimated cost of repairs is needed, along with partnerships with vehicle repair companies to assist. Gas cards were requested by 64 evacuees. However, 36

evacuees have no car at this time. The actual number of evacuees that need a gas card at this time appears to be 28.

4. Finding a job will involve connecting evacuees with the Alabama Career System's One Stop Employment Office, and providing support and assistance in helping them enhance their job search skills. Matching them with the right volunteer support will be critical to their success.

5. Permanent housing is a major concern. Evacuees indicated concerns about their how long they can remain in their temporary housing and want help to locate and move to a permanent affordable home. Current resources are inadequate to meet this need. Most families must increase their income through full-time employment before they can obtaining permanent housing.

Meeting the Major Needs of Evacuees

Connecting each individual/family with community resources involves a substantial commitment of volunteer time and one-on-one involvement. Each family that indicated the need for counseling and social work support will have a volunteer to provide case management services coordinated by the Department of Social Work at Alabama A & M University.

Assistance from the Church Hurricane Task Force will be needed to provide all other support services for individuals/families.

Marilyn V. Mabry, ACSW, LCSW
Assistant Social Work Professor
Alabama A & M University