Data Management: Local Church Data Collection

Why, Who, What, When, How

Our coalition leadership team helps you gather data and stories to track and share how your church is responding to disasters, crises, and critical needs in the community.

Why
Sharing stories raises awareness of local needs and service opportunities, encourages the church, demonstrates God's love for our neighbors, and proves helpful when requesting support or funding. It also helps The Church Responds share more broadly the stories of how churches are responding, individually and collectively, across many local church coalitions. *Story examples can be found in the Houston Responds e-news and coalition annual updates at www.houstonresponds.org.*

Who
Our coalition leadership team provides guidance, reminders, and any support needed to collect and share data. We recommend designating a point person for collecting data and sharing your data.

What
The Church Responds and our local coalition collect data on church response to disaster, crisis, or critical need in the community, by individual churches or church collaborations. *Definitions of key metrics are available in the "Local Church Data Collection: Accuracy & Definitions" section.*

When
To make it easier and more accurate, we recommended that you collect data monthly and share it with the leadership team monthly or quarterly, at the very least. Our coalition leadership team provides a monthly rhythm and reminders for sharing data.

How
We provide a simple Google Form for sharing your monthly data, which will be sent at regular monthly intervals. We can also provide a summary of your previous data if helpful.

Support
If you need assistance collecting or sharing your data, our leadership team and The Church Responds are glad to help. Feel free to contact your leadership for any help that you need.

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Accuracy & Definitions

The sooner you collect and share your data, the more efficient and accurate it will be. When data was not collected at the time of an event, but there is a memory of it, we encourage making conservative estimates. The following are basic definitions of metrics for tracking congregational activity, specifically in response to disasters, crises, and critical needs in the community.

Projects
Any activity undertaken by individuals or groups in a congregation or in collaboration with other churches (e.g., food distribution, home repair, compassionate care training).

Volunteer Hours
Volunteer hours (vs. individual volunteers); from planning a food distribution to physically distributing food. All volunteer hours in the process may be included.

People Served
Distinct families or individuals served through congregation activities.

Home Repairs
A home repair project completed, however defined, from a specific project to complete restoration.

Labor and Materials
The total cost of paid labor, materials, and any other related expenses.

Distributions
Distributions made by churches to people in need, either monetary (e.g., for rent, utilities) or in-kind, including goods and services such as food, water, construction materials, or a tradesperson's services. In-kind distributions are valued at the market rate.

The Church Responds provides guidance for valuing in-kind donations and distributions.