



CAPABILITY STATEMENT

DISASTER RESPONSE SERVICES



DISASTER RESPONSE SERVICES (DRS) SNAPSHOT

As of FY23, DRS has engaged **46,750 VOLUNTEERS** to complete **49,709 REPAIRS AND REBUILDS**, help **469,797 FAMILIES** receive assistance, and respond to **325 DISASTERS**.

Who is World Renew?

World Renew is a faith-based international development and humanitarian organization, working since 1962 to address the root causes and impacts of poverty, disaster, and injustice. With a USD \$45.6 million budget in 2023, we work with 67 local partners and have a long-term presence in 19 countries in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, bringing permanent, sustainable change to vulnerable communities and working towards the Sustainable Development Goals. We provide consultation, technical assistance, and funding to build the capacity of our partners as they implement programs that integrate food security, health, economic opportunities, peacebuilding and justice, disaster response and preparedness, and gender equality. As an industry leader in local ownership of programs, we use Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) methodologies so communities can identify challenges, evaluate their assets, and generate their own solutions.

Our Domestic Disaster Response Work

World Renew responds to natural and human-made disasters by providing assistance worldwide. In North America, this work is carried out by Disaster Response Services (DRS), which has been responding to disasters and serving communities in North America since 1972. When hurricanes, flooding, tornadoes, or wildfires hit, a range of services are provided to community organizations in the days, months, and years after a disaster. DRS conducts unmet needs assessments, clean-up and debris removal, organizational capacity building, and reconstruction. DRS partners with local long-term recovery organizations (LTROs) in their relief efforts with the goal of strengthening their institutional and technical capacities, and encouraging the transition to ongoing community development whenever feasible. For example, BRACE (Be Ready Alliance Coordinating for Emergencies), a LTRO in Pensacola, FL, transitioned to a permanent community-based disaster coalition and named DRS their partner of the year in 2017 for its community involvement. DRS aims to strengthen under-resourced communities as they face the possibility of undergoing multiple disasters. During the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction phases, DRS maintains and builds long-term community capacity and reduces risks for future disasters.

Key Programming Approaches

- **Reconstruction:** DRS provides volunteer site leadership and workers to repair homes. Vetted volunteer groups contribute 1-3 weeks of labor, often with multiple groups at one location, and long-term programs send back-to-back groups for 1-5 years. Volunteers sign up as individuals, couples, churches, schools or businesses to support the reconstruction.

- **Volunteers:** Facilitated by staff, DRS' entire process is carried out by trained volunteers and leaders at regional and local site levels. Volunteers prepare trucks and trailers at the DRS warehouse with the right tools and housing resources for reconstruction sites, they conduct needs assessment surveys, and coordinate construction and repairs on disaster-impacted homes.
- **Partnerships:** DRS partners with local LTROs which have the best knowledge of their community's needs. LTROs provide case management support for families, including reconstruction and building materials, while DRS provides labor and tools for rebuilding and restoring homes. DRS Regional Managers act as consultants to LTROs, sharing information and connections for their development.

Our Expertise in Domestic Disaster Response

In the US, DRS works in collaboration with Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs), which consist of nonprofit organizations that respond to local, state, and national disasters. To date, National VOAD members coordinated 9.9 million volunteers who logged 48 million volunteer hours. DRS is a founding member of the National VOAD, whose mission is to facilitate communication, collaboration, and cooperation among members to help coordinate their work, avoid duplication, and maximize resources in times of disaster. The DRS Director maintains a strong relationship with the National VOAD, while Regional Managers manage state-level relationships. DRS also collaborates with disaster response organizations such as Mennonite, Lutheran, United Methodist and Catholic organizations, the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army. DRS cascades knowledge and expertise by using mentorship of experienced volunteers to train new leaders. This mentorship along with participation in National VOAD trainings and committees builds our expertise. Staff and volunteer leaders regularly attend federal and state VOAD conferences for ongoing learning, networking and sharing of best practices. Volunteer leaders have attended the Spiritual First Aid Summit through the Humanitarian Disaster Institute, as well as training from the Trauma Healing Institute. This supports World Renew's holistic approach in caring for disaster-impacted communities.

Evidence of Impact

Following Hurricane Maria, which devastated Puerto Rico and part of other Caribbean islands, DRS began a three-year response (2018-2020) followed by another 6 month response in 2022-2023, which included organizational capacity building and multiple reconstruction sites in five different communities in Puerto Rico. World Renew Canadian and United States donors provided nearly \$1 million USD to Hurricane Maria efforts. In total, more than 20,000 volunteer hours were spent building the capacity of a local partner, Stronger than Maria, and repairing or rebuilding 53 homes. Homes damaged from the hurricane were repaired by DRS volunteer teams, including repairing roofs, installing new floors and windows, replacing drywall, painting walls, and so much more.

Best Practices & Innovations

- **Long-term Response:** While the media's attention to disasters ends after a few weeks, disaster survivors often face challenges for years to come. DRS may not be the first one to show up, as we do not provide immediate disaster relief, but often is the last to leave. Often years later it is still necessary to muck out flooded homes, remove downed trees, tarp roofs, replace flooring, drywall, roofs, and more. When work is complete volunteers make finishing touches and hold a ceremony to celebrate the completion of a home.
- **Unmet Needs Assessment:** 5-12 months after a disaster, with the invitation of a LTRO, trained and supervised volunteer teams conduct door-to-door community surveys or set up walk-in centers to determine long-term recovery needs of vulnerable survivors, connecting them with resources and local support.

