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Isaac M. O'Bannon • Sep. 19, 2017



When natural disasters strike, Americans naturally want to help. And that feeling of compassion is doubled when those catastrophes happen to our neighbors, our fellow citizens.

Such was the case recently in the aftermath of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma in Texas, Florida and other states. But sometimes, the disaster can be so overwhelming and widespread, that a prospective good-doer doesn't know where to start.

## Don't Try to Send Clothes and Physical Goods

As a result of the hurricanes, many of the roadways, railways and other

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possible. According to federal officials and many experts, financial donations are the most immediate way to assist in recovery. The safest way is to donate to organizations that already have infrastructures in place that can handle mass disaster assistance programs, and also have the recognition and respect of local officials. This means they will have the ability to quickly establish operations in towns and rural areas affected by the storm.

## Reputable Charities Helping with Hurricanes Harvey and Irma

The **American Red Cross** is often the first organization to set up shelters for disaster victims across the country. Donations can be made directly via text (text Harvey or Irma to 90999), or by phone at 800-RED-CROSS.

Donations can also be sent to the **Salvation Army** via text (text Storm to 51555) or phone 800-SAL-ARMY. Both organizations also accept donations via their websites, and some companies collect on their behalf. Amazon and Whole Foods are matching cash donations to the Red Cross up to \$1 million total.

The **United Way** is helping with immediate housing needs such as home repair and services, while **Catholic Charities** is coordinating food, clothing and shelter operations for victims of both storms. They accept donations via their website and texting CCUSADISASTER to 71777.

**Save the Children** is helping deliver baby supplies such as cribs, strollers, formula and diapers, as well as setting up children's areas in shelters. Local religious organizations across the country also often work through their national body and through additional charitable organizations to reach those who need help.

## Avoid Disaster Relief Scams

Unfortunately, there are always a few unscrupulous people who will try to benefit

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## Disaster Relief and Charity Apps

For those who are inclined to get involved through their mobile device, there are several apps that enable charitable giving, including for disaster relief operations for Hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

[Charity Navigator](#)

[CharityBox](#)

[Catholic Charities MobileCause](#)

[Givo Charity](#)

[One Today](#)

[PhilantrhoPal](#)

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