



Is Your Company Prepared for the Next Disaster?

Updated 17 July 2018

Summer is upon us. Unfortunately, so is disaster season. Last year was unprecedented, with eight major disasters occurring within just a few short months of one another. Forecasters estimate [hurricane activity to be higher than normal this year](#) for the United States, and crises such as floods and volcanic eruptions have already devastated communities in Guatemala and Hawaii. Companies need to get strategic now to prepare for the next disaster.

Around the world, [disasters are increasing in frequency and severity](#), predominantly due to climate change and related factors, such as warmer oceans and rising sea levels. The power of natural disasters is stunning—but so is people’s capacity to help in their aftermath. Did you know that [80 percent of all disaster giving happens during the first 72 hours](#) after a disaster, and last year, at the height of disaster season, [donor generosity](#) on GlobalGiving didn’t wane? When a disaster strikes, donors are motivated to give quickly and easily, and often look to their employers as a source of information. When governments have limited resources, companies are called upon to take a leadership role and provide additional disaster relief support.

In a time when consumers and employees so often wish to support nonprofit organizations responding to disasters with charitable donations, is your company ready for the next disaster? Here are four ways your company can get prepared now:

1. [Develop your response strategy before a disaster strikes](#)

Does your company have an existing policy on what type of disaster relief and recovery it will or will not support? If not, now might be the best time for your senior leadership to think through your strategy. Will you respond to both natural and manmade disasters? What about humanitarian versus environmental crises? With a limited budget available, some companies restrict response only to areas where they have operations or

employees. In cases that involve major loss of life or damage, many make exceptions. Companies should additionally consider the political component of responding in certain areas. By going through the process of difficult decision-making and determining your disaster relief budget in advance of a disaster, your team will be able to respond quickly and cohesively to employee and customer expectations.

2. Consider your company's long game

When a major disaster strikes, is your company going to be interested in supporting immediate relief, long-term recovery efforts, or a combination of the two? The United Nations estimates that five times more is spent on disaster response than reduction. Yet, for every \$1 invested in disaster preparedness, \$7 is saved in disaster recovery costs. GlobalGiving's unique disaster approach, through its [Disaster Recovery Network](#), covers the entire disaster lifecycle and can be leveraged to provide both immediate relief donation options, as well as preparedness and long-term recovery in the form of international grants and nonprofit capacity building. In 2017 alone, GlobalGiving facilitated more than \$30 million in individual donations and corporate grants to our nonprofit disaster partners. Many of our partners in Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Texas continue to receive grants from GlobalGiving. They live and work in regions impacted by disaster, and they'll be there for the long haul, making their communities more resilient to future crises.

3. Identify potential disaster relief nonprofit partners now

Building relationships with potential nonprofit partners in areas of strategic importance to your company is a key step in disaster planning. Many funders are surprised to learn that nonprofits are typically very busy responding in the field after a disaster, which can pose delays in them being available for funding discussions. [In addition, certain countries have complex regulations that restrict or prohibit foreign funding.](#) By doing your due diligence now and developing strong relationships with disaster partners proactively, your ability to respond will be that much more impactful. In addition, your team will also want to determine your preference to work through either a large NGO, smaller local organizations, or both. During times of disaster, GlobalGiving is able to respond quickly, in part because we already have relationships established with thousands of vetted nonprofit partners in 160 countries. We work with large, established partners as well as smaller, highly effective local partners, who we firmly believe know their communities best.

4. Involve your employees in disaster decision-making

Does your company provide opportunities for employees to give to disaster charities? Does the company match these and is there a cap on the amount? Perhaps your company prefers to make grants from its foundation, can it do so internationally? If your company already has an employee giving program, details should be centrally located in one place, where all employees know they can easily find up to date information. If you don't yet have an employee giving strategy, consider expanding your decision-making to include them. When 3M surveyed its employees on what causes they cared about in 2016, disaster giving topped the list. Using the feedback they received, [3M launched a GlobalGiving disaster giving page](#), which can be updated with current disaster giving

options at a moment's notice, enabling employees to immediately support nonprofits responding.

This piece was originally published by [GlobalGiving](#).

AUTHORS



Nicole Morrissey

Corporate Partnerships
GlobalGiving

The Conference Board is the Member-driven think tank that delivers *Trusted Insights for What's Ahead*[®]. Founded in 1916, we are a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization holding 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt status in the United States. [TCB.org](https://www.tcb.org) | [Learn about Membership](#)

© 2026 The Conference Board, Inc.