

Florida Launches Hurricane Ian Assistance Portal

By Hector Flores

I hope all of you and your families enjoyed a restful and healthy Thanksgiving. With all we have been through these past two months, the holiday was a welcome respite. On Monday, my county colleagues and I will be right back to work to ensure our community is getting all the assistance needed to ensure a full recovery from Hurricane Ian.

Charlotte County residents impacted by Hurricane Ian can apply to the state for recovery resources, including housing and sheltering. Residents unable to remain in their homes due to damage caused by Hurricane Ian, and are not eligible for FEMA individual assistance, may receive temporary sheltering and temporary or permanent home repairs. Unmet needs, such as transportation, senior services, or household supplies, may also be fulfilled.

To apply, visit [lanRecovery.fl.gov/unite](https://lanrecovery.fl.gov/unite) or call 800-892-0948.

Some sheltering and housing assistance programs may require you to register for FEMA Individual Assistance. Hurricane Ian survivors can apply for FEMA assistance and continuously update their applications by visiting DisasterAssistance.gov, calling 800-621-3362 or visiting the Disaster Recovery Center at Tringali Park recreation center in Englewood.

Charlotte County's debris contractor, AshBritt, passed a major recovery milestone Sunday when it collected its 2 millionth cubic yard of debris. More than 170 crews are collecting about 50,000 cubic yards of debris per day, seven days a week. We estimate the final debris tally will far exceed our revised estimate of 2.5 million cubic yards and will still take several more months.

To view a dashboard featuring a heat map of where debris has been collected, visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov/debris.

We continue to operate two temporary debris drop-off sites, one at 7000 Florida St., east of Punta Gorda and another next to the Placida West boat ramp at 12560 Placida Road. Residents can also use the mini-transfer facilities on 19765 Kenilworth Blvd., in Port Charlotte and 7070 Environmental Way in Englewood.

Tens of thousands of residents already have taken advantage of these debris drop-off sites. Between Oct. 6 and Nov. 21, more than 24,000 loads of debris have been dropped off at the four locations.

The Florida Department of Emergency Management is now accepting applications from private and commercial property owners who would like assistance for the assessment and removal of qualifying debris, including vehicles. Please keep in mind, contractors hired by the state will visit your property to conduct an assessment to determine if you are eligible for debris collection.

They should have identification indicating they are working for the state Division of Emergency Services.

To apply, visit www.IanDebrisCleanup.com or call 850-961-2002. For information, call the Hurricane Ian Debris hotline 8 a.m.-8 p.m., Monday-Friday and 9 a.m.-5 p.m., weekends or email IanDebrisCleanup@em.myflorida.com.

Readers may reach County Administrator Hector Flores at Hector.Flores@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.