

Know your rights

Identification

You shouldn't need identification to receive emergency supplies or stay at most emergency shelters, but you may be asked to provide some. Identification may include a photo or non-photo ID; it does not necessarily mean you need to supply a driver's license, passport, or social security number. Some organizations offer community IDs for those who do not qualify for a state-issued ID. This is only available in some counties, however, and may not be accepted depending on the county or location. Places that offer them include: Legal Aid in Broward County; Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County; Human Rights Coalition/RWHP in Alachua County.

Staying safe and informed

Going to a shelter or government-run site can be intimidating. Here are some tips:

- Use the buddy system: There is safety in numbers. Go with multiple people to feel more confident in getting the help you need.
- Find an English speaker: Someone who speaks English well may be able to help you if you are worried about experiencing language barriers.
- Request language interpretation: When talking to police, firefighters, or hospital workers, you have a legal right to an interpreter. Other agencies and institutions may have access to interpreters and translators as well.
- Contact an advocacy organization: Farmworker and immigrant advocacy organizations may be able to help you get the supplies and food you need at a safe space. Check with the ones listed in this brochure.
- Talk to your faith community: Speak with your local pastor, members of your place of worship, or someone else you trust about your options.



“Our community needs trust. And to build the trust between our community is something that will take some time, and also education.”

—Giovana Perazzo
Promotora de salud, RWHP

Legal resources

There are many resources for immigrants, migrant workers, and farmworkers in Florida in case you are in need of legal help. (Disclaimer: We are not offering legal advice; this is only to offer contact information for organizations that can offer legal resources and services.)

Florida Immigrant Coalition

Phone: 1-888-600-5762 for referrals to legal services; info@flic.org
They also offer free printable “Know Your Rights” cards in Spanish and English.

Florida Legal Services has offices in Newberry and Orlando. Phone: 407-801-4350

Florida Rural Legal Services assists people in Lee, Polk, Palm Beach, St. Lucie, Martin, Okeechobee, Indian River, Highlands, Hardee, Hendry, Charlotte, Desoto, and Glade Counties.

Farmworkers can call from 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.: 1-855-771-3077

Unemployment during disasters

If you are an agricultural worker on a temporary visa and you lose a job when a flood or storm hits, your employer must give you up to 75% of your lost wages. This is a federal law. If you are an H2-A worker and your employer does not provide them, you can file a complaint with the Department of Labor. (This website has instructions in English and Spanish.) Some people have reported retaliation for making a complaint. You can tell the Department of Labor if you think this has happened to you.

Grist

This informational brochure was created by Grist (grist.org), a nonprofit, independent media organization dedicated to highlighting climate solutions and uncovering environmental injustices. If you have questions, please contact: community@grist.org.

Cover photo: A displaced damaged mobile home is seen in the middle of a road in Steinhatchee, Florida on August 30, 2023 after Hurricane Idalia made landfall. Photo by Chandan Khanna / AFP / Getty Images

How to prepare for a disaster



Check out our digital guide to find more resources located in north and central Florida.



A guide for immigrant community members to stay safe, access food and emergency supplies, and navigate the days after a hurricane

Be prepared for a hurricane

A hurricane is a type of tropical storm that has extremely high winds, strong rain, and storm surge. They are rated by category (1 through 5, with 5 being the strongest) and can be deadly, causing flooding and damage to homes.

Evacuation routes

Do you know which road to take if you need to evacuate? Florida's evacuation routes for each county can be found in English (You'll need to use Google Translate to translate the page).

Pack an emergency kit

It's important to pack a kit of supplies for your family to get ready for hurricane season, which is usually strongest from August through October. Try to gather as much as you can ahead of time, in case shelves are empty at stores.

Some of the most important things to have:

- Water (1 gallon per person per day for several days)
- Food (at least a several-day supply of non-perishable food), can opener
- Medicines and documentation of your medical needs
- Documents (ID, proof of citizenship if you have it, an electric or phone bill to prove your address, a lease if you're renting)
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio (with batteries)
- Flashlight (with batteries)
- First aid kit
- Masks, hand sanitizer, and trash bags
- Wrench or pliers
- Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery
- Diapers and wipes for babies and children
- Sandbags: These won't stop water completely or protect you from waves or storm surge, but they can reduce the amount of water that gets into your home. Usually, counties or cities offer free sandbags. You have to have proof of residency, so bring a phone bill/electric bill or an ID card.

Where to get cheap or free supplies

It can be expensive to build a kit, so try buying an extra gallon of water or can of food when you go to the grocery over the course of a few weeks. Although this varies depending on where you are, here are some places that may provide supplies or could connect you with organizations that offer them: Local churches or places of worship; food banks; libraries; American Red Cross; family Resource Centers; school backpack programs

What is FEMA?

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is an agency under the Department of Homeland Security, so you may see DHS logos at its sites. FEMA shows up after a major disaster is declared by the president to offer financial assistance and resources to individuals; it also helps state, tribal, and local governments pay for the cost of removing debris and rebuilding public infrastructure.

If you are a U.S. citizen or meet certain qualifications as a non-citizen, you could be eligible for financial assistance after a disaster. Regardless of citizenship or immigration status, if you are affected by a federally declared disaster, you may be eligible for crisis counseling, disaster legal services, disaster case management, medical care, shelter, food, and water.

FEMA disaster recovery centers are facilities and mobile units where you can find information about the agency's programs as well as other state and local resources. According to a FEMA spokesperson, if any person has any type of need after a federally declared disaster, you can ask for that information and will be directed to where to find it. If you need financial assistance, you will be asked for a social security number and identification.



There's just so many people in so many settings that aren't helped after a hurricane, or have to try to navigate what to do. And that's why community comes together in the way it does, and why all these community-based organizations are trying to help, are coming together and trying to fill those gaps.

—Dominique O'Connor, FWAF

Where to find resources

These organizations offer resources for farmworkers throughout Florida. Among the services they provide are: free food, health clinics, emergency services, and referrals to legal assistance. Contact them directly to find out what is available to you.

The Farmworker Association of Florida — floridafarmworkers.org
Headquarters in Apopka: 1264 Apopka Boulevard, Apopka, FL 32703
Phone: 407-886-5151; Open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday, with events on weekends and after hours

Fellsmere: 29 S Maple Street, Unit A, Fellsmere, FL 32948
Phone 772-571-0081

Immokalee: 415 Rose Ave, Immokalee, FL 34142
Phone: 863-885-9484

Pierson: 111 Fountain Drive, Pierson, FL 32180
Phone: 386-749-9826

Project SALUD, of the Rural Women's Health Project — rwhp.org
RWHP connects immigrant community members to food, health clinics, and more, and offers programs around health and social justice in Alachua, Dixie, Levy, Gilchrist, Marion, and Suwannee counties.
1108 SW 2nd Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32601
Phone: 352-575-8024
Email: info@rwhp.org; Facebook: Project SALUDWHP

The United Way of Florida — uwof.org
The United Way has offices across Florida and offers resources in Spanish. Text your zip code to 898-211 for more information or call 2-1-1 to get information about food and nutrition programs, emergency information, healthcare services, and much more.

Farm Share — [facebook.com/farmsharefl](https://www.facebook.com/farmsharefl)
Based in Homestead, Farm Share offers workshops for hurricane preparedness and does food distribution. Their Facebook posts are only in English, but if you click "follow" in the upper right corner you will be able to see locations when they distribute food or announce events throughout the state.

RCMA — rcma.org
With offices across south Florida, including in Immokalee, Palm Beach, and LaBelle, RCMA offers programs for child development, emergency preparedness for families, and immigration assistance.
402 W Main St., Immokalee, FL 34142
Phone: 800-282-6540

Don't go hungry: Here's how you can access food

Below are resources to find affordable or free food before, during, or after a hurricane or heat wave. You can contact the organizations listed in this brochure, or follow them on social media, to find out about food distribution services they can connect you with.

Nonprofit and community food programs

- The Farmworker Association of Florida has Campesinos' Gardens at some locations, which offer free fresh food, as well as donated baked goods and canned/packaged goods when the garden is not in season. Contact the office to find out more: 407-886-5151
- Look for a church near you that has a food pantry or food distribution service.
- Our digital guide (find it via QR code on the back) lists more.



Ernesto Ruiz kneels in the Farmworker Association of Florida's garden in Apopka, which he oversees. He opens the site twice a month to people living nearby, who are encouraged to take home anything they care to harvest.
Photo: Ayrella Horn-Muller / Grist

Federal food assistance programs

Depending on your legal status, total household income, and if your household has children under 5 years old or a pregnant or breastfeeding mother, you could be eligible for government benefits that include financial assistance for food.

Some important things to consider:

- If you are an H2-A worker, you can qualify for these federal food benefits through an application process, but you typically have to wait five years after you secure qualified immigrant status.
- Do you have a U.S.-born child? They can qualify for these benefits, though it may not be enough to feed the entire family.

SNAP: The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides food assistance to low-income families to supplement their grocery budget for foods to prepare at home. In the event of a disaster, you may be able to buy hot or pre-made food using SNAP dollars. You must fill out a waiver to apply for SNAP benefits. (English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese)

WIC: The Women, Infants, and Children program offers food assistance, information, and healthcare referrals to low-income families with children under age 5 or those expecting a new child. You can be eligible for WIC with any immigration status. To apply for WIC, you will need to call either your local WIC office number, or the toll-free number: 1-800-342-3556.

SUNCAP: In Florida, if you receive SSI, or Supplemental Security Income, you could also be eligible to receive SUNCAP to help pay for food. To receive SSI and/or SUNCAP, you must be a citizen or have legal status.

D-SNAP: After a disaster, you could receive D-SNAP, which is usually at least a month of the maximum SNAP benefit. This assistance is for those who do not already get or qualify for SNAP and have experienced a disaster-related loss such as loss of food. You must request D-SNAP benefits, which involves pre-registering online and a telephone interview. This is not immediate relief, as it could take time to receive the benefits.