
How PDA Funds Are Used

Funds given to PC(USA) designated for PDA domestic disaster response are used, in collaboration with mid councils, in three primary ways:

1. **To provide immediate financial support to the Presbytery's response** to the needs of the community in the wake of the disaster. These funds are used in a variety of ways depending on the needs in the community and the gaps left by other responding agencies and groups. In one disaster funds were used to buy and distribute plastic sheeting to cover the belongings of survivors. In another funds were used to pay for items left off the supply truck from the Red Cross. There are no set rules about the use of the money, with two exceptions:
 - a. Funds should not be used to make direct cash payments to survivors, so as to avoid becoming an entitlement program without accountability.
 - b. Funds may not be used as a loan. Assistance from donated dollars is need based and is a free gift of the church.

2. **Church funds frequently are used to set up the long-term recovery program in the community.** Following a disaster many agencies and organizations provide funds for survivors. The Red Cross, FEMA and Salvation Army assist with food, clothing and shelter. However, no governmental funds and very few non-governmental funds will support the cost of the organization to coordinate and supervise the ongoing use of volunteers, donated materials and case management. These organizations are essential for the long-term recovery of the community. While many groups consider these expenditures as 'administration' and not a direct benefit to the survivors, without coordination and organization the long-term recovery will not happen and many resources, volunteers and funding will not be available to survivors.

3. **Support for Spiritual and Emotional Care for the Caregivers.** When disaster strikes, the church has a special responsibility to those who are most vulnerable to the secondary stresses of responding to the needs of others: pastors, church leaders and caregivers. Church funds are used to ensure that the spiritual needs of church leaders, pastors and caregivers are available to the community. A variety of resources are made available through the Presbytery including respite for affected pastors, compassion fatigue training and print material.

Church funds are still used for building materials, covering the unexpected costs of rebuilding, and volunteer management; but one of the distinctive aspects of PC(USA) Disaster Response is its flexibility allowing the Presbytery and the local community to fill the gaps where the greatest need exists.

In addition to these three main areas, the use of church funds are guided by these core values:

1. **Disaster response is a need-based program.** Those who are most in need and least likely to recover without church assistance are helped first.
2. Because the need always outstrips the available resources, it is important to **use church funds strategically** where they will do the most good.
3. **Church funds are used last.** Others agencies and governmental programs are mandated to provide resources in disaster. It is important not to use church funds to replace the funds mandated as a responsibility of others.
4. **The PCUSA encourages Presbyteries and congregations to be engaged ecumenically** and in interfaith organizations in participating in disaster recovery.
5. **Church assistance is provided on an 'affiliation neutral' basis.** Being a Presbyterian is neither a benefit nor an obstacle to assistance. Neither does one need to be a Christian in order to receive assistance from the Church.
6. **Neither Church funds nor volunteer labor may be used to enrich a third party** or result in indebtedness to a third party.

When a disaster strikes, the community frequently looks to the Presbyterian Church to assist in supporting the long-term recovery of the community. This is truly a time when 'decently and in order' is valued by our partners in the faith community and beyond.