

Somerset County, Maryland: Hurricane/Post-Tropical Cyclone

Background

"Sandy made landfall along the southern New Jersey shore on October 29, 2012, causing historic devastation and substantial loss of life. The National Hurricane Center (NHC) Tropical Cyclone Report estimated the death count from Sandy at 147 direct deaths"ⁱ and the storm caused more than \$70 billion in damages overall, ranking second only to Hurricane Katrina.ⁱⁱ In Maryland, Somerset County on the Eastern Shore bore the brunt of the storm, sustaining around \$40 million worth of damage, with several hundred houses damaged or destroyed.ⁱⁱⁱ

Long-Term Recovery Committee

Shortly after Sandy, the Somerset County Long Term Recovery Committee (LTRC) organized to facilitate recovery efforts in the area. The LTRC is overseen by a Board of Directors, composed of 20 members representing local government, faith-based/voluntary organizations, and county citizens. The Board of Directors is responsible for the direction and management of the LTRC, with various subcommittees set up for specific tasks (discussed below). The main goals of the LTRC are to identify and assess needs; provide information about available resources; receive donations; apply for grants; coordinate with voluntary organizations; deliver services to fill unmet needs; repair/rebuild damaged/destroyed homes; repair/restore damage to public lands/waters; and advocate to state and federal government on behalf of the community. The LTRC applied for and received 501(c)(3) status, effective January 2013.

LTRC Committees and Tasking^{iv}

- ◆ *Policy Committee* - Draft and recommend for approval all policies of the LTRC.
- ◆ *Case Review Committee* – Review each application for assistance, approve or disapprove it, and assign case to a funding source and a construction crew.
- ◆ *Construction Committee* – Coordinate and schedule work of various work crews, assist with permitting, and recommend building materials and supplies to be ordered.
- ◆ *Finance Committee* – Propose budget for LTRC and propose all financial policies, and exercise oversight of funds, along with the Treasurer.
- ◆ *Grants and Publicity Committee* – Solicit and oversee all grants and major gifts, and issue press releases on behalf of the LTRC.
- ◆ *Donations and Fundraising* – Raise funds and solicit donations, and oversee in kind donations of goods and materials.
- ◆ *Visioning and Planning for the Future* – Study and recommend to the Board of Directors mitigation projects and long-term plans that might benefit the future of the County after the recovery process is completed.

Somerset County LTRC Fast Facts

- ◆ *Mission Statement:* The Somerset County Long Term Recovery Committee exists to help residents of the County to recover from this disaster and to provide a gateway to a better future for the County and its residents.
- ◆ *Partners:* Resident-leaders from Somerset County, representatives from non-profit and faith-based organizations, and municipal, County and State Agency representatives.
- ◆ *Active:* January 2013 - present

◆ *Economic Development Committee* – Work with existing businesses to strengthen the business community and improve economic climate in Somerset County throughout and following recovery process.

Activities^v

- ◆ Helped to repair and rebuild damaged homes through providing construction assessment, case work, volunteer recruitment, and technical expertise.
- ◆ Provided gap funding for residents in need of additional funds. Residents contributed any funds that they received from FEMA, insurance, and personal resources and the LTRC funded the difference needed for the resident to achieve recovery.
- ◆ Provided disaster case management through a staff of seven disaster recovery professionals, and opened an office and drop-in center for staff and clients to meet.
- ◆ Converted a former WWII Radar Station into a work camp to house and feed volunteer construction teams that came to the community to assist with recovery efforts. Known as Kamp Kairos, the property was made available to the LTRC by the American Legion, and was renovated by volunteers to accommodate 30-35 volunteers and on-site managers.
- ◆ Provided county clergy with resource directories for social, spiritual, and psychological resources available to county residents, and coordinated Camp Noah, two one-week-long day camps for children affected by the storm.

Highlights^{vi,vii}

- ◆ Managed a case load of more than 295 clients in need of home repair, new home construction, and spiritual and psychological recovery
- ◆ Raised approximately \$2,678,000 for recovery and engaged over 1,000 volunteers
- ◆ Repaired 220 homes and built 21 new homes

ⁱ Kathryn D. Sullivan and Louis W. Uccellini, "Hurricane/Post-Tropical Cyclone Sandy, October 22–29, 2012," U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (May 2013): 1.

ⁱⁱ "The Thirty Costliest Mainland United States Tropical Cyclones 1900-2013," National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Hurricane Research Division.
<http://www.aoml.noaa.gov/hrd/tcfaq/costliesttable.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Alex DeMetrick, "Sandy Was Second-Costliest Hurricane in U.S.," CBS News (February 2013).

^{iv} Somerset County Long Term Recovery Committee, Inc. By-Laws.

^v Somerset County Long Term Recovery Committee, Inc., "Summary Report to Ecumenical Funding Partners," (July 2014).

^{vi} Ibid.

^{vii} Lauren Holloway, "Hurricane Sandy Aid Committee Receives Praise," WBOC (July 2015).
<http://www.wbc.com/story/29557911/hurricane-sandy-aid-committee-receives-praise>