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v.

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PLAINTIFF EXHIBIT 4

Pinellas 2024 Hurricane AAR & People First Recovery Programs

Pinellas County 2024 Hurricane Season Hurricanes Debby, Helene, and Milton After-Action Report Overview

The 2024 hurricane season was challenging, with three storms, two occurring within two weeks of each other. Each storm devastated many communities. The collaboration and partnerships built over the years were evident in the colossal efforts demonstrated during the preparedness, response, and recovery efforts of thousands of partners and community members.

- Hurricane Debby in August highlighted the need to prepare for localized impacts, such as severe marine conditions for boaters, and flash flooding from rainfall.
- Hurricane Helene in September emphasized the devastating impact of storm surge flooding, even when a storm doesn't make landfall in Pinellas County.
- Hurricane Milton in October illustrated the need to be prepared for multiple impacts and cascading incidents. Impacts from Helene were exacerbated by Hurricane Milton, even though monumental efforts were made to clean up and restore critical infrastructure immediately after Hurricane Helene. Assessments for substantial damage determinations were cumbersome and complex.

This is a summary of the key actions taken, lessons learned, and improvements planned based on the official After-Action Report developed after the hurricane season.

Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Activation

The County EOC was activated for 154 days in response to multiple storm threats throughout the 2024 hurricane season. Activation levels were adjusted based on the severity of the weather events, ensuring appropriate staffing and coordination. The EOC was the central hub for operational decisions, resource management, and communications among various partners.

Improvement Actions:

- *Pinellas County Emergency Management is increasing seating and conference room capacity in the County EOC.*
- *Pinellas County Emergency Management is increasing display and conference capabilities in County EOC conference rooms.*

Interagency Coordination

Pinellas County Emergency Management collaborated with local municipalities, State agencies, the National Weather Service, and other partners. Unified messaging and planning were emphasized to streamline efforts across jurisdictions. Over 70 situation reports, and numerous daily conference calls helped keep stakeholders informed and aligned. As of May 2025, Pinellas County continues to work with local, state and federal partners to support recovery efforts and prepare for the 2025 hurricane season.

Improvement Actions:

- *Pinellas County Emergency Management is working with municipal emergency management to increase municipal training, workshops and planning meetings.*

measure determinations. Public education on tree trimming to prevent damage to underground and overhead infrastructure is needed.

Improvement Actions

- *Pinellas County Utilities established a multijurisdictional Utilities Working Group and sustain best practices for future rapid emergency repairs by water, sewer and electrical providers.*

Damage Assessment

Damage assessment teams were deployed immediately after the storm passed. Rapid assessments enabled faster access to federal and State aid. The three storms damaged 46,728 homes. Pinellas County identified the need to streamline the damage assessment process from preliminary damage assessment through substantial damage assessment.

Improvement Actions:

- *The County will improve damage assessments by updating collection and estimating tools, incorporating interior inspections, drone, and resident-submitted imagery and documents.*
- *The County will be identifying contracts for post-storm services such as building code administration, code enforcement, and floodplain management ordinance administration and enforcement that municipalities will be able to contract with.*

Permitting

Pinellas County focused on streamlining storm repair approvals by creating an in-person permitting hub that issued over 3,500 permits, enabling same-day service for homeowners. Challenges included inconsistencies across 25 jurisdictions, a lack of electronic systems in some jurisdictions, and limited personnel for inspections and reviews, prompting the need for clearer public protocols, mutual aid, and vendor contracts. Lessons learned included valuation processes for housing types such as single-family homes, mobile/manufactured homes, and multifamily units.

Improvement Actions:

- *The County will use criteria to expedite permitting for homes with less than 12 inches of water inside.*
- *All jurisdictions should provide public information to help homeowners, starting with the muck and dry out process, then inspections before moving forward with repairs.*
- *All jurisdictions should provide information to homeowners on what they can provide for permitting applications and appointments, so they don't have to wait for the determination.*

Housing

Over 3,335 residential structures were evaluated in unincorporated areas using FEMA's Substantial Damage Estimator tool, with 13% initially deemed substantially damaged and

over 95% of 1,407 mobile homes meeting the same threshold. To support displaced residents, more than 3,900 households—totaling over 7,500 people—were housed in over 100 hotels under FEMA’s Transitional Sheltering Assistance and the State’s Non-Congregate Sheltering programs. As of June 2025, over 75 households remained in these programs, with about 200 awaiting FEMA Direct Housing Assistance placement. The County and municipalities worked with FEMA and the State for placement of travel trailers and mobile home units at private sites, and existing commercial parks.

Permitting was one of the largest hurdles to getting people back in their homes. Unincorporated Pinellas County issued over 4,500 storm repair permits and created an in-person permitting hub to accelerate rebuilding. The County also launched the Income Eligible Hurricane Home Repair Program, offering up to \$30,000 in grants, and received \$813 million in federal Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds (plus \$160 million for St. Petersburg) to support long-term recovery. Over 3,500 county residents applied to the State’s Elevate Florida program for mitigation and reconstruction support, with project implementation expected in the summer of 2025.

Improvement Actions:

- *Pinellas County was granted over \$813 million in Community Development Block Grant funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and has submitted an action plan to prioritize people first and support those impacted by the storms.*
- *Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) continue to work with residents with unmet needs.*



Pinellas Recovers
Hurricane Help That Puts People First

People First Hurricane Recovery Programs

Last Updated: April 28, 2026

The People First Hurricane Recovery Programs are here to support **homeowners, tenants, and local landlords** impacted by **Hurricanes Idalia, Helene, or Milton**. These programs provide funding and assistance to repair damage, prevent long-term displacement, and make housing safer and more affordable. Check out the programs and qualifications below – if you're not sure which program meets your needs, you can request assistance from a case manager to help determine the right fit for you.

Five Programs to Serve Pinellas County



Homeowner Rehabilitation/ Reconstruction

Funding to repair, rebuild, or replace hurricane-damaged homes.

[Learn more](#)



Homeowner Reimbursement

Reimbursement for repair work you have already completed.

[Learn more](#)



Local Landlord Program

Support for landlords to repair or rebuild rental properties to rent as affordable housing.

[Learn more](#)



Homebuyer Assistance

Help for income-eligible homebuyers to purchase a safe home outside flood zones.

[Learn more](#)



Disaster Relief Reimbursement

Reimbursement for essential disaster-related expenses such as rent, mortgage, or utilities.

[Learn more](#)

Ready to apply? [Start an application.](#)

Do you live in St. Petersburg?

The People First programs serve individuals and families based on household income, with priority to those with the biggest unmet financial needs. Programs are open to **all Pinellas residents except those who live in the City of St. Petersburg,**

which has its own funding allocation. St. Petersburg's programs are not currently taking applications, but you can learn more at [Sunrise St. Pete](#). If you have a St. Petersburg mailing address but you're not sure if you're in the city limits, put in your address to see which program serves you.

Type your address like the sample below then click the button.

ex. 315 Court St, Clearwater, FL 33756

Submit Lookup

Getting started is as easy as 1...2...3!

1

Check Income Eligibility

There's a chart below that defines the income requirements for each program.

2

Check Document Requirements