

Disaster Relief volunteers sought ahead of Milton landfall

By Hubert Yates

MS Disaster Relief Director

With the emerging threat of Hurricane Milton and the ongoing Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Disaster Relief (DR) response to Hurricane Helene across the Southeast, Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief (MSBDR) is looking at the need to mobilize additional volunteers. The following has been approved by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) Administrative Team:

1. **MSBDR has temporarily modified our participation rule to include as “credentialed” those who were credentialed within the last 6 years (2018).** COVID (2020/2021) saw many volunteers drop from the credentialed list due to lack of credentialing. While some have returned since then, a large number have not. This modification will allow any volunteer with credentials from 2018 to current to volunteer to deploy in response to these current events.
2. **MSBDR will temporarily allow participation of a limited number of non-credentialed participants from churches/association who already support active credentialed MSBDR teams.** These participants must be “vouched” for by existing team leadership/pastors/AMS and must work alongside the existing team credentialed leadership. In addition, these volunteers must complete the MSBDR Liability Waiver and Background Check Release. This modification will allow non-credentialed volunteers

from churches and associations with active DR Teams to join those teams for deployments to these current events, as long as documentation is provided.

- 3. MSBDR is planning the utilization of ZOOM multicasts to conduct several "just-in-time" training events in order to prepare volunteers for service in the coming days/weeks.** This will allow churches/associations who would be interested in fielding a DR Response "Mission Team" through and with the SBC DR network to meet credentialing requirements in a timely manner. The required training for SBC DR participation (Introduction to SBC DR Ministry) and the Mass Feeding or Flood Recovery specialties would be offered. Churches/Associations who would like to host these events in their local area and develop or enhance a basic Disaster Relief response capability should contact the MSBDR Office at hyates@mbcb.org or (601)292-3335 for more information. Host sites must be able to provide space for 20-30 participants, administrative support, a stable internet connection, and large screen TV/Projection capability.