

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 5, 2022

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Royal Palm Coast Realtor® Association Hurricane Ian Relief Efforts

Fort Myers and Cape Coral, FL – At Royal Palm Coast Realtor® Association (RPCRA), our hearts go out to all of those affected by the catastrophic devastation caused by Hurricane Ian. The aftermath of the hurricane has left communities in Florida, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Southeastern United States in dismay. Hundreds of thousands of residents are left with no housing, severe flooding, loss of power and water, and unfathomable long-term financial, emotional, and mental distress.

RPCRA Leadership is committed to providing the necessary resources to help rebuild our community. Thoughtful efforts to provide relief began moments after Hurricane Ian touched down. These efforts include creating a pop-up Distribution Center onsite at the RPCRA Fort Myers Education Center located at 4081 Center Pointe Drive, Fort Myers, FL 33916 to collect donations that will provide some supply relief to our community as well as business service access for those needing to connect to Wi-Fi and enjoy air conditioning.

The RPCRA Lounge and Distribution Center will be available starting on Wednesday, October 5; Monday – Friday from 10 AM – 5 PM and Saturday’s 10 AM – 2 PM until further notice. The Distribution Center will begin collecting donations on Wednesday, October 5 and will be available for pickup by the community in the coming days. Information will be posted via RPCRA’s [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#) social media platforms.

“RPCRA is dedicated to our members and our community,” said Bill Steinke, 2022 President of RPCRA. *“We will continue working with our local governance, fellow realtor® associations and nonprofits to offer relief and recovery to our community as best as we can.”*

RPCRA is working to re-open for regular business services to our realtor® members in the coming days and will continue to provide updates as they become available.

As we begin to evaluate and re-build our community in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian, we want to provide you with important and helpful resources:

- **RENTALS:** RPCRA, and local realtor® associations, are building a safe platform for the community to access rentals for temporary housing in Fort Myers, Cape Coral, Naples, Bonita Springs, and Marco Island. The website, HurricaneHomes.org will be available in the coming days and provides listings for housing whose properties have been vetted as reliable, safe, and clean. The listings are given by licensed realtors® in the area. RPCRA urges the community to be careful when contacting listings from Craigslist and Facebook Marketplace as they may be fraudulent.
- **MATRIX INVENTORY:** RPCRA encourages all realtors® to add their rental inventory to Matrix as a starting point for more inventory options for displaced residents that will roll over to the HurricaneHomes.org website.

To learn more about Royal Palm Coast Realtor Association and membership, visit RPCRA.org.

The Royal Palm Coast Realtor® Association was chartered in 1922 as the Fort Myers Board of Realty and today serves more than 9,300 Realtor® members and affiliates. The Association acts as the primary resource and active advocate for its members by collectively promoting member business interests through education, communications, and proactive management of industry issues.

- **RV AND STORAGE:** Effective October 4, 2022, the City of Cape Coral has suspended RV and storage ordinances for 180 days. This will allow residents to live in their RV on their property with no penalty. RPCRA is working with Lee County and the City of Fort Myers for those jurisdictions to allow the same.
- **REALTOR® LICENSING:** Governor DeSantis approved an extension of the September license renewal through October 31, 2022.
- **INSURANCE:** [CLICK HERE](#) for phone numbers, websites and email addresses for property insurance companies serving Florida.
- **REPORT SAFE & FOUND:** [CLICK HERE](#) to report safe and found persons.
- **COMMUNITY RECOVERY RESOURCES:**
 - [Cape Coral](#)
 - [City of Fort Myers](#)
 - [Hendry County](#)
 - [Collier County](#)
 - [City of Sanibel](#)
 - [Lee County of Southwest Florida](#)
- **RELIEF EFFORTS:** Below, please find links to many relief and recovery efforts for donations or to apply for assistance:
 - **State of Florida Relief Efforts:** [CLICK HERE](#) for information related to the aftermath of Hurricane Ian.
 - **Florida Realtors® Disaster Relief Fund**
 - Unemployment benefits
 - Small-business assistance loans
 - Transactions and contract clauses
 - Mortgage relief
 - **Florida Disaster Relief Fund:** State of Florida's official private fund established to assist Florida's communities as they respond to and recover during times of emergency or disaster.
 - **Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM):** Working together to ensure that Florida is prepared to respond to emergencies, recover from them, and mitigate against their impacts.
 - **American Red Cross:** Red Cross volunteers and staff work to deliver vital services – from providing relief and support to those in crisis, to helping you be prepared to respond in emergencies.
 - **Florida Housing:** (Free) state resource for renters and property managers in Florida. Dynamic search options can help you find available rental housing fit your needs and income.
 - **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):** To help people before, during and after disasters.

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- **Disaster Assistance Improvement Program (DAIP)**: The Disaster Assistance Improvement Program's (DAIP) mission is to provide disaster survivors with information, support, services, and a means to access and apply for disaster assistance through joint data-sharing efforts between federal, tribal, state, local, and private sector partners.
 - **Operation Blue Roof**: The purpose of Operation Blue Roof is to provide homeowners and permanently occupied rental properties in disaster areas with fiber-reinforced sheeting to cover their damaged roofs until arrangements can be made for permanent repairs.
 - **Disaster Unemployment Assistance**: The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity is offering temporary wage replacement benefits to qualified individuals who are out of work through no fault of their own due to Hurricane Ian. All are eligible, including independent contractors.
 - **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development**: The 203(h) program provides mortgages to victims of a presidentially declared major disaster for the purchase of a new home or expanded 203(k) reconstruction for single-family properties. The borrower's EXISTING residence (**owned OR rented**) must be located in a presidentially declared major disaster area and destroyed or damaged to such an extent that reconstruction or replacement is necessary. If the borrower is purchasing a new property, it does not have to be located in the same area as the disaster.
- Price gouging during a State of Emergency is a criminal offense. Call the Florida Attorney General at **1-866-9-NO-SCAM** (1-866-966-7226) to report it.
 - Be cautious of doing business with unlicensed, rogue contractors knocking on your door or place of business. Only work with licensed, reputable contractors; never assign your assign your benefits. An Assignment of Benefits (AOB) is an agreement that transfers the insurance claims rights or benefits of the policy to a third party. An AOB gives the third-party authority to file a claim, make repair decisions, and collect insurance payments without the involvement of the homeowner.

Details will be provided as they unfold on additional relief efforts. We appreciate your community support and look forward to opening our doors in the near future.

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