

St. Lucie Disaster Recovery Coalition Bylaws

Mission Statement

The mission of the St. Lucie Disaster Recovery Coalition is to organize and strengthen long term recovery efforts for the unmet needs of residents affected by disasters in St. Lucie County.

Article 1: Name

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be St. Lucie Disaster Recovery Coalition, herein referred to as the “LTRG” serving St. Lucie County and all municipal jurisdictions therein.

Article 2: Purpose

Section 1. The LTRG is a network of faith-based, volunteer, non-profit, governmental, community based, private sector, and other organizations, agencies, and private community members, who have identified the need for additional recovery resources and services necessary to address disaster related unmet needs of disaster survivors in St. Lucie County.

Section 2. The LTRG is a non-profit organization that coordinates disaster recovery efforts, supports service providers and case managers in assessing the needs of impacted survivors, identifies available resources, analyzes and provides information identifying gaps in services, and advocates for timely resolutions to evolving issues for those with disaster related or disaster aggravated unmet needs.

Section 3. The LTRG is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established to address disaster related unmet needs including but not limited to housing, employment childcare, transportation, mental health, food, clothing, home furnishing, weatherization/storm mitigation, and legal advice.

Section 4. The LTRG is an independent organization that is neither created in law nor by a public agency to perform a public function and all LTRG services shall not be construed as the provision of public services nor an extension of the duties of any public member organization. All authority and decision-making decisions shall remain within the functions of the LTRG as detailed in these Bylaws.

Article 3: Membership

Section 1: Eligibility: Membership in the St. Lucie Disaster Recovery Coalition (LTRG) shall be open to all organizations, agencies, and individuals committed to the LTRG's mission and purpose, including but not limited to:

- Faith-based organizations
- Volunteer groups
- Non-profit entities
- Governmental agencies
- Community-based organizations
- Private sector entities
- Individual community members

Eligible members are expected to actively contribute to the mission through financial, material, or volunteer support, or by providing expertise and advocacy.

Section 2: Membership Application Process:

1. Application Submission:
 - Interested parties shall complete and submit the official LTRG Membership Application Form, along with any required supporting documentation, to the Executive Committee.
2. Review and Approval:
 - The Executive Committee will review applications and ensure alignment with LTRG's mission and goals.
 - Approved applications will be submitted to the LTRG for final approval.
3. Notification:
 - Applicants will be notified of their membership status within 30 days of application submission.

Section 3: Member Responsibilities:

1. Each member organization or individual shall:
 - Sign and adhere to the LTRG Membership Agreement.
 - Actively participate in coalition meetings, initiatives, and committees.
 - Provide timely and accurate reporting of any resources, services, or support offered to the coalition.

Section 4: Membership Termination: Membership may be terminated under the following conditions:

1. Voluntary Withdrawal:
 - A member may resign by submitting a written notice to the Executive Committee.
2. Non-Compliance:
 - Members failing to adhere to the Membership Application or failing to actively participate for more than six months without justification, may be subject to removal by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Committee.
3. Notification and Appeal:
 - Termination decisions will be communicated in writing, and members may appeal within 30 days of receiving the notice.

Section 5: Membership Roster: The Executive Committee shall maintain an up-to-date roster of all member organizations and individuals, including contact information and areas of expertise, to facilitate communication and collaboration.

Article 4: Eligible Voters

Section 1: One (1) representative of each Member Organization is eligible to vote on matters coming before the LTRG. In the case of an unaffiliated individual member, they shall have one (1) vote.

Article 5: Meetings of the LTRG

Section 1: Regular Meetings:

1. Regular meetings of the St. Lucie Disaster Recovery Coalition (LTRG) shall be held quarterly, at a time and location determined by the Executive Committee.
2. Members shall receive written notice of all regular meetings at least 14 days in advance, including the date, time, location, and agenda.
3. All meetings are open to the public.

Section 2: Annual Meeting

1. The annual meeting of the LTRG shall take place in April of each year for the purpose of:
 - Electing officers.
 - Receiving the annual report.
 - Reviewing and approving the annual work plan.
 - Conducting any other business customary to an annual meeting.
2. Notice of the annual meeting shall be provided in writing to all members at least 14 days in advance and shall include the date, time, location, and agenda.

Section 3: Special Meetings

1. Special meetings may be called as needed by:
 - The Chairperson.
 - The Vice-Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson.
 - Any two members of the LTRG.
2. The purpose of the special meeting shall be clearly stated in the meeting notice.
3. Notice of special meetings shall be provided to all members at least 7 days in advance.
4. Only business specified in the call for the special meeting may be conducted.

Section 4: Emergency Meetings

1. The County's Office of Emergency Management may request a meeting of the Executive Committee.
2. The Executive Committee may decide whether to call a meeting of the LTRG.
3. Emergency meetings may be held with minimal notice and are not subject to the standard quorum requirements, provided all efforts are made to ensure broad participation.

Section 5: Attendance and Participation

1. Members are expected to attend all meetings or designate an alternate representative from their organization to attend on their behalf.

2. Virtual participation shall be permitted for all meetings, with remote attendees counted toward quorum and voting eligibility.
3. There is no fee or charge to be a member of the LTRG.

Section 6: Quorum

1. A quorum for the transaction of business at any regular, annual, or special meeting shall consist of at least fifty percent (50%) plus one (1) voting member.
2. Emergency meetings do not require a quorum, but any decisions made must be ratified at the next regular or special meeting.

Section 7: Decision-Making

1. All decisions shall be made by a majority vote of members present at a meeting where quorum is established, unless otherwise specified in these bylaws.
2. In the case of a tie, the Chairperson shall cast the deciding vote.

Article 6: Officers

Section 1: The committee shall elect:

1. A Chairperson who shall preside at all meetings, and perform other duties as deemed necessary by the Committee.
2. A Vice Chairperson who shall preside in the absence of the Chairperson, or at other times as deemed necessary by the Chairperson, and perform other functions as deemed necessary by the Committee.
3. A Secretary who shall ensure those minutes of all meetings are recorded and preserved, communicate on behalf of the Committee, and perform other duties deemed necessary by the Committee.
4. A Fiscal Agent that shall have custody of and be responsible for all Committee funds; keep full and accurate accounts of receipts, disbursements, assets and liabilities of the Committee; and present timely and accurate reports of such transactions to the Members, as required or requested. The Fiscal Agent shall deposit or cause to be deposited all monies in the name of the Committee in such depositories as shall be designated by the Members.

Each officer shall be elected during the annual meeting by a majority vote of the Members present. The term of office shall be one (1) year, and each officer must be selected from a different member organization. Each officer will have an equal vote in decision making.

Officers shall receive no compensation for service in the elected position.

Article 7: Committees

1. **Section 1: Standing Committees:** The LTRG shall establish the following standing committees, as needed, each tasked with specific responsibilities to support disaster recovery efforts:

1. Executive Committee:

Purpose: The Executive Committee shall provide oversight, strategic direction, and operational leadership for the LTRG. It shall act on behalf of the full membership between meetings, ensuring decisions align with the mission and objectives of the organization.

Membership: The Executive Committee shall consist of the following officers:

- Chairperson
- Vice Chairperson
- Secretary
- Fiscal Agent
- Two (2) additional at-large members elected from the general membership

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Ensure the effective implementation of LTRG policies and strategic plans.
- Act on urgent matters requiring immediate attention between general meetings.
- Set the agenda for general membership meetings.
- Oversee the performance of standing committees and provide necessary support.
- Approve emergency funding decisions, if applicable, within board-authorized limits.
- Review and make recommendations on organizational policies and amendments.

Meetings & Decision-Making:

- The Executive Committee shall meet at quarterly, or as needed.
- A majority of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum for decision-making.
- All actions taken must be reported to the full membership at the next scheduled general meeting.

2. Unmet Needs Committee:

- Purpose: To identify and coordinate resources (money, manpower, and materials) to assist St. Lucie County residents with disaster-related unmet needs after all available federal, state, and local assistance has been exhausted.
- Membership: Composed of organizations that can provide funding, resources, or labor.
- Reporting: Submit monthly progress reports to the Executive Committee.

3. Case Management Committee:

- Purpose: To assist disaster survivors by guiding them through recovery processes, including accessing federal, state, and local assistance programs and securing additional support when necessary.
- Membership: Comprised of agencies with expertise in case management.
- Reporting: Provide quarterly updates to the LTRG and collaborate with the Unmet Needs Committee.

4. Grants and Fundraising Committee

- Purpose: To use the data collected by the UnMet Need Committee to identify funding sources to serve those needs.
- Membership: Includes individuals and organizations that can perform the work of grant writing and solicitation of funds.
- Reporting: Provides quarterly report on progress and activities

Section 2: Temporary Committees and Task Forces: The LTRG Executive Committee may establish temporary or permanent committees and task forces as needed to address specific disaster-related issues, provide technical expertise, or respond to emerging challenges. Such groups shall:

- Have a clear purpose and timeline.
- Operate under the direction of the Executive Committee.
- Provide regular updates to the Executive Committee.

Section 3: Committee Leadership: Each committee shall elect a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson from its members. Responsibilities include:

Chairperson:

- Schedule and facilitate committee meetings.
- Ensure committee tasks align with LTRG goals.
- Prepare and present reports to the Executive Committee.

Vice-Chairperson:

- Assist the Chairperson and assume their duties in their absence.

Section 4: Committee Reporting and Accountability:

1. Committees shall submit written reports on activities, progress, and challenges to the Executive Committee as specified.
2. The Executive Committee may review and modify committee structures or leadership to ensure effectiveness.

Article 8: Vacancies and Nominating Process

Section 1: Filling Vacancies

1. Notification of Vacancy:
 - In the event of a vacancy in any elected or appointed position, the Chairperson shall notify the Executive Committee and the membership within seven (7) days.
 - Vacancies may arise due to resignation, removal, incapacity, or other reasons as determined by the Executive Committee.
2. Temporary Appointments:
 - The Executive Committee may appoint an interim officer to fill the vacancy temporarily until the formal nomination and election process is completed.

3. Timeline for Replacement:

- The nomination and election process for permanently filling the vacancy shall begin within thirty (30) days of the vacancy being declared.

Section 2: Open Nomination Process

1. Call for Nominations:

- The Executive Committee shall issue a call for nominations to all members via email, written notice, or other approved communication methods.
- Members will have a minimum of ten (10) days to submit nominations for the vacant position.

2. Eligibility Criteria: Nominees must:

- Be an active member or representative of a member organization.
- Demonstrate alignment with the LTRG's mission and goals.
- Possess the skills and availability necessary to fulfill the duties of the position.

3. Nomination Submission: Members may self-nominate or nominate others by submitting the following:

- The nominee's name and contact information.
- A brief statement of qualifications and consent from the nominee.

Section 3: Election Process

1. Review of Nominations:

The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, with input from the Executive Committee, shall review all nominations to ensure eligibility and completeness.

2. Presentation of Candidates:

- A final slate of candidates shall be shared with the membership at least five (5) days before the scheduled election.

3. Voting:

- Elections shall be conducted during the next regular or special meeting, or via an approved electronic voting method if necessary.
- Each member organization shall have one (1) vote, and the candidate receiving the majority vote shall be declared elected.

4. Tie-Breaking Procedure:

- In the event of a tie, a runoff vote shall be held immediately following the initial vote.

Section 4: Term of Office

5. Individuals elected to fill a vacancy shall serve for the remainder of the original term.
6. Interim appointees are eligible to run for the position during the regular election process.

Article 9: Rules

Section 1: All business of the LTRG, as well as any and all committees, shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, the Membership Agreement, and procedures/guidelines/strategies approved by the committees.

Article 10: Amendments, Nondiscrimination Clause and Accessibility

Section 1: These Bylaws may be amended, subject agreed upon provisions set forth by the LTRG, as well as the laws of the State of Florida, at any meeting or special meetings of the LTRG, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voters present, providing that a full written account of the proposed changes have been sent to all Individual / Corporate Members two (2) weeks (14 days) prior to the meeting date.

Section 2: All funded agencies must ensure that all persons have fair and equal access to all forms of assistance regardless of race, color, national origin, age, sex, familial status, religious preference, disability, type or amount of disability, gender identity, perceived gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, or perceived sexual orientation.

Section 3: Handicapped Accessibility – All services and programs must be accessible to persons with disabilities. Programs, information, participation, communications and services must be accessible to persons with disabilities. Agencies must comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974 and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Article 11: Dissolution of LTRG

Section 1: Criteria for Dissolution

1. The St. Lucie Disaster Recovery Coalition (LTRG) may be dissolved under the following circumstances:
 - A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the voting members, with quorum present, determines dissolution is necessary.
2. The Executive Committee shall conduct a thorough review of operations, resources, and recovery needs before recommending dissolution.

Section 2: Exit Strategy

1. The LTRG shall develop an exit strategy to ensure an orderly dissolution process, including:
 - Closing or transferring all active client cases to appropriate member organizations.
 - Providing a summary report of completed and outstanding recovery efforts.
 - Informing members, partners, and stakeholders of the dissolution decision and timeline.
2. A Transition Committee may be formed to oversee the exit strategy, including representation from key committees and member organizations.

Section 3: Distribution of Assets

1. All properties and assets of the LTRG are irrevocably dedicated to non-profit purposes. No part of the net earnings, properties, or assets shall inure to the benefit of any individual member, director, or officer.
2. Upon dissolution:

- Any remaining funds, equipment, or other assets shall be distributed to one or more organizations dedicated to disaster recovery or non-profit purposes, as approved by the voting membership.
- Priority shall be given to local organizations with 501(c)(3) status that align with the mission of the LTRG.

Section 4: Final Report

1. A final report documenting the LTRG's accomplishments, financial summary, and asset distribution shall be prepared and shared with all members, partners, and stakeholders.
2. Copies of the final report shall be maintained in the Coalition's official records and submitted to the County's Office of Emergency Management.

Section 5: Record Retention

1. All official records of the LTRG, including minutes, financial statements, and client files, shall be preserved for a minimum of seven (7) years following dissolution, in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.