

Panhandle Disaster Relief Fund - Impact Survey Appendix

Open-Ended Response (Response)

Use of Funds:

Open-Ended Response

Estimated Number Served:

Open-Ended Response

Impact Stories:

Open-Ended Response

Partnerships:

Open-Ended Response

Suggested Resources:

Open-Ended Response

Suggestions for AAF:

Open-Ended Response

PANHANDLE COMMUNITY SERVICES (Nonprofit)

Use of Funds:

We paid for hotel nearly immediately. Additionally, We created hotel bags that included items to make a living in a hotel more bearable. Paper towels, silverware, disinfecting wipes, plates, full size trashbags are a few examples. Many of the families had utility bills that despite not having a home, the utility company was not patient with payment!! Since the home was not habitable, grant funds could not be used to pay these bills. Your funding was also invaluable in that our CSBG funds have income restrictions; however, fire does not choose homes based on who will qualify for assistance. We also held a Walmart night where families came and shopped for items they needed for their new homes - they were able to pick what they wanted, their style, it was new and it was their choice to make. We were also able to work with a local furniture store for families to pick out what they wanted in their new home. We endeavored to be really flexible - if it wasn't alcohol, tobacco, or illegal... IF it made sense to help that family recover, then we tried to make it happen! Of course, there was housing and deposits and such. And, one of the other things that became necessary was legal fees to "fix" the inherited housing

Estimated Number Served:

49 We also opened a hygiene closet and it is hard to know because those families came when they needed items. so while this number is large - it is not unduplicated.

Impact Stories:

I will need to email you this separately. We did get some emails and thank yous from different people.

Partnerships:

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Yes!! we worked with Community Connections and United Way very closely. We shared our lists of those served so that we weren't duplicating and families were served by who could meet the need best or fastest etc.

Suggested Resources:

We are skilled at serving the families of the 26 counties; however, disaster recovery was new to us in 2023. But right on the heels, we had this disaster. I think I will try to find my team training for the emotional aspect of disaster recovery. They did not know what to say to families when presented with having to be counselors of sorts. If AAF could create or host some sort of training for the emotional factors, we would be better equipped in the future. Obviously, I don't mean long-term counseling, but when at the dome, my team (and I) cried with families. You are there, and they need hope. We provided hope as best we could.

Suggestions for AAF:

I (well, PCS) think y'all are awesome. You were quick and you trust us to show up and serve families. That is a privilege we know not everyone is afforded. Really, all I can think of is possibly the trauma informed training or some sort of training to deal with the emotional factors of the service providers. going along with the above, It would have also been nice for there to be self-care options for the staff working the disasters. However, nobody is going to take time for such when families are in crisis. But I recognize as we moved out of disaster recovery, just how much a toll had been felt by my team members in 2023 & 2024!

Celebration Family Church/Hutchinson County (Nonprofit)

Use of Funds:

Debris Removal, Infrastructure (Septic, Water, Power Poles, and clean up)

Estimated Number Served:

100 residences both in Fritch area and Stinnett area 38 Septics, 26 power poles, 4 to 6 roll off containers for debris removal, then 7000 tons of Concrete disposal and removal of all both the Smokehouse and Windy Deuce wildfires in Feb. 2024.

Impact Stories:

Due to Amarillo Area Foundation. We were able to get family back into a home within the area, as well as make a positive impact on the quality of life and environment of the region. Not to mention provide many poverties , disabled, veterans, and families with small children provide a stable and supported future for those impacted by the disaster. Not just those impacted directly, but also the community (Schools, city, and local economy for both Hutchinson and Carson area). On the mental health perspective, the assistance from Amarillo Area Foundation helped restore the compassion within the area for each other and those in crisis.

Partnerships:

Since we are the HUB for crisis in our area. We worked with many organizations. Red Cross, Salvation Army, Hutchinson County United Way, Baptist Men, Christian Aide Ministry (Mennonites), Panhandle Community Services, and local churches and benevolence organizations. (Each crisis is usually a collective of crews, volunteers, and companies for cleanup.)

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Suggested Resources:

In my opinion and in my observation from this last crisis verse the others, the response and resources were abundant. I personally feel since the fires made national/world news we had an abundance of resources and support. Overall very well supported with this crisis.

Suggestions for AAF:

In both the Fires of 2014 and 2024. Amarillo Area Foundation was met and/or exceeded any of the expectations or generosity ever expected. Lara and the team at AAF were always available and willing to assist in any way they could. Nothing could have been better from AAF in my opinion.

Fairlanes Baptist Church (Church)

Use of Funds:

Over the course of the past year, funds have been used in about every way possible to help as many people as we could. We have helped people rebuild structures, fences, and electrical systems. In the early months, a great amount of attention was designated to agricultural and ranching needs in the counties affected, especially supporting livestock feeding needs. That support also included wildlife in all forms, from the quail to the roaming antelope, we sought to provide some sort of relief from the pressures of the fires. Individuals have been assisted in a variety of ways, especially cleanup and lot clearing early on. In the later months, and still to this day, we have been focused on getting people back on their feet financially, as well as helping with residual effects of the fire. Burned tree removal and preparing ground for new builds has taken up most of our efforts.

Estimated Number Served:

Approximately 45 families from all backgrounds have been assisted through our work over the past year.

Impact Stories:

If I gave a three hour presentation there would not be enough time to adequately compile all the wonderful stories we have experienced over the past year. Not only have the people that lost their homes, businesses, and ranches been greatly affected, but also every worker and volunteer along the way. It is true that people come together during difficult times and this has definitely been no exception. The greatest impact the work has had on me personally, is the vast amount of relationships made with families that received assistance as well as individuals and businesses that have stepped up to help. Although I have lived here for a short amount of time, the past year has solidified our love for Fritch and the Texas Panhandle as a whole.

Partnerships:

Again, there are too many to mention in this brief survey, but local businesses and churches made up the bulk of our support structure. Without those people stepping up to help we would not have been able to do a fraction of the work that we accomplished. Even with an infinite amount of funds, the real work was done through connections with people around us willing to give and offer support.

Suggested Resources:

As far as the Amarillo Foundation is concerned, there is nothing I would have changed. When I needed help it was never

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denied, and I was able to maintain contact with someone throughout the entire ordeal. It meant a great deal to have that lifeline when we faced financial needs that we couldn't cover ourselves. If I could add anything, it would be someone I could have spoken to on a weekly basis. After the first month, most organizations were no longer involved in cleanup. We truly felt we were on our own. People in our community attempted to get back to their normal lives, outside help dissipated, the news shifted to whatever the next big headline was. For weeks at a time, we would work every day with no breaks. We canceled vacations, retreats, and our normal activities to continue our mission. We loved the work, but there were moments it seemed that no one cared or supported what we were doing. A mental health liaison, a group of people that have been through something like this before, anyone we could just catch up with over a short conversation would have gone a long way. This is also something we are going to address with our non-profit.

Suggestions for AAF:

Embarrassingly, I was not aware of your organization before all of this kicked off. I was surprised but thrilled with the initial help. As time progressed, you guys have been a true support system for me personally as well as our community. I am eternally grateful to you and your donors and I look forward to being one in the future. That being said, if I could speak to someone about our new non-profit and how we can be of use to the entire Texas Panhandle, I would enjoy nothing more than having a relationship going forward.

CCS Connect Community Services (Nonprofit)

Use of Funds:

The funds received from Amarillo Area Foundation were used at first to get temporary needs met for the fire victims. Once vetting was complete by the Fire Committee, CCS worked alongside United Way in the recovery process and was able to assist 7 families back into permanent housing. We were able to assist in buying furniture for those who did not make the deadline from Panhandle Community Services.

Estimated Number Served:

Approximately 80 families were vetted and received assistance for housing from the entire recovery committee. CCS used some funding to assist with this. CCS itself, was able to assist approximately 110 families with various needs.

Impact Stories:

One gentleman wasn't understanding the entire process of going and signing up at the recovery committee location, this man was a CCS client and we had not heard from him. A board member and myself went to check on him, we found him living in an old high-low RV without any utilities. He was trying to dig out the rubble and find his utility connections in the 100 plus degree weather. This man is a senior citizen on SSI of about 900 per month. He had no means to recover. We were able to get him a brand new home, re-establish his utilities, furnish his new home and stock his home with food, hygiene, and cleaning supplies. We also provided him with clothing. He is so grateful and appreciative. He gives thanks to everyone including God for this assistance.

Partnerships:

Yes, we were part of the recovery committee, which included United Way, Panhandle Community Services, local churches, Christian Aide Ministries, and the county commissioners. Overall, we were able to assist 80 families that were vetted and many more that might have not had a total loss but still endured loss.

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Suggested Resources:

During a disaster, the community is great at rallying together and getting things done. Support came from everywhere, Oregon, California, New York, and South Texas to name a few. Without the support of EVERYONE, none of the recovery would have been possible.

Suggestions for AAF:

Honestly, Amarillo Area Foundation was amazing and a key factor in our ability to assist these individuals. We appreciate how they understand even though we work with United Way, we are not funded or apart of the United Way and need our own funding. Everyone at Amarillo Area Foundation has been such a blessing to CCS and we absolutely could not continue our mission without their support.

Miami Ministerial Alliance (Nonprofit)

Use of Funds:

housing, fencing, rebuilding, cattle, supplies

Estimated Number Served:

60 families (total number of people unknown)

Impact Stories:

We received multiple thank you letters stating that the fires were very devastating and that what we were able to distribute to those affected through yourselves and other kind donors was more than appreciated. In a very tense situation, the monetary blessings were a breath of fresh air.

Partnerships:

We had multiple donors, churches, food trucks, fundraisers, etc., that all combined to give back as much as possible.

Suggested Resources:

The devastation was so substantial that millions of more dollars could've been given, but the ability to fully re-supply still would not have been met. We all do the best we could with what we had, and God sees that.

Suggestions for AAF:

We were more than blessed by the AAF and are VERY grateful for your efforts and willingness to help!!

Hemphill County (Government)

Use of Funds:

Funds were used to assist ranchers with fence replacement and infrastructure such as well houses, corrals, pens, etc.

Estimated Number Served:

Approximately 45 ranchers/families

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Impact Stories:

I do not have knowledge about specific grant projects but have heard from many ranchers that they are grateful for the additional funds and it has put them a lot further along in their recovery from the fire.

Partnerships:

We had a Multi Agency Resource Center where victims of the fire had access to Red Cross, Texas Panhandle Centers, Baptist Disaster Services, Texas A&M Extension Service, High Plains Food Bank, and others

Suggested Resources:

Can't think of any that we didn't have

Suggestions for AAF:

AAF has been tremendously supportive through our recovery from the Smokehouse Creek Fire. Not sure you could do more than you have.