

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS UMCOR/ERT OPPORTUNITY

1. **What is UMCOR?** It is the **United Methodist Committee on Relief**. UMCOR provides funding and volunteers to assist in the recovery that occurs after a natural disaster. The funding is provided to the United Methodist Conference in the affected area. The aid is made available to all.
2. **What is an ERT?** An ERT is an **Emergency Response Team**. In addition to providing funding, UMCOR will train ERT members to go to the disaster site to assist in the initial portions of the disaster recovery.
3. **Do I have to be a member of a United Methodist Congregation to become a member of an ERT?** No. The mission of an ERT is to support and assist those who have experienced a crisis. UMCOR is part of a larger network of responders to natural disasters. In their initial training ERT members must agree that no one is denied support or assistance, consistent with the safe sanctuary policies and procedures of most denominations.
4. **How do I become a member of an ERT?** All members of an ERT undergo a one-day training session conducted locally. There is a \$25.00 registration fee that covers the cost of the training materials and the lunch.
5. **Will I be required to go to a natural disaster site?** No. Said in the simplest way; come when you can. When a natural disaster occurs, a Conference Disaster Coordinator will notify trained individuals and put together one or more emergency response teams.
6. **If I can go, how long will I be gone?** A typical ERT response to an area disaster is three days. Adding a travel day to and from the location, the number of days can be five days or more. Team members often drive back and forth if the disaster is local.
7. **What if I think I am too old or not strong enough?** If there is breath in your body, you can be a member of an ERT. There are a variety of tasks that are not strenuous and do not require physical labor.
8. **Do I need any prior experience or special skills?** The most important skill is your willingness to help others in a time of great need. Beyond that, no special skill or experience is required.
9. **How frequently do calls to out to form an ERT?** The number of calls cannot be predicted. While we often learn about the major disasters through social media and the news, calls do go out for smaller, local disasters.

10. **What tools do I need?** Team members are not required to bring their own tools. However, it often helps if a team member has a work belt and a small box of hand tools that they are willing to take to the disaster site.
11. **Will UMCOR compensate me for the pay I lose while I am away?** All ERT members are volunteers. However, every person who completes ERT training will receive a badge can get a letter informing their employer that they are now a trained ERT member. Some employers will not deduct wages or charge vacation time for those who are volunteering to help others.
12. **If the disaster is outside of my local area, what type of housing is provided?** Team members are expected to be self-sufficient. However, the inviting conference usually arranges housing for the volunteers. Whether housing is going to be available will be known when the call goes out to form one or more teams.
13. **Do I need to bring my own food?** If specialty food, such as gluten free items are needed, it is wise to bring them with you. Quite often grocery stores and restaurants will be accessible near the disaster area.
14. **I have medications that need to be refrigerated. Will there be refrigeration available?** It would be wise to bring the medication with you in a cooler. Cold packs can be re-frozen once on location.
15. **Why is a campaign being conducted to entice people to become trained ERT members?** Over the last three years the number of local and major natural disasters has increased significantly. Sadly, there are only twelve trained ERT members in the Peninsula-Delaware Conference. Many more are needed.
16. **When and where is the next training session?** Bethel United Methodist Church, 124 West Fourth Street, Lewes, DE will host a training session on Saturday, October 17, 2025. The training sessions will begin at 9:00 a.m.
17. **How do I register for the training session?** First, email Rob Robison at robrobison78@verizon.net to secure your spot in the class. Second, write a check made out to the Pen-Del Conference (ERT training in the memo line) for \$25.00 and mail it to Bethel United Methodist Church (address above).
18. **Questions needing to be answered?** Call or email Rob Robison. Phone: 732-331-5292. Email: Above.