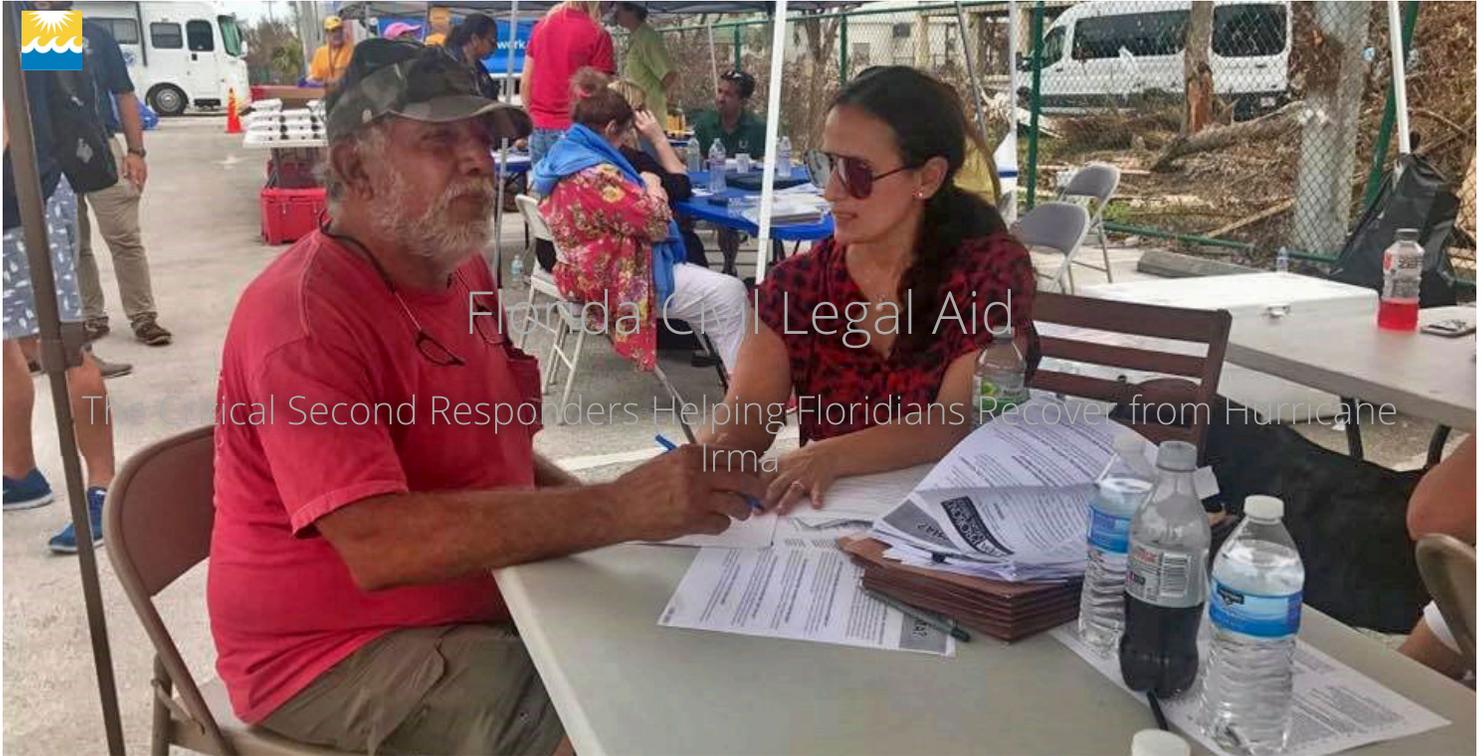


This story was made with [Esri's Story Map Cascade](https://arcg.is/CCDzi).

Read it on the web at <https://arcg.is/CCDzi>.



Florida Civil Legal Aid
 The Most Critical Second Responders Helping Floridians Recover from Hurricane Irma

When hurricanes strike, first responders make sure people have the basics – food, shelter, utilities and medical care. But when the survivors start picking up the pieces of their lives, it’s the second responders on whom they depend. Civil legal aid providers are among the most critical of the second responders.

Legal aid protects the rights of people who are:

Denied insurance and federal disaster benefits to which they are entitled because important documentation has been lost or destroyed, because they’re unable to navigate the process, or because someone has stolen their identity

Taken advantage of by landlords who demand rent for housing that is no longer habitable, or who try to evict them unlawfully in order to hike the rent in a post-disaster housing shortage

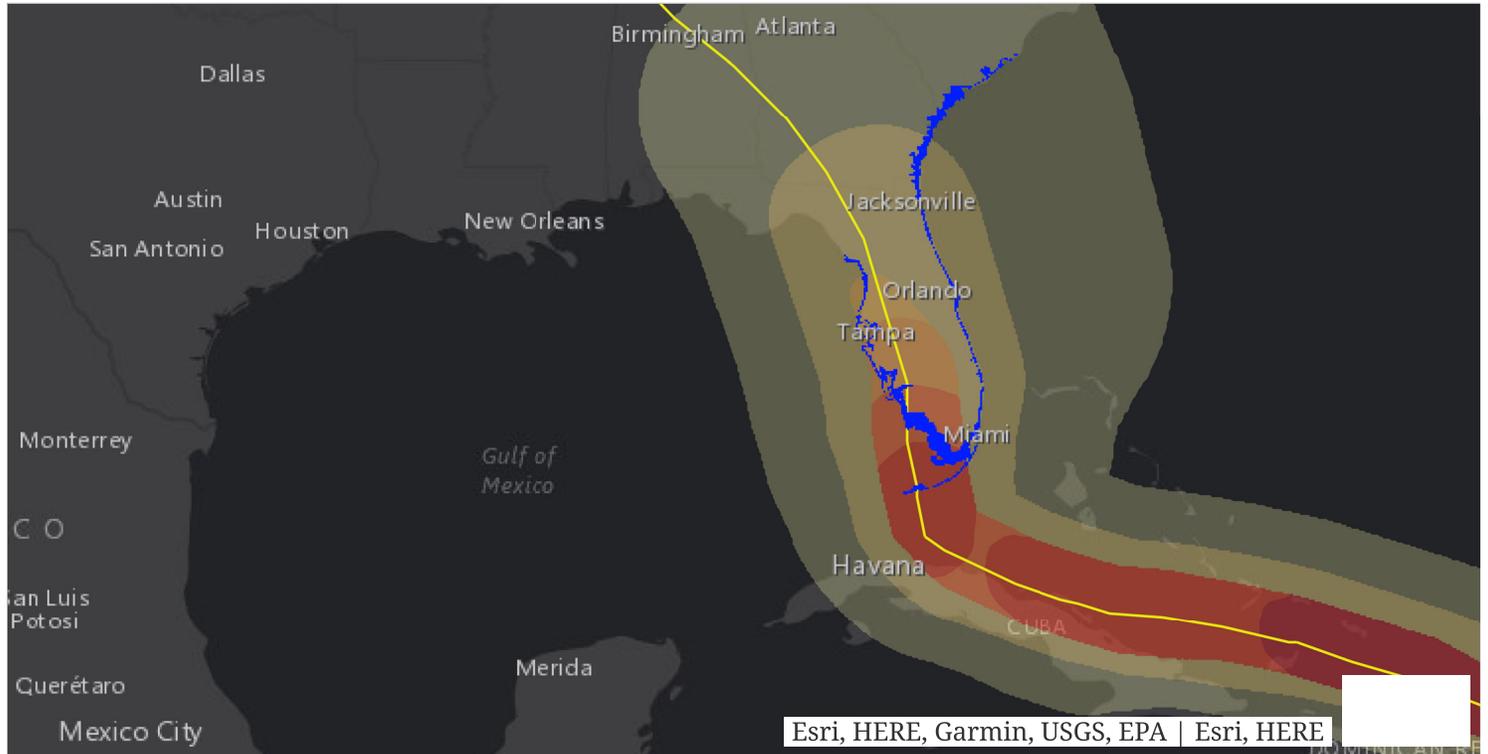
Scammed by phony or unscrupulous contractors, or unable to collect a final paycheck from an employer who has laid them off

At risk of being left out of the recovery effort because they are part of a marginalized community



Hurricane Irma made landfall in the Florida Keys as a Category 4 storm Sept. 10, 2017, and swept up the peninsula from Marco Island along the Gulf coast, reaching inland toward Orlando. The storm knocked out power for 15 million of the state's 20.6 million residents.

The following maps show Florida areas hardest by high winds and storm surge, which also affected the Atlantic coast.



Peak Winds

Wind speeds of more than 130 mph were recorded at Cudjoe Key, where the storm first made landfall, and upon its second landfall in the Naples area peak gusts still exceeded 115 mph.

Click on an area to see approximate wind speeds .

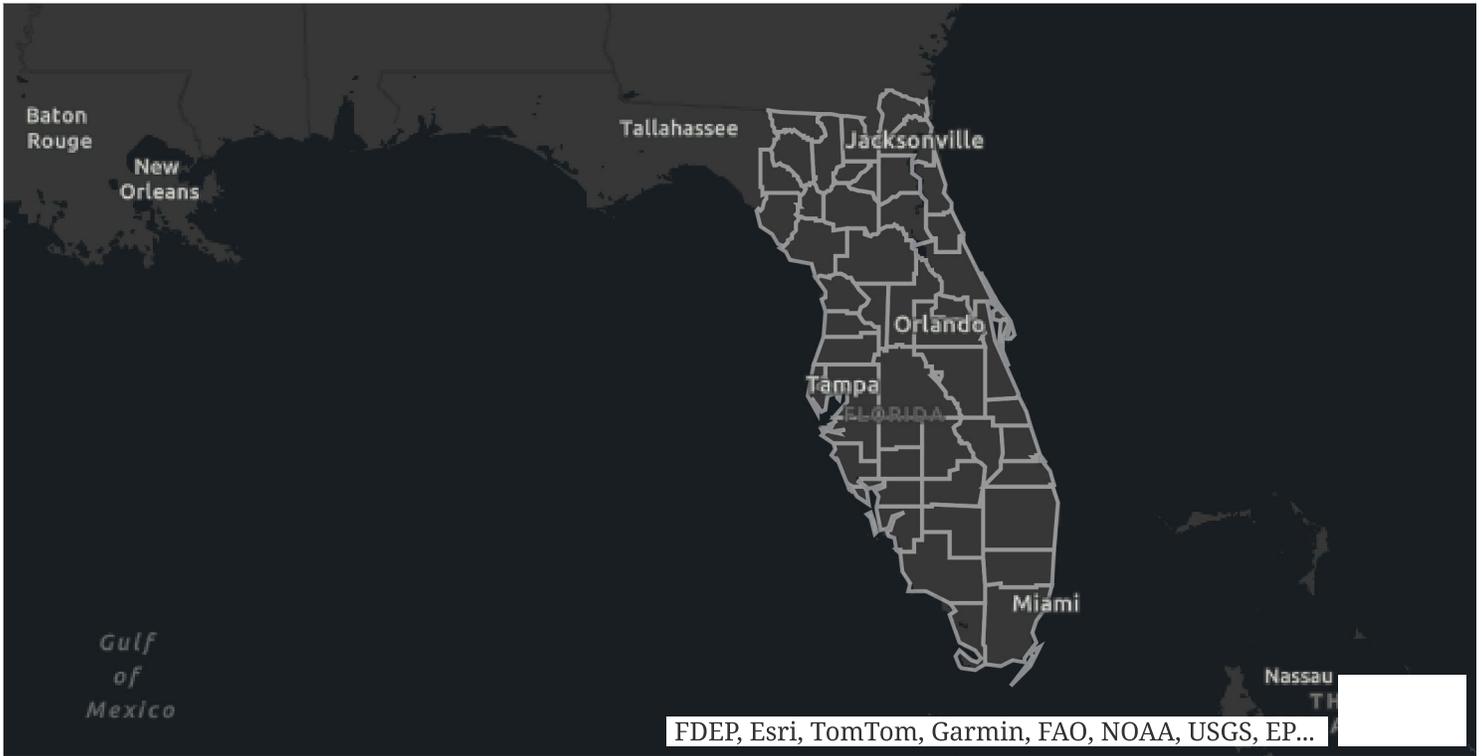
Source: [FEMA HAZUS ASOS Observed Winds](#)

Combined Hurricane Impacts

A combination of peak gusts of high wind, estimated flooding and estimate initial storm surge damage from Hurricane Irma hit much of Florida. Homes and businesses were damaged from high winds and flooding that went inland into northeastern, central, and southern Florida.



On Sept. 10, 2017, President Trump issued a disaster declaration for 48 of the 67 Florida counties. This declaration enables legal residents to apply for and receive federal assistance.



Disaster Declaration

Much of the state, excluding the Florida Panhandle, is included in the disaster declaration, making legal residents eligible for individual assistance.

Click on an county to confirm that it is included in the disaster declaration.

Source: [Presidential Disaster Declaration under DR-4337](#) hosted by [HUD](#)



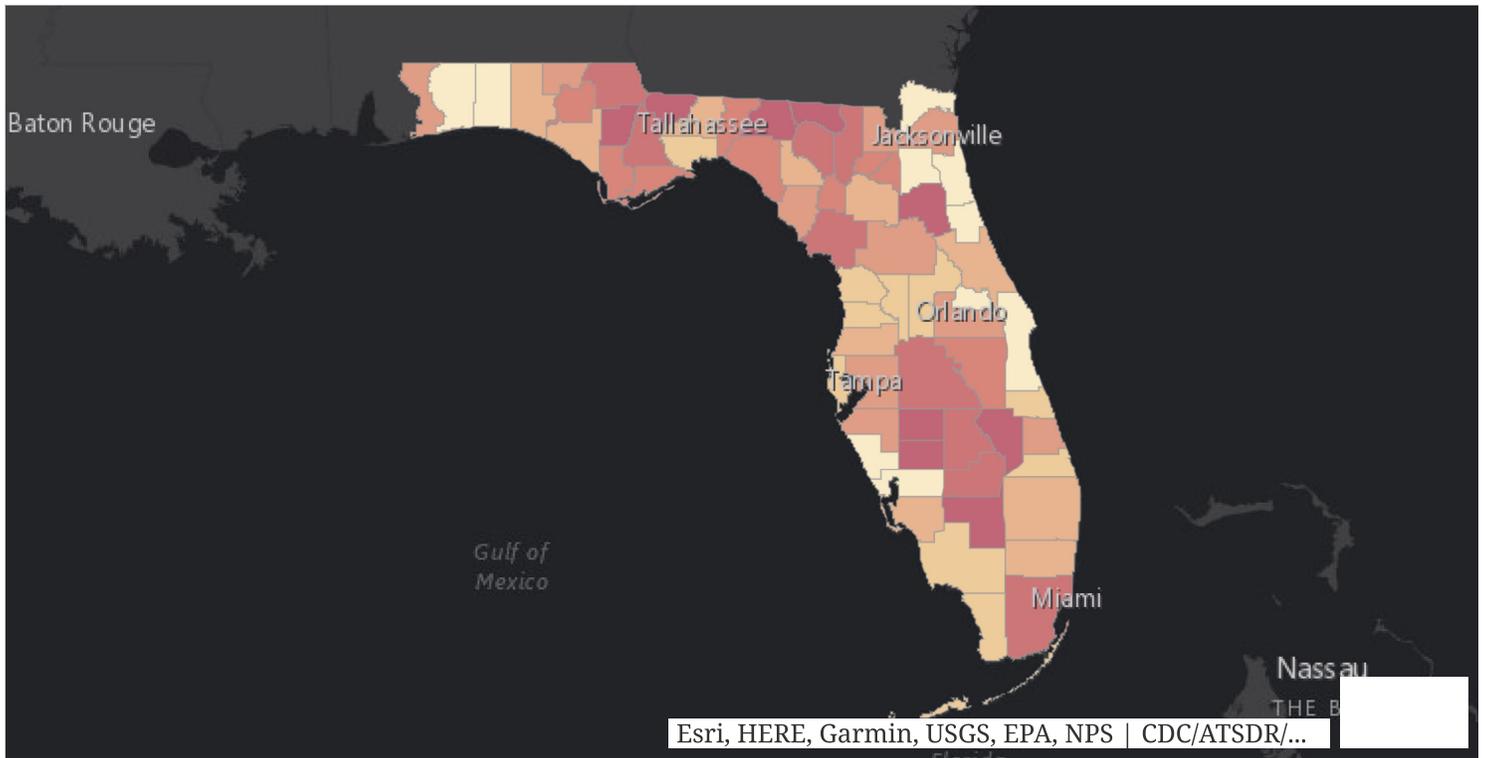
Some communities are more at-risk for preparing for or responding to a hazardous event.

These maps use indexes to estimate risks based on:

Social Vulnerability - Individuals may be more in need of assistance if they are experiencing high poverty, lack access to a vehicle, live in a crowded household, or face other barriers.

Housing affordability - In areas where houses are already not affordable prior to a natural disaster, residents may find it harder to afford a home post-disaster.

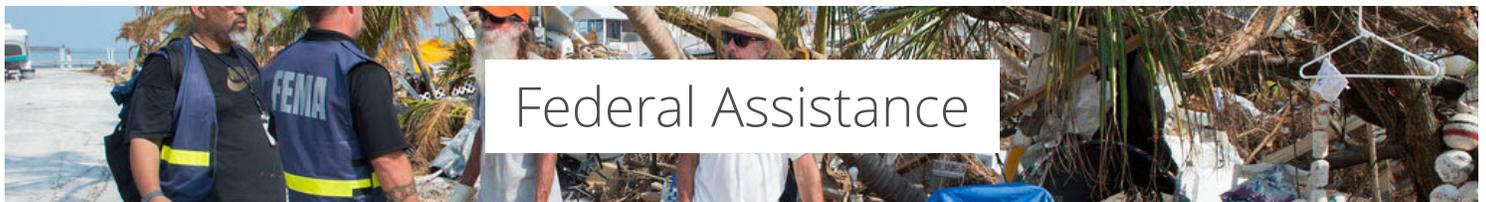
Location affordability - If rent is already not affordable prior to a natural disaster, residents may be even more at-risk post-disaster, when predatory landlords sometimes seek to evict tenants to take advantage of inflated rental markets, or continue to charge rent for damaged or uninhabitable units.



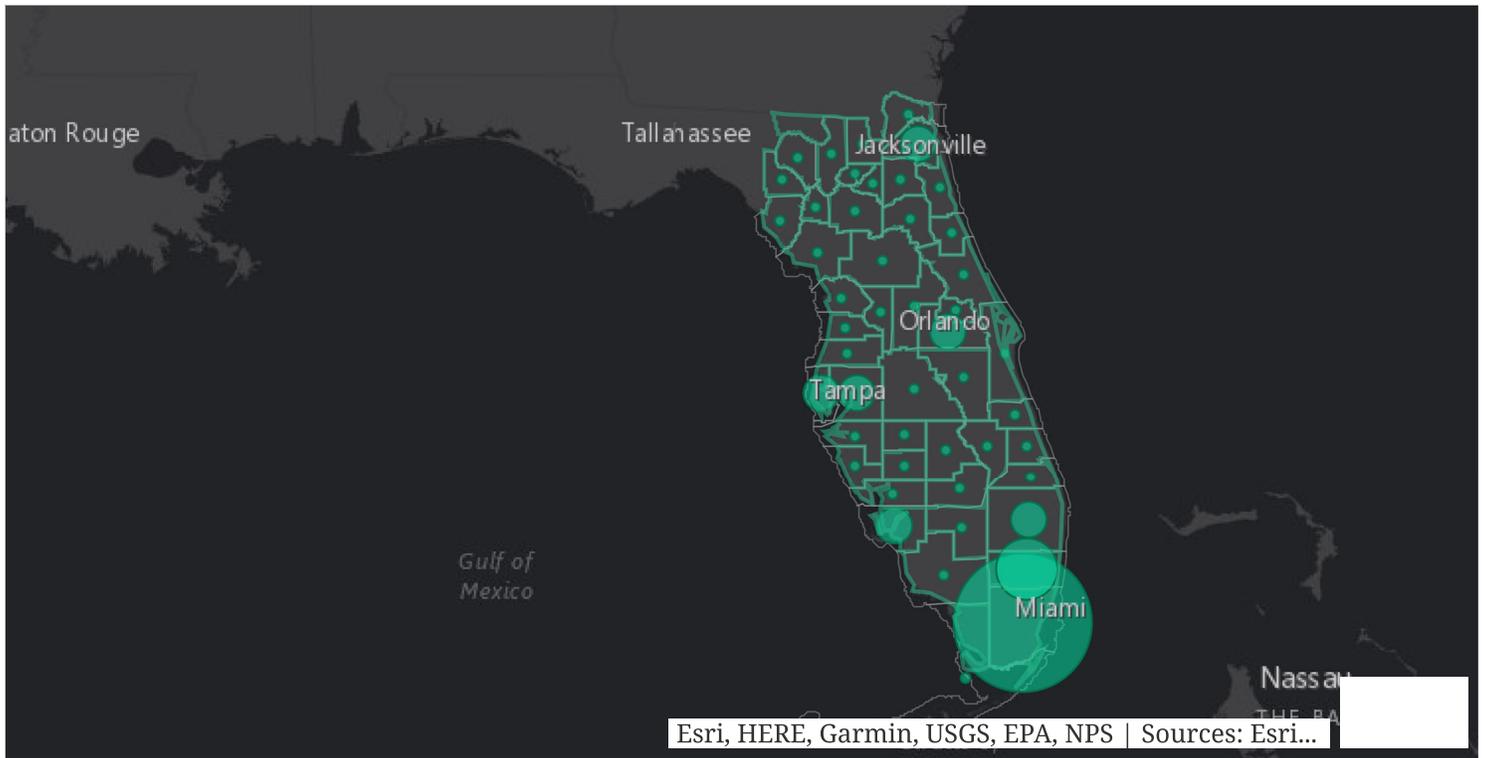
Social Vulnerability Index

The SVI identifies communities that will most likely need support before, during, and after a hazardous event. This index uses U.S. census variables at the tract level to determine the degree to which a community exhibits certain social conditions that may affect that community’s ability to prepare for and respond to a hazardous event. Vulnerability Score: **Highest, Very High, High, Normal, Low, Very Low and Lowest.**

Source: [CDC Social Vulnerability Index](#)



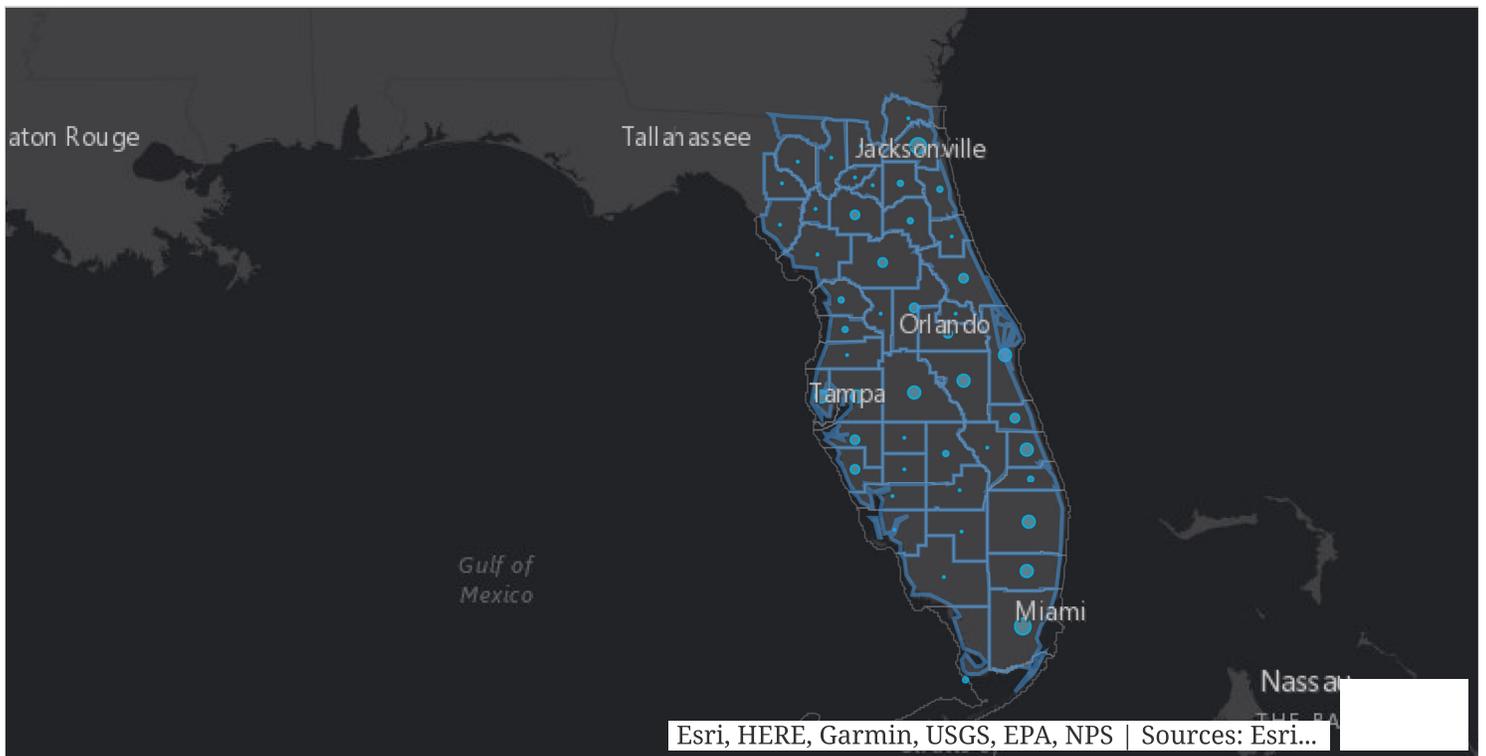
The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) can provide assistance to those affected by Hurricane Irma. FEMA provides alternative housing if an individual's primary home was damaged, medical and dental care, child care, funeral and burial expenses, essential household items, moving and storage, transportation, and some clean-up items. As of Nov. 7, 2.6 million Floridians had applied for FEMA assistance. The following map shows the distribution of applications as of Oct. 11.



FEMA Assistance Applicants

2,399,007 million people had applied for FEMA assistance in Florida counties included in the disaster declaration as of Oct. 11, 2017, at 7:00 a.m.

Source: [FEMA, DR-4337-FL Recovery Program Summary, Oct 11, 2017](#)



Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Food for Florida is the name of Florida’s D-SNAP, which offers emergency food benefits to victims of hurricanes or other types of presidentially-declared disaster. The declaration must be for “individual assistance” and be

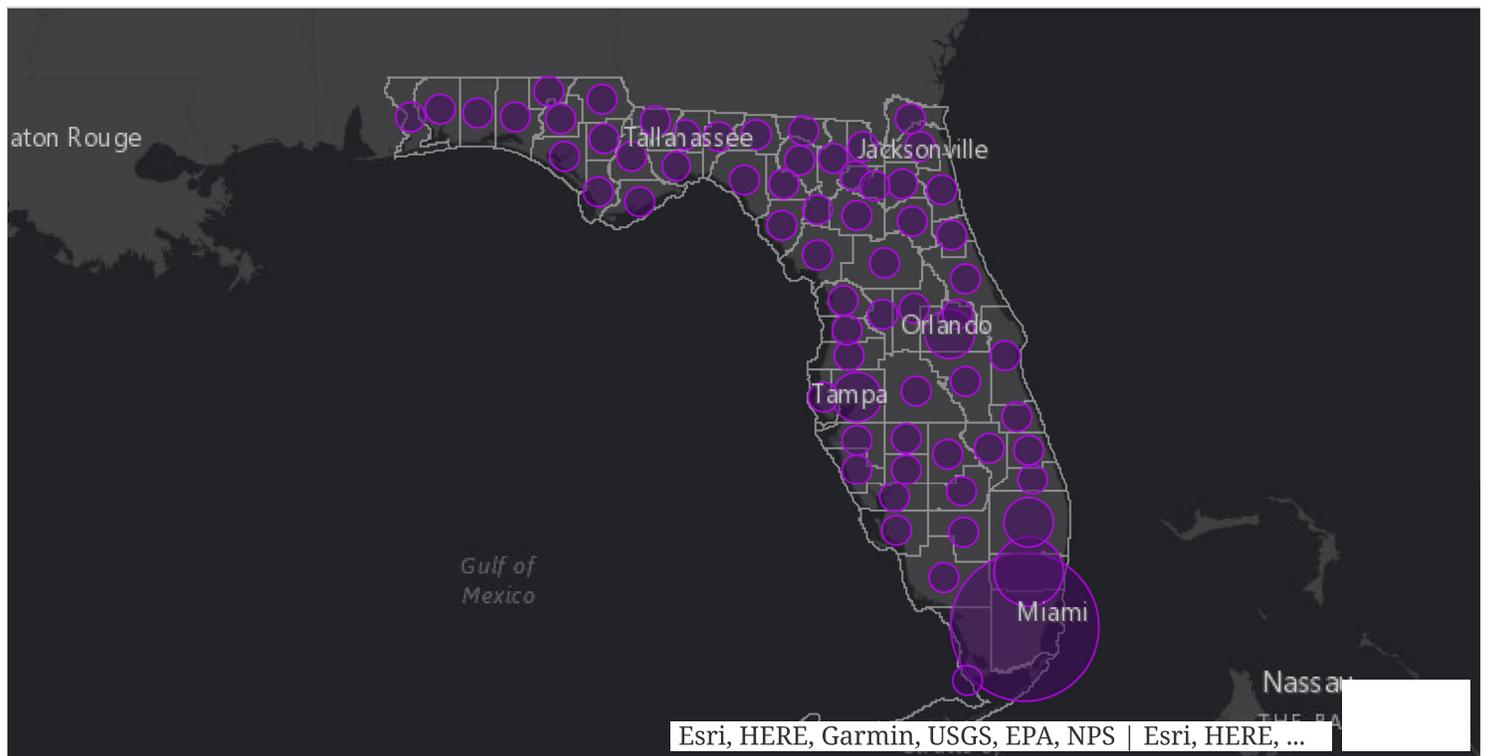
approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services (FNS).

This map shows D-SNAP applicants for Hurricane Irma as of Oct. 19, 2017.

Source: [Food for Florida - Oct. 19, 2017](#)



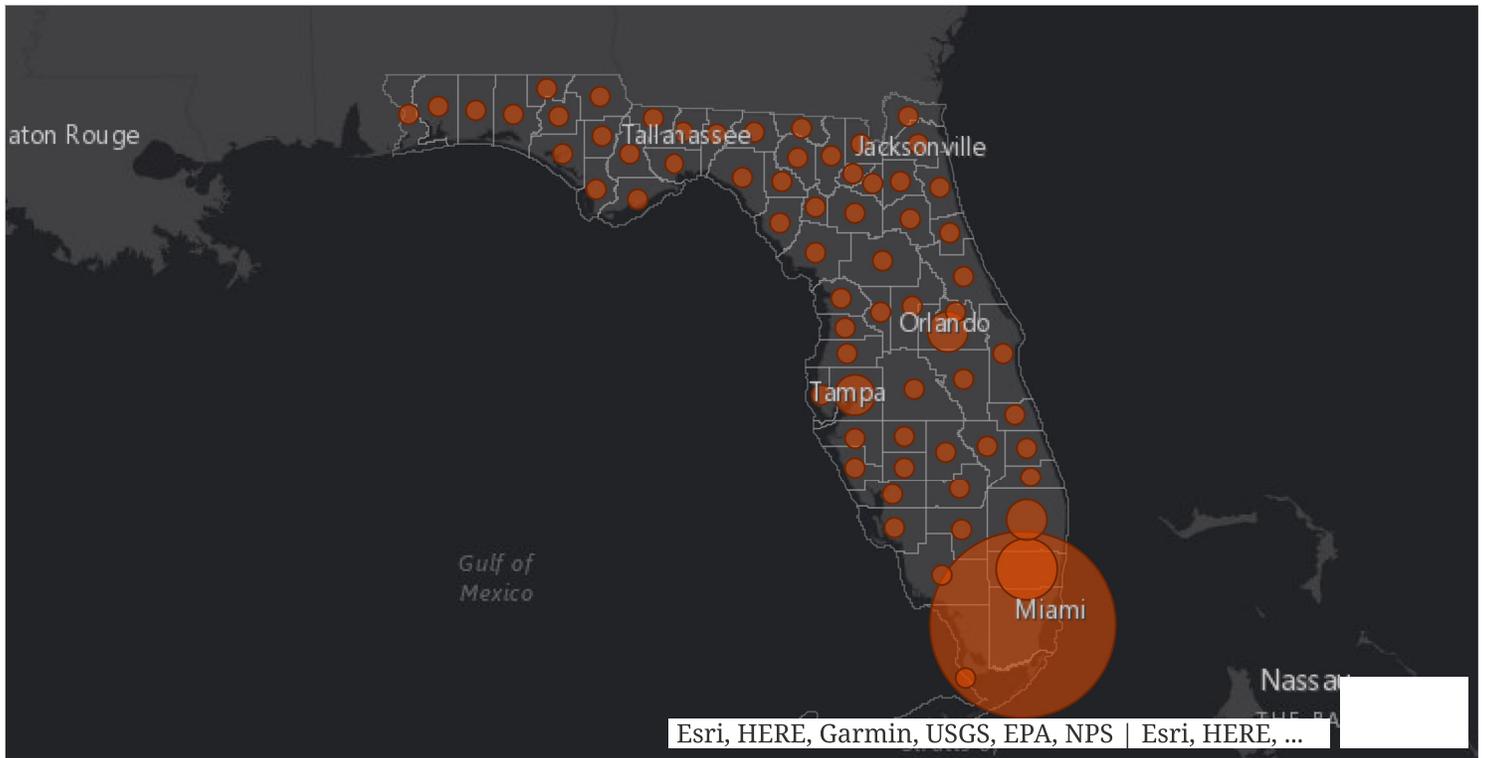
In spite of the availability of government assistance, millions of Floridians are still struggling. Many are facing civil legal issues resulting from the storm and having difficulty obtaining the benefits for which they qualify. Residents of marginalized communities often need help making their voices heard as the cleanup and rebuilding efforts get underway. Undocumented immigrants who may have lost their homes or livelihoods, and who don't qualify for federal assistance, face daunting challenges in the recovery. To quantify some of the at-risk populations in the areas impacted by the storm, the Foundation has created a legal vulnerability index based on available public data.



Foreign Born Non-US Citizens

These populations may experience barriers to accessing benefits or the courts. They may be ineligible for federal aid or reluctant to seek help.

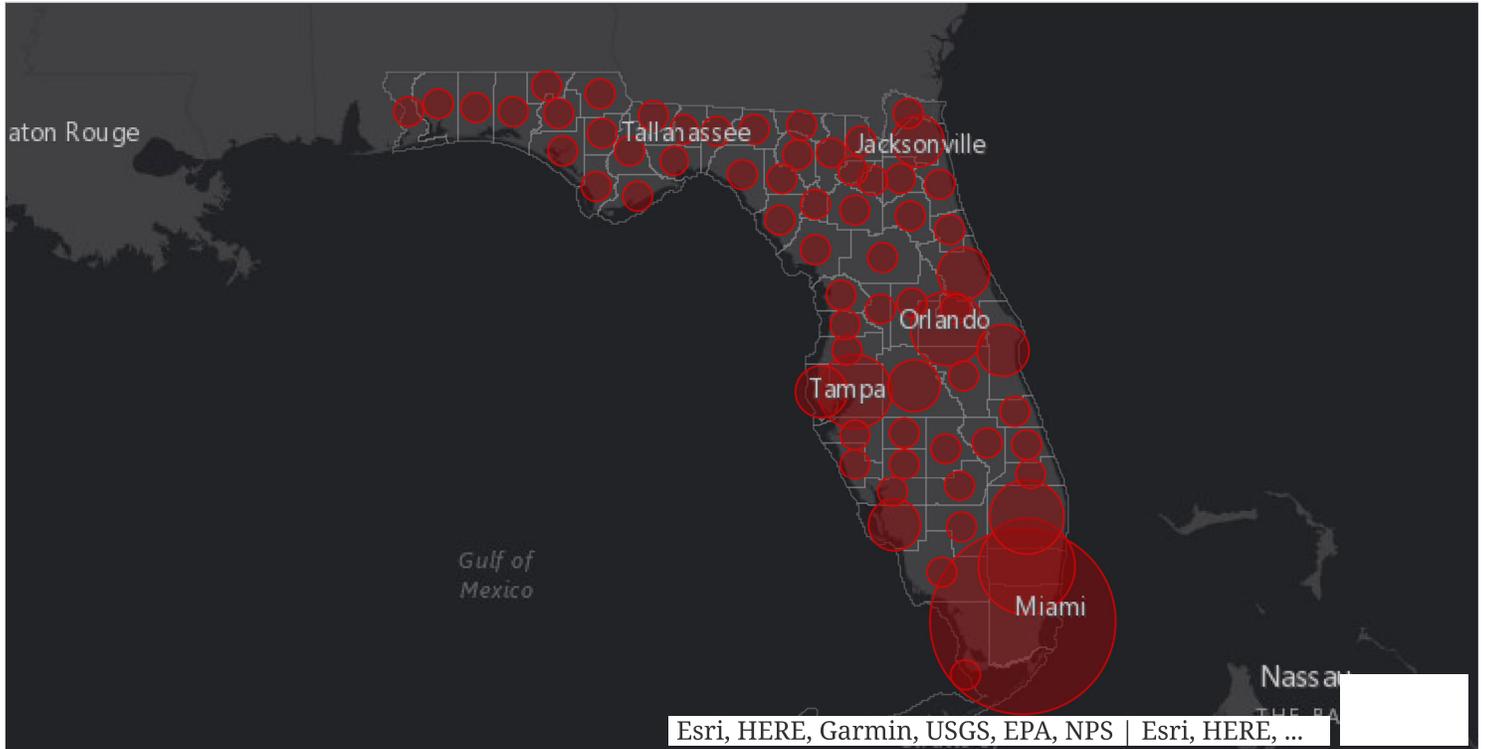
Source: [U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2011-2015](#) hosted by SRLN.



Limited English Proficiency

People with limited English proficiency (LEP) need additional language services to connect with legal resources.

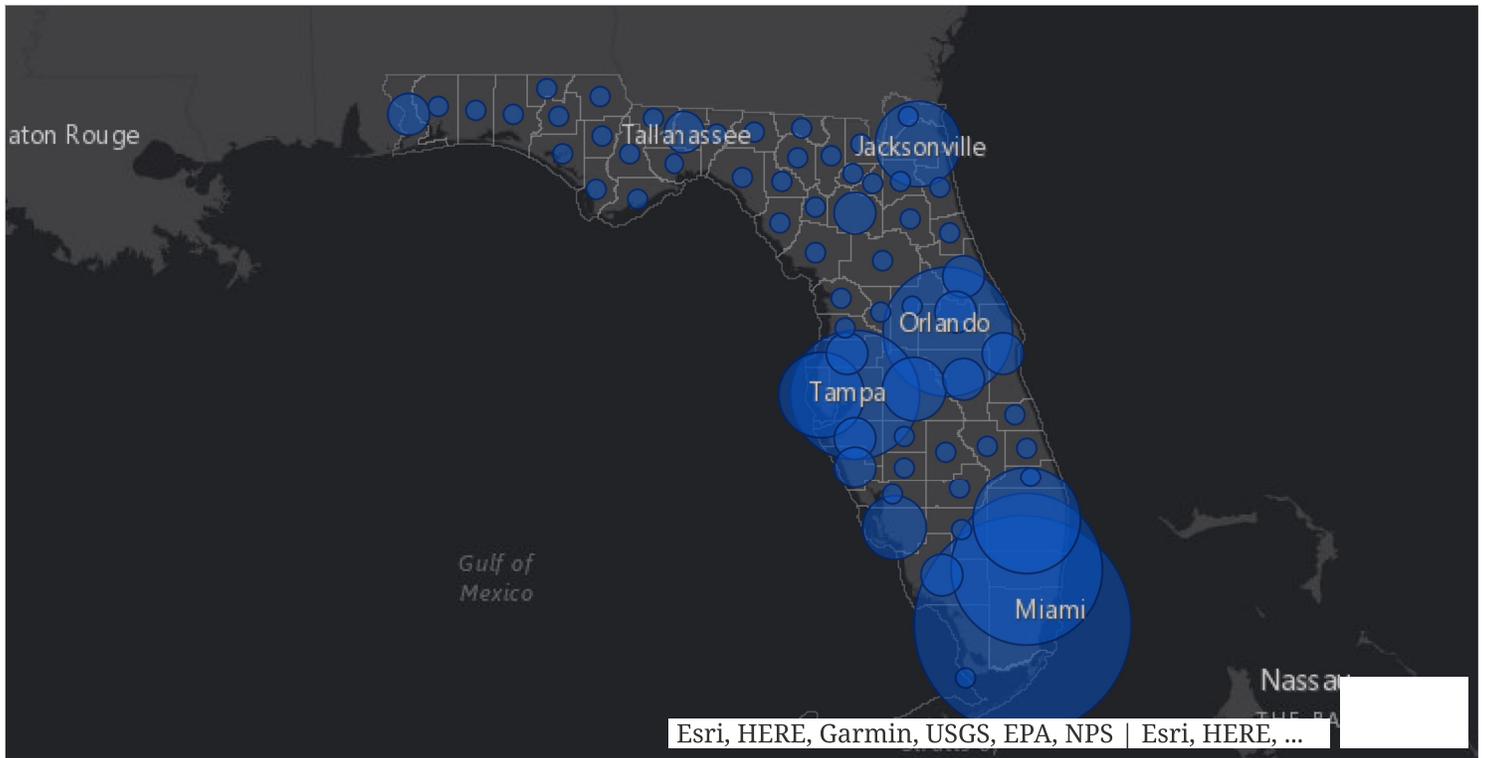
Source: [U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2011-2015](#) hosted by [SRLN](#)



Poverty Below 125%

People with incomes below 125% of the Federal Poverty Level need access to legal resources and are eligible for civil legal aid.

Source: [U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2011-2015](#) hosted by [SRLN](#).



Renters

Renters may be susceptible to predatory landlords who charge rent for property that is damaged or uninhabitable, or who pursue evictions in order to raise rent in a post-hurricane housing shortage.

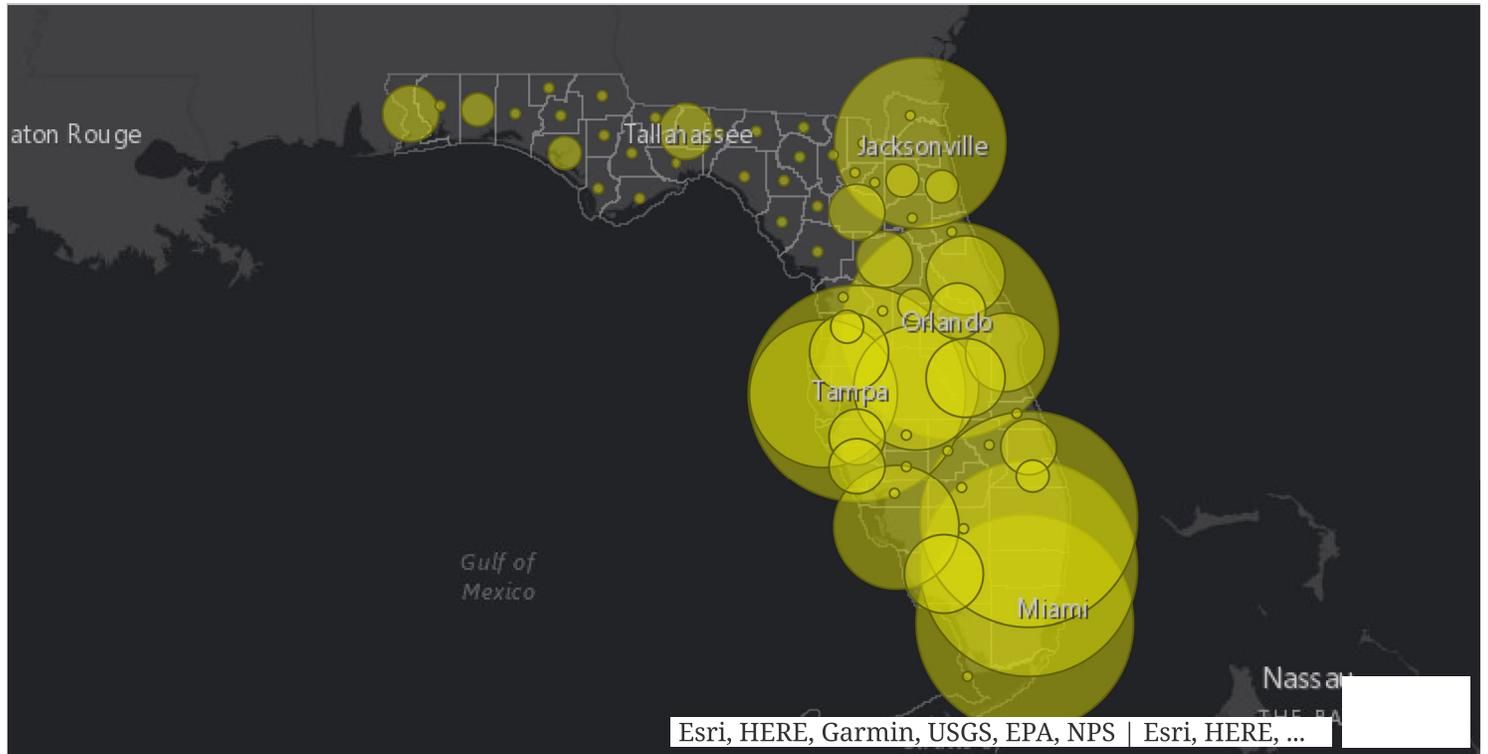
Source: [U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2011-2015](#) hosted by [SRLN](#).



Without Health Insurance

Those without health insurance may be at-risk for costly medical bills. The inability to afford health insurance is an indicator that these residents might be unable to afford other expenses such as legal fees.

Source: [U.S. Census Bureau American Small Area Health Insurance Estimates \(SAHIE\), 2015.](#)

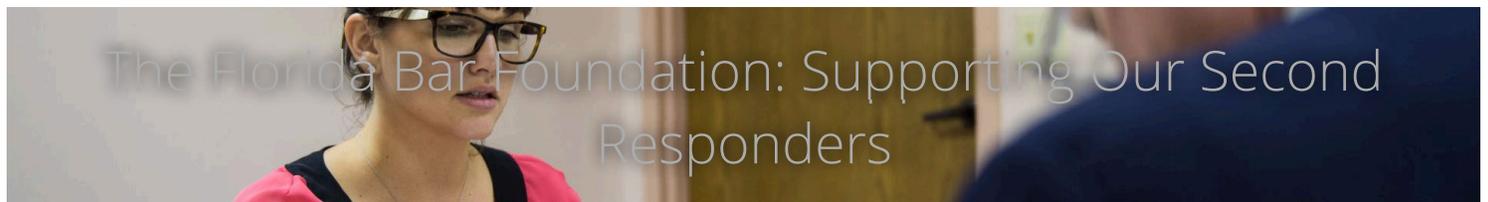


Legal Vulnerability Index

The Florida Bar Foundation created the LVI to identify how vulnerable a community may be when seeking legal help after a disaster.

The index shows the sum of all the at-risk indicators for each county's population.

Source: [U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2011-2015](#) hosted by [SRLN](#).



The Florida Bar Foundation is providing more than \$750,000 in civil legal aid for Floridians affected by Hurricane Irma and for those relocating to Florida as a result of Hurricane Maria. In addition to the original \$500,000 set aside by The Florida Bar Foundation board on Sept. 7, three days before the storm hit Florida, the Foundation also has received a significant gift from a private foundation for disaster-related civil legal aid for immigrants.

To supplement the funds already allocated, the Foundation is accepting donations to the [Florida Hurricane Legal Aid Fund](#), all of the proceeds of which will be added to the disaster legal services grants. For more information about resources for Floridians affected by hurricanes and other disasters, visit the Foundation's [Storm Aid](#) page.

The Florida Bar Foundation will use and share resources like this story map and the legal vulnerability index to help maximize the impact of its grants. The Foundation has made this data available on an open source platform in hope that its grantees and others working to help Floridians recover from Hurricane Irma will use it to support their strategic planning, outreach and decision-making.

CREDITS

Story & Funding	<u>The Florida Bar Foundation</u>
The Florida Bar Foundation Director of Communications	<u>Nancy Kinnally</u>
The Florida Bar Foundation Director of Grants	<u>Jennifer Wimberly</u>
GIS Support	<u>Self-Represented Litigation Network (SRLN)</u>
SRLN GIS/Data Manager	<u>Alison Davis-Holland</u>
SRLN GIS Specialist	<u>Suzanne Wade</u>
Geospatial Data	FEMA, HUD, CDC & U.S. Census Bureau hosted by SRLN
Cover photo	FEMA, Photo by J.T. Blatty