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# Managing HR in the Aftermath of a Natural Disaster

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Posted by [Johnston, Lori](#) at Monday, 12/10/2012 1:26 pm

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By Lori Johnston, Writer, [EmploymentNetwork.net](#)

Hurricanes and other natural disasters not only damage and destroy homes and possessions, but the storms can halt companies' efforts to recruit and hire workers.

Electrical outages, transportation difficulties, damaged and destroyed offices, and overall sadness and frustration in a storm's aftermath can hamper the efforts of job seekers and human resources representatives.

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Libby Anderson, president of consulting firm Human Resources Now, based in Naples, Fla., shared three ways for companies to resume recruitment efforts and reach out to job

candidates after a disaster.

## 1. Go where potential job candidates are.

If you have immediate workforce needs, head to shelters and facilities operated by nonprofit organizations, such as the Salvation Army or American Red Cross, to find out-of-work individuals. But remember that because of their situation – a damaged or destroyed home, or loss of possessions – they won't have the pulled-together look of a typical job candidate. "They are not going to be dressed in interview clothes," she says.

If you find a candidate who was in the midst of the interview process but lacks transportation due to a disaster, travel to them or conduct a telephone interview. If you can fly to them, meet them at the airport in their town. "You've got to be flexible," Anderson says.

## 2. Be a company that volunteers.

Gathering your staff to support recovery efforts, such as distributing care packages or food, can show your concern for the community – and connect you to potential workers. Your employees will be interacting with other potential employees, and the effort could demonstrate your company's culture of giving. "This is a company's opportunity to do great things and to attract great people through their efforts," says Anderson, adding, "Of

course, it has to be genuine and heartfelt.”

For CollegeBound Cares, the philanthropic arm of The CollegeBound Network and the [Employment Network](#), pulling together as a company to help with Hurricane Sandy relief hit home. With their headquarters located in Staten Island, which was severely devastated by the storm, it was in the natural “order of business” to mobilize team efforts targeted toward assistance, explains Luciano Rammaione, founder and president. “It was a way for us to apply our team’s passion to an immediate need, and it exemplified our company’s commitment to our community.”

### 3. Start a referral program.

Provide a financial incentive for existing employees to refer possible job candidates. With so many people seeking work at an inopportune time emotionally, the help of friends is integral. Plus, it offers your employers another chance to “do good” during a time of great need. Also, understanding that current and incoming employees may need flexible time off to continue recovering from a disaster is key. If you are consistent and fair in your support of victims of a disaster, says Anderson, it could pay off by employees referring strong candidates. “This could be a great opportunity for an employer to shine, if they focus on how they can be good ambassadors in the community.”

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