

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: BALDWIN TOGETHER - Cooperative Partnerships Working Together Supporting Baldwin County Residents Impacted by COVID-19

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BALDWIN TOGETHER is a coordinated countywide framework to assist and support the residents of Baldwin County in recovery from the economic, sociological, and emotional impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

This project is just as its name suggests; Baldwin Together. Stakeholders from a cross section of the community formed a working group, Baldwin Moving Forward, to assess the impact of the pandemic and look for paths forward to help those most impacted. The working group's findings included high unemployment, businesses suffering from a hit to revenue streams, and a social service system strained by an increase in need. The group recommended hiring specialized case managers. Long-Term Recovery Case Management is not something new for Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters but funding for this personnel was not available from conventional channels.

“VOAD has a lot of experience helping our communities recover from disaster, but this is a different type of disaster with very unique challenges. We appreciate our County Commission coming alongside us to help fill in the gaps where traditional funding is not available.” Dana Jepsen, VOAD Chair, South Baldwin Director, Ecumenical Ministries, Inc.

Commissioner Billie Jo Underwood, Baldwin County Commission Chair shares, “The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a global economic crisis. The citizens of Baldwin County are resilient, but navigating available resources is complex. This program will provide a way for citizens to access someone who can help them find programs and organizations to help guide them through the recovery process. We appreciate all of our local nonprofit and faith-based organizations for all they do to serve our communities and our Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters group for spearheading this effort.”

Families and individuals impacted by COVID-19 and struggling to recover can seek help by calling Baldwin Together at **251-424-1506** or emailing **BaldwinTogether@gmail.com**. Case Managers will connect them with available resources from an office at Prodissee Pantry in Spanish Fort starting on **September 1st**.

The stakeholders in Baldwin Together include: Baldwin County Commission, Baldwin County EMA, Baldwin County VOAD, Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance, Baldwin Realtors, Central Baldwin Chamber of Commerce, Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce, Gulf Coast Business Chamber, Gulf Shores Orange Beach Tourism, North Baldwin Chamber of Commerce, South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce, United Way of Baldwin County, Mapp Family Foundation. **Active BCVOAD Members include:** 211 Connects/Lifelines, Adventist Disaster Response, AL Dept. of Public Health, American Red Cross, Baldwin Baptist Disaster Relief, Baldwin County Public Schools, Baldwin County EMA, Catholic Social Services, Christian Service Center, Church of the Highlands, Community Action Agency, Convoy of Hope, Council on Aging, Dept. of Human Resources, Disaster Victim Services, Ecumenical Ministries, Inc., Fairhope Rotary Club, Fairhope United Methodist Church, Family Promise, Feeding the Gulf Coast, Grace Lutheran, Gulf Shores Church of Christ, Gulf Shores United Methodist Church, Habitat for Humanity, Liberty Church, Point Clear Rotary, Prodissee Pantry, Providence United Methodist Church, Salvation Army, Team Rubicon Alabama, United Way of Baldwin County.