

NEWS

THE CURRENT

CLASSICAL

Events | Member info | Support | Shop | About us

Search MPR

GO

# MPRnews

Member Supported · Join Now ›

Thursday, May 26, 2011

50° in [Twin Cities](#)[\(more cities\)](#)[Weather Report ›](#)[Traffic Report ›](#)

Mobile  
Newsletters  
RSS Feeds  
Podcasts



## TORNADO IN NORTH MINNEAPOLIS

### Volunteers help assess needs of storm victims

by [Brandt Williams](#), Minnesota Public Radio

May 25, 2011

Minneapolis — Hundreds of volunteers fanned out across the north side of Minneapolis Wednesday to help clear debris still left by Sunday afternoon's tornado, and talk to residents to see what kind of help they need to recover from the storm's devastating impact.

The homes and trees near the corner of Lowry and Knox Avenues look like they were buzzed by a giant weed-whacker. If you look up you'll see a noticeable gap where the tree tops used to be.

A crane in the middle of the street scoops up the dismembered remains of trees and drops them into the back of a large truck.

The homes on this block have been without power since the tornado ripped through here on Sunday afternoon. So, it's possible that many people here haven't heard about the resources available to help them. That's one of the reasons a group of five women have come to this block.

"So the idea is to assess; knock on the door and then do a visual if there's not anyone there," said Jeweleen Jackson, who's leading the group down the block, house by house.

That's no easy task, considering the boulevards and sidewalks are littered with tree debris. The women are part of a coalition of northside faith groups and service organizations trying to assess residents' needs and help direct them to where they can get help. About 40 volunteers are out spreading the word.

Evelyn Evans is a volunteer who lives in Maplewood, and is studying to be a community health worker at Summit Academy OIC. Evans' first encounter of the day is with Innes Siolkowski.



[Outreach to homeowners](#)

"Do you need any food or water or clothing, any kind of medical?" asked Evans.

"We got a generator in the back," said Siolkowski. "And we got two freezers full of food and one in the kitchen."

Siolkowski's house is getting its power restored shortly. She said she's going to need a new roof, but her son-in-law -- a contractor -- is going to fix it for her.

Down the block, Jeweleen Jackson, or Ms. Jackson as she is known throughout the community, is talking with Joyce Pierce. Pierce is sitting in front of a house that has a tarp on the roof.

Pierce says the house, which she rents, has no power. The chimney was knocked off the house, letting water into the second floor. Pierce tells Jackson she's not staying in the house and is leaving today.



[Talking with a homeowner](#)

"Do you have a place to go?" asked Jackson.

"That's what I'm trying to get," said Pierce. "They're calling me now to see if I can get a place now."

Jackson tells Pierce that the shelter at the Armory is still open, and runs down a short list of temporary housing, including the Drake Hotel downtown.

City officials say they are still looking for longer-term housing options for renters who will have to wait perhaps months before their buildings are repaired.

Volunteer Jameilia Howard has gotten halfway down the block and talked with a few neighborhood residents. Howard doesn't live on the north side, and is feeling slightly overwhelmed by what she's hearing and seeing.

"This is a very sad experience, and I've almost been in tears walking down the block just looking at the stuff, because this is crazy," said Howard. "I never experienced anything like this. It's like something in a movie. You don't expect this to happen to you, but it's obvious it can happen to anybody."

The organizers of the doorknocking campaign say they hope to cover the whole area of damage over the next few weeks. When they finish, they will submit their data to city officials to help them coordinate their disaster response.

The doorknockers may encounter similar teams from FEMA who will be out assessing damage over the next few days. If a federal disaster is declared, residents could receive up to \$29,000 to repair their damaged homes.

Be the first of your friends to recommend this.

### Broadcast Dates

All Things Considered, [05/25/2011, 4:49 p.m.](#)

SPONSORS

### AUDIO

[Volunteers help assess needs of storm victims \(feature audio\)](#)

### TORNADO IN NORTH MINNEAPOLIS

North Minneapolis residents are cleaning up after a tornado tore through the area on May 22, 2011. The storm was responsible for two deaths, dozens of injuries and at least \$166 million in damages.