

Payments for good

E4E Relief accelerates emergency payments



E4E Relief is a Charlotte, NC-based nonprofit that partners with corporate clients to help them assist employees affected by disaster. Over the last 18 years, E4E Relief has grown into a major force for good that channels emergency aid to tens of thousands of people annually. Bank of America recently helped E4E Relief begin sending aid disbursements digitally. The results? Faster, easier financial assistance that can make a bigger impact when people need it the most.

A new approach to disaster relief

In 2017, things came to a head for many of E4E Relief clients. Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria hit in quick succession, affecting Texas, North Carolina and Puerto Rico. Wildfires ravaged the West, destroying thousands of homes. E4E Relief sprang into action. The team, led by President and CEO Holly Welch Stubbing, disbursed funds to 13,000 people in just 16 weeks.

Reflecting on this herculean effort, Welch Stubbing and her team began to seek faster, more efficient approaches. **“Up to that point, we had sent nearly every disbursement via ACH, which was effective but cumbersome,”** says Welch Stubbing.

One challenge of ACH was the extensive labor involved, since E4E Relief only had one person on staff to process the manual payments. Second, sending ACH payments required E4E Relief to securely gather and store recipients' bank account information. This created an extra compliance burden for E4E Relief, while forcing disaster victims to scramble for information that most did not have on hand. Lastly, ACH was slower than newer, high-tech payment methods.

E4E Relief at a glance



- **Founded in 2001**
- **A subsidiary of the Foundation For The Carolinas (FFTC), the nation's sixth-largest community foundation**
- **Awarded 13,000 payments to disaster victims in 2017**

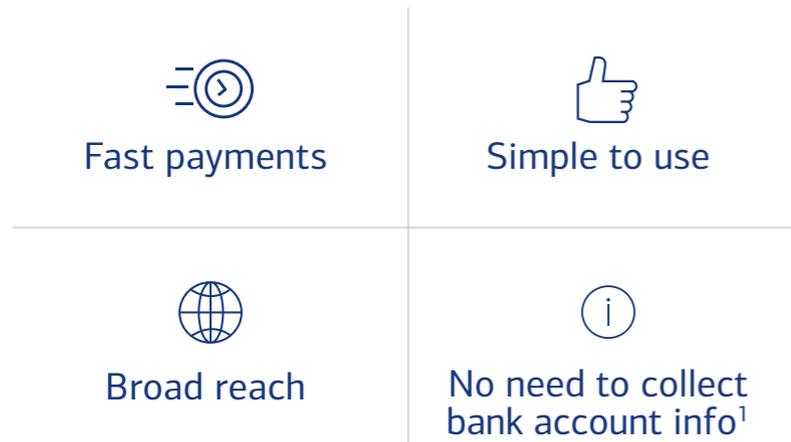
Fast payments, enabled by Zelle®

After evaluating several digital solutions, Welch Stubbing and Alyssa Federico, E4E Relief's vice president of finance, chose Global Digital Disbursements from Bank of America. Global Digital Disbursements enables organizations to send funds to individuals via email and text message, enabled by Zelle®, a payments network that enables money to be easily sent from one bank account in the U.S. to another.

Key takeaways

- In 2018, E4E Relief switched to Global Digital Disbursements so that aid payments can reach recipients in minutes.
- Global Digital Disbursements is a mobile payment network with extensive reach in the U.S. and beyond.¹
- Global Digital Disbursements is easier and more secure than sending checks.

Benefits of Global Digital Disbursements



“Global Digital Disbursements was an obvious choice for a number of reasons,” says Federico. “Most importantly, it helps us get funds to recipients in minutes¹ instead of days, using technology —smartphones and Zelle®— that’s become ubiquitous. It’s also significantly cheaper and easier than using ACH, and since we’re able to send money using just an email address or U.S. mobile phone number, we no longer need to obtain and store recipients’ bank account info.”

The cost savings can also be a game-changer, especially for a nonprofit. Federico notes that E4E Relief could have saved about \$400,000 in administrative costs in 2017 had they used Global Digital Disbursements instead of ACH.

Another advantage, according to Federico, is that Global Digital Disbursements is part of the banking system, so E4E Relief knows that it’s highly trusted and compliant with all regulations. **“We looked at several fintech solutions,”** she recalls. **“But the fact that Bank of America was one of the first financial institutions to offer Zelle® and Global Digital Disbursements made our decision easier.”**

 98%
of E4E Relief’s recipients have signed up for digital payments

What’s next for E4E Relief

Embracing technology such as digital payments is part of how E4E Relief continually seeks to improve and expand its ability to help others. E4E Relief’s leadership team recently audited its operating model and updated its back-end technology to better integrate with Global Digital Disbursements.

Expanded growth into new countries is also on the horizon for E4E Relief, as they are working with a third-party charity to make payments outside of the U.S. Global Digital Disbursements is central to their plans, since it offers the ability to transmit funds to PayPal® account holders in other countries. This will enable E4E Relief to reach recipients across borders and increase their impact.

“Over the years, no matter where our ambitions have led us, Bank of America has been right there by our side,” Welch Stubbing concludes. **“We’re extremely excited about the future, and expanding our ability to help as many people as possible.”**



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¹Once payment is sent and recipient is enrolled, funds can arrive as quickly as minutes or may take up to three business days. U.S. checking or savings account required to use Zelle®.

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