



SBP Helps Families Recover and Rebuild with TTEC Digital and AWS



About SBP

SBP, formerly St. Bernard Project, is a non-profit organization dedicated to shrinking the time between when a disaster occurs and a community recovers. Founded in New Orleans in the wake of hurricane Katrina, SBP has grown its original team of three volunteers into a national organization that has rebuilt homes for more than 5,000 families in communities across the United States and the Bahamas.

AT-A-GLANCE

TTEC Digital's Solution...

- Created a fully remote cloud-based contact center
- Included a single-stream phone intake process, accessible through a toll free hotline
- Easily integrated with Salesforce Nonprofit Cloud
- Enabled remote work for SBP agents

PARTNER

AWS

INDUSTRY CATEGORIES

Public Sector

SERVICES PROVIDED

Contact Center Optimization
Customer Experience
Employee Experience

PRODUCTS USED

Amazon Connect

THE CHALLENGE

Fulfilling their mission statement to “Help people before, during, and after disasters”, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides qualified households in the United States with grants, temporary housing, and other forms of support to rebuild after disaster. But following reports of widespread fraud in federal relief programs after Hurricane Katrina, the agency grew increasingly strict in how they reviewed and approved applications. Of the six million households that applied for FEMA assistance between 2017 and 2020, four million were rejected. That downward trend continued into 2021, with only 13% of applications approved that year — the agency’s lowest acceptance rate yet.

Only 3% of FEMA applicants appeal their decisions. Appealing an initial rejection is a complicated process, particularly burdensome for vulnerable

survivors in low-income or underrepresented households. When SBP filed its first FEMA appeal in Southwest Louisiana in December 2020, a formal FEMA appeals process did not yet exist. Recognizing that need, SBP launched its FEMA Appeals Program in August 2021. In its first year, the SBP FEMA Appeals Program helped more than 200 survivors access over \$1 million in additional FEMA awards — an increase of more than 63%.

The initial success of the FEMA Appeals Program relied on partner referrals and internal networking, made possible by SBP’s long-term presence in southern Louisiana. However, SBP wanted to expand the program’s reach to help disaster survivors across the country. SBP needed a solution that would allow them to help survivors navigate their FEMA appeals and take the first step on the road to recovery.

THE SOLUTION

In order to be accessible to survivors across the country throughout the appeals process, SBP knew they would need to leverage technology and automation to scale their existing FEMA Appeals Program. Working closely with TTEC Digital and AWS, SBP designed a remote disaster assistance contact center underpinned by Amazon Connect and accessible nationwide through a single toll-free hotline. When people call in, they select the specific support they need – from information on emergency housing and support in their area, to how to submit an initial FEMA application or appeal – to maximize the support they receive. This holistic process ensures the call is routed to an available agent that can provide expertise on the topic most important to the caller.

On the other end of an incoming call, through deep integration between Amazon Connect and Salesforce Nonprofit Cloud, contact center agents receive an automatic screen pop on their desktop displaying all relevant information — including if this caller has reached out before — so they can identify, process, and support families and their needs efficiently. The Salesforce integration also provides SBP with the ability to locate and listen to previous customer call recordings directly from the Salesforce interface so they can revisit ongoing issues, or even generate ideas for agent training based on call feedback. A huge benefit of the system is that it allows agents to work from anywhere – home, local SBP office, coffee shops, literally anywhere with an internet connection. This was an extremely

important feature, especially among nonprofits, in today's expensive, high-churn, employee-driven market. The new single-stream phone intake process ensures SBP can deliver on their mission to maximize

their support to survivors with the added benefit of tracking hotline usage and results to continually reduce inefficiencies and improve their outreach after a disaster.

THE RESULTS

Launched in May 2022, the contact center immediately went to work to support Kentuckians impacted by tornadoes that had ripped through the state the previous December. As of September 2022, the call center has allowed 87 survivors to directly connect with SBP. Having a single contact number on marketing materials meant that survivors could directly reach a FEMA Appeals Program agent to begin the intake process and receive the guidance

they needed to successfully appeal. SBP predicted that the hotline will help 200 survivors of the Kentucky tornadoes and recent floods to access at least \$500,000 in additional FEMA award monies by December 2022. As more disasters inevitably strike, agents will be on standby to support more families across other states as they begin their pathway to permanence.

“Our FEMA appeals program, although effective at helping disaster survivors receive more funding from FEMA to support their recovery, was limited by our team’s in-person presence. With the creation of the FEMA helpline, we are able to scale this offering to more disaster-impacted communities quickly.”

Liz McCartney
Co-Founder and Chief Operations Officer, SBP

About TTEC Digital

TTEC Digital is a global leader in customer experience orchestration, combining technology and empathy at the point of conversation. With decades of innovation experience across the world's leading contact center technology platforms — plus in-house expertise in CX strategy, data and analytics, AI and more — TTEC Digital delivers an unmatched skillset for organizations looking to forge deeper customer relationships and drive better business outcomes. Learn more at [ttecdigital.com](https://www.ttecdigital.com).