

The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants urges all Americans who are financially able to contribute to organizations providing relief to Haiti.

“This earthquake struck the poorest nation in our hemisphere with devastating ferocity,” said Barry Melancon, CPA, AICPA president and CEO. “The scope of this tragedy is unimaginable and heartbreaking and the AICPA and the accounting profession will be part of the relief effort.”

AICPA Personal Financial Planners, who are meeting in Orlando now for a previously scheduled three-day conference, are available to advise the public and the media on the best ways to give money to charitable groups participating in the relief efforts, both immediate and long-term.

The AICPA is also accepting donations from member CPAs to its disaster relief fund -- CPAs in Support of America Fund, Inc. -- a 501(c)(3) that was formed in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and was later used to collect contributions for the victims of Hurricane Katrina.. All of the contributions made now to the fund will be used to help victims of the Haitian earthquake on behalf of the U.S. accounting profession.

CPAs advise that Americans wishing to participate in the Haitian relief effort should give to reputable organizations and research their options. Charitable gifts are tax deductible and CPAs are able to advise taxpayers about what the requirements are for claiming a deduction on their taxes. Information about charities recognized by the IRS may be searched online at [Guidestar.org](http://Guidestar.org). Information about groups working in Haiti is available through the U.S. State Department and the United Nations.

In the near-term, the scope of the disaster in Haiti is so huge the focus must be on immediate relief and assistance to help stem the unfolding human tragedy. Millions of Americans are stepping forward to contribute funds and more will be needed.

“The AICPA and its member CPAs stand ready to help facilitate and enable the transactions necessary to bring Haitians the help and resources they so desperately need now,” Melancon said.

CPAs have a strong record of providing pro bono financial advice to Americans seeking to put their lives back together after disasters, including the publication of a “Disaster Recovery Guide” aimed at helping Americans who lose their homes or are displaced by storms, floods, and earthquakes. While this guide is focused on Americans, many of the same basic principles will apply to Haitians as they recover from this earthquake.

The AICPA’s website [www.360financialliteracy.org](http://www.360financialliteracy.org) provides free tools, articles, resources and a list of where donations can be made.

AICPA members interested in contributing to the Haitian relief efforts may call (877) CPA-4ALL.