

Day-labor agencies ready for surge of work

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By Elizabeth Rhodes

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The day-labor dispatch service run by Seattle's Millionair Club charity reported about 50 calls Friday from homeowners needing help with storm cleanup.

"For the wintertime, that's a good day for us," said Deborah Crawley, spokeswoman for the 85-year-old social-service agency. "Unfortunately, the storm has done a lot of damage.

"The only good news is that it has provided work for some of Seattle's working homeless. There are 100 men and women a day wanting a job, so the calls are great."

The day laborers, who've all passed federal criminal background and legal residency checks, are paid \$8 to \$9 an hour.

Crawley expects demand will continue for workers to do storm-related hauling, yard cleanup, gutter and drainage-ditch cleaning.

She said the club's labor line, 206-728-JOBS, will be staffed beginning at 6 a.m. Saturday.

Another temporary worker agency, Labor Ready, hasn't seen an increase in calls, but spokeswoman Stacey Burke anticipates it will. Headquartered in Tacoma, Labor Ready has offices across the U.S.

"We've seen that before in other areas, like New Orleans and Florida," Burke said. "In the first few days, people are making sure they're safe. In the days following, that is cleanup."

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