HERE’S HOW TO APPLY FOR FEDERAL-STATE STORM ASSISTANCE

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. - Federal and state disaster assistance is now available for people and businesses that need help recovering from uninsured or underinsured losses related to the storms, tornadoes, winds and flooding that began March 26.

Affected counties include Calhoun, Hamilton, Holmes, Jackson, Lafayette, Liberty, Madison, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Suwannee, Walton and Washington.

State-Federal recovery programs are designed to give storm survivors a helping hand in their effort to recover – not necessarily to return things to exactly as they existed prior to the storms. Before assistance can be provided, people must apply with FEMA. Anyone who has suffered uninsured or underinsured storm-related losses should apply for assistance. It costs nothing to apply and takes only a few minutes, but the request for help must be made before a response can happen.

How do I apply for disaster help?

Those affected by the recent disaster may register online at any time and also check the status of their application at www.disasterassistance.gov or call FEMA’s toll free registration number, 800-621-FEMA (3362) or TTY 800-462-7585 for the hearing- or speech-impaired. Both numbers are operational between 7 a.m. - 1 a.m. EDT seven days a week until further notice. It will take about 15 minutes to complete the process. Before applicants call or go online, they should gather the following basic information to speed the process:

- Social Security number;
- Telephone number where he or she can be reached;
- Address of the damaged property;
- Current mailing address;
- Brief description of disaster-related damages and losses;
- Insurance information; and
- Bank account address information.

Is there any cost associated with registering for disaster assistance?

No. There are no costs related to registering for or receiving federal disaster assistance. If anyone is asked to pay for federal disaster assistance, contact the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General hotline at 800-323-8603.
**What types of assistance can be provided?**

The following list describes some of the types of assistance available to eligible applicants through FEMA’s Individuals and Households Program (IHP):

- **Temporary Housing** (a place to live for a limited period of time). Money is available for eligible applicants to rent a different place to live.

- **Repair** – Money is available to eligible homeowners to repair damage from the disaster that is not covered by insurance. The goal is to make the damaged home safe, sanitary, and functional.

- **Replacement** – Money is available to a homeowner to replace an uninsured home destroyed in the disaster. The goal is to help the homeowner with the cost of replacing a destroyed home.

- **Other Needs** – Money is available for necessary expenses and serious needs caused by the disaster. This includes medical, dental, funeral, personal property, transportation, moving and storage, and other expenses.

- **U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)** – low-interest disaster loans are available for homeowners, renters, private non-profits and businesses of all sizes. Businesses of any size and non-profit organizations may borrow up to $2 million to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory and other business assets. The SBA also offers mitigation loans to disaster survivors based on 20 percent of the verified physical damage. These funds are designed to help borrowers pay for protective measures to minimize damages of the same kind in the future.

**Complete and return that SBA Loan Application**

Temporary housing assistance from FEMA does not require that an applicant file for an SBA loan. However, if an applicant receives an SBA loan application, it must be completed and returned in order to be considered for additional assistance under the Other Needs Assistance (ONA) program, which may cover personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses. If you are found to be eligible for a loan, you are not required to accept it.

There are other ONA grants such as public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses that do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan to be eligible.

FEMA will process applications for housing assistance regardless of whether the applicant has applied for an SBA loan. Eligibility determinations for applicants requesting FEMA’s temporary housing assistance will not be held up because the applicant has or has not filled out an SBA application.

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*FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation, to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.*
Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585.

FEMA’s temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA loan officers to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

The Florida Division of Emergency Management and State Emergency Response Team (SERT) coordinates disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation programs with all 67 counties and the federal government. For more information and to GET A PLAN! please visit www.FloridaDisaster.org.

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