

Individuals and Households Program

FEMA's Individuals and Households Program (IHP) provides money and direct services to eligible individuals and households affected by disaster who have uninsured or underinsured necessary expenses and serious needs.

FEMA assistance can't replace insurance but can help survivors jumpstart their road to recovery.

IHP Eligibility

These general conditions must be met for an applicant to be eligible to receive assistance:

- The applicant must be a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified non-citizen.
- FEMA must be able to confirm the applicant's identity.
- The applicant's insurance, or other forms of disaster assistance received, cannot meet their disaster-caused needs.
- The applicant's necessary expenses and serious needs are directly caused by a declared disaster.

Housing Assistance

Housing Assistance may include help with temporary housing needs, repairing or replacing owner-occupied homes, or mitigation measures to rebuild stronger. Applicants may receive more than one type of Housing Assistance. FEMA determines the appropriate types of Housing Assistance based on disaster-caused losses, access to life-sustaining services, cost-effectiveness and other factors.

To qualify for Housing Assistance, FEMA must confirm the applicant lived at the disaster-damaged home as their primary residence. If the applicant is the homeowner, FEMA must confirm ownership of the residence before providing Home Repair or Home Replacement.

Assistance may include:

- **Home Repair or Replacement:** Money to help repair or replace an owner-occupied, disaster-damaged primary residence so the home is safe to live in. For example, this may include addressing mold caused by the disaster, money to repair or replace damaged wells, septic systems, privately owned roads, bridges and docks or money for mitigation measures. The money can also help with preexisting damage to parts of the home that were further damaged by the disaster.
 - **Accessibility Needs:** Money to help those with a disability with specific repairs to make their home accessible, including an exterior ramp, grab bars and paved path to the home entrance. Repairs can be



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made when these items are damaged. Improvements can be made when those features were not present prior to the disaster, and they are needed due to a pre-existing disability in a damaged home or due to a disability caused by the disaster.

- **Hazard Mitigation Measures:** Money for specific mitigation measures based on the cause and amount of damage to the home. These can include roof repair with more resilient materials to withstand higher wind gusts or elevating a water heater or furnace to prevent damage from future floods.
- **Temporary Housing Needs:**
 - **Rental Assistance:** Money to rent alternate housing accommodations while an applicant is displaced from their disaster-damaged primary residence. Rental Assistance may be used to rent a house, apartment, manufactured home, recreational vehicle or other readily fabricated dwelling.
 - **Lodging Expense Reimbursement:** Money for reimbursement for hotels, motels or other short-term lodging while an applicant is displaced from their disaster-damaged primary residence. Applicants who receive Displacement Assistance are not eligible for this form of assistance.
 - **Direct Housing Assistance:** These forms of assistance must be requested by the State, Territory or Tribal government and approved by FEMA. If active for the declared disaster, eligible applicants who are unable to use Rental Assistance due to a lack of available housing resources may get Direct Housing Assistance. Types of Direct Housing Assistance may include:
 - **Multi-Family Lease and Repair:** Allows FEMA to enter into lease agreements with owners of multi-family rental properties located within or near declared areas to make repairs or improvements that provide temporary housing to eligible applicants.
 - **Transportable Temporary Housing Units:** A ready-to-use housing unit (i.e., a Recreation Vehicle or a Manufactured Housing Unit) purchased or leased by FEMA and provided to eligible applicants for use as temporary housing for a limited time.
 - **Direct Lease:** Existing ready-for-occupancy residential property leased for eligible applicants and, if necessary, modified or improved to provide a reasonable accommodation for an eligible applicant with a disability, for use as temporary housing.
 - **Permanent Housing Construction:** Home repair and/or construction services provided for homeowners in insular areas outside the continental United States and in other locations where no alternative housing resources are available, and where types of housing assistance FEMA normally provides, such as Rental Assistance or other forms of direct assistance, are unavailable, infeasible or not cost-effective.

Other Needs Assistance

Applicants may receive money for other disaster-caused necessary expenses and serious needs.

Assistance may include:

- **Serious Needs:** Money to help survivors pay for essential items like water, food, first aid, breast-feeding supplies, infant formula, diapers, personal hygiene items or fuel for transportation.

- **Displacement:** Money to help with immediate housing needs if applicants cannot return to their home because of the disaster. The money can be used to stay in a hotel, with family or friends, or for other options while looking for temporary housing.
- **Personal Property:** Money to help repair or replace appliances, room furnishings and a personal or family computer damaged by the disaster. Books, uniforms, tools, additional computers and other items required for school or work, including self-employment, may also be eligible.
- **Medical/Dental:** Money to help pay for medical expenses because the disaster caused an injury or illness. This money can also be used to help replace medical/dental equipment, breastfeeding equipment, lost or damaged prescribed medicine or the loss/injury of a service animal.
- **Funeral:** Money to help to pay for funeral or reburial expenses caused by the disaster.
- **Child Care:** Money to help pay for increased or new childcare expenses caused by the disaster.
- **Assistance for Miscellaneous Items:** Money to help pay for specific items that were purchased or rented after the disaster to assist in recovery efforts, like a chainsaw to help clear fallen trees that prevent safe access to the home.
- **Transportation:** Money to help repair or replace a vehicle damaged by the disaster.
- **Moving and Storage Expenses:** Money to help move and store personal property from the home to prevent additional damage, usually while making repairs to the home or moving to a new place due to the disaster.
- **Clean and Sanitize:** Money to help pay to clean or repair disaster impacts that did not make the home unsafe to live in.
- **Group Flood Insurance Policy:** If the home is in a Special Flood Hazard Area and there is flood damage caused by the disaster, FEMA may purchase a Group Flood Insurance Policy on the applicant's behalf that gives them three years of coverage.

FEMA must confirm the applicant lived at the disaster-damaged home as their primary residence to be considered for Serious Needs Assistance, Displacement Assistance, Personal Property Assistance, Moving and Storage Assistance, Assistance for Miscellaneous Items, Clean and Sanitize Assistance, or a Group Flood Insurance Policy.

Important Elements of Receiving FEMA Disaster Assistance

- **Flood Insurance Requirement:** Applicants whose homes are located in a Special Flood Hazard Area and who receive assistance for Home Repair, Replacement, Permanent Housing Construction and/or Personal Property as a result of a flood-caused disaster must obtain and maintain flood insurance as a condition of receiving future disaster assistance for a flood event.
- **IHP Financial Maximums:** The maximum amount for Housing Assistance and for Other Needs Assistance changes each fiscal year and the adjusted amount is based on the U.S. Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index. Some types of assistance count toward the maximum amount of financial assistance:

Subject to Financial Maximum	Home Repair or Replacement Assistance, Other Needs Assistance
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No Financial Maximum	Direct Housing, Rental Assistance, Lodging Expense Reimbursement, repair or replacement of specific accessibility-related personal property items or elements of the home.
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- **How Money is Sent to Applicants:** Money is sent to disaster survivors through an electronic funds transfer into the recipient’s bank account or by a U.S. Treasury check.
- **Use Money as Intended:** Failure to use assistance appropriately may result in ineligibility for additional assistance, and the applicant may be required to return the misused money. Applicants should document how they used the disaster assistance and retain these records (e.g., receipts, invoices) for at least three years to ensure they are prepared if FEMA identifies their case for an audit.
- **Documentation:** Applicants may need to provide documentation to help FEMA evaluate their eligibility, such as documents showing occupancy, ownership or income loss. Visit [Verifying Home Ownership or Occupancy on FEMA.gov](#) for more information regarding acceptable documentation.
- **Home Inspection:** FEMA may need to complete a home inspection before applicants can receive some types of assistance.
- **Period of Assistance:** IHP assistance is limited to 18 months following the date of the Presidentially declared disaster and may be extended due to extraordinary circumstances.
- **Assistance is Not Taxed and Doesn’t Affect Other Benefits:** FEMA’s assistance is not taxable and is not counted as income or a resource when determining eligibility for income assistance or income-tested benefit programs such as Social Security benefits or disability income.
- **Everyone Has the Right to Appeal:** Applicants who disagree with any FEMA decision, such as the type or the amount of assistance provided, have the right to appeal within 60 days of the date on the decision letter from FEMA. In each decision letter, FEMA will explain the documents applicants may need to send for an appeal. Applicants can find correspondence and information on how to appeal by visiting [DisasterAssistance.gov](#), or calling FEMA’s Helpline at 1-800-621-3362. If you use a video relay service (VRS), captioned telephone services, or others, give FEMA your specific number for that service.

Serious Needs Assistance

Serious Needs Assistance is money received upfront to help survivors pay for expenses related to a disaster, such as food, water, baby formula and other emergency supplies.

Based on feedback received from disaster survivors, impacted communities, and stakeholders, FEMA made changes to Individual Assistance to cut red tape and expand eligibility to reach more people and help them build back stronger. These changes apply to disasters declared on or after March 22, 2024.

Serious Needs Assistance is a new type of assistance and counts toward the maximum amount of Other Needs Assistance you can receive. The following information explains this new form of assistance.

What is Serious Needs Assistance?

Serious Needs Assistance is a flexible, upfront payment that can be used to pay for emergency supplies like water, food, first aid, breast-feeding supplies, infant formula, diapers, personal hygiene items, or fuel for transportation. It is available in all disasters declared for Individual Assistance.

Who can get Serious Needs Assistance?

You may get Serious Needs Assistance if:

- You or someone in your home is a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified non-citizen,
- FEMA can confirm your identity,
- Your home is in a declared disaster area,
- You live in your home most of the year,
- You apply for FEMA assistance while Serious Needs Assistance is available, and
- There is disaster damage to your home. FEMA confirms this based on an inspection or documents you send.



How much Serious Needs Assistance can I get?

FEMA gives Serious Needs Assistance as an upfront payment of \$750 for disasters declared between March 22, 2024, and September 30, 2024. For disasters declared after October 1, 2024, the payment is \$770. The award amount is adjusted each Fiscal Year.

Is Serious Needs Assistance the ONLY assistance I can get?

No. Serious Needs Assistance is meant to provide help with essential needs while you begin your recovery. Serious Needs Assistance does not disqualify you from receiving other assistance from FEMA.

Do I need to pay FEMA back for Serious Needs Assistance?

No. FEMA Serious Needs Assistance does NOT have to be paid back.



When can I get Serious Needs Assistance?

Serious Needs Assistance is available for survivors who apply during the first 30 days after a disaster is declared. FEMA can extend this time to 60 days in response to a written request from the impacted state, territory, or Tribal Nation.

I need help before my inspection, can I get Serious Needs Assistance faster?

Yes. FEMA may give survivors in the hardest hit areas Serious Needs Assistance before their inspection. If you don't get a faster payment because FEMA isn't able to confirm your information, you may still be able to receive Serious Needs Assistance after your inspection.

I didn't get Serious Needs Assistance after my inspection. Can I still get help?

Yes. If you applied while Serious Needs Assistance is available, but didn't get help after your inspection, FEMA will send a letter that explains what information you may need to show to get help.

You may need to send more information about:

- Your identity or where you live, or
- The repairs or clean up needed because of disaster damage to your home.

I have insurance and haven't had a FEMA inspection. Can I still get help?

Yes. You can still get Serious Needs Assistance by sending FEMA your insurance information or by showing FEMA the repairs or clean up you did or need to do because of disaster damage to your home.

You may need to send more information about:

- Any receipts or estimates from contractors or service providers to repair disaster damage, or
- Documents from your landlord about disaster damages to your home.

I don't agree with FEMA's decision. How can I appeal?

If you don't agree with FEMA's decision, you can appeal by showing why you need FEMA assistance. The decision letter you get from FEMA will have more information about the types of documents you should send.

You may use an optional Appeal Request form, which is included in the decision letter you receive from FEMA. You can also choose to write and sign a letter to send with your documents to help FEMA understand why you need help.

How can I send documents?

You can send supporting documents to FEMA by:

- Uploading to your disaster assistance account at DisasterAssistance.gov.
- Mailing to FEMA, P.O. Box 10055, Hyattsville, MD 20782-8055.
- Faxing to 1-800-827-8112.
- Visiting a Disaster Recovery Center, if available.

Public Assistance

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Public Assistance (PA) Program provides assistance to State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial (SLTT) governments, and certain types of private nonprofit (PNP) organizations. Through the Public Assistance Program,

FEMA provides supplemental grant assistance for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and the restoration and mitigation of disaster-damaged facilities. For additional information on the Public Assistance Program refer to the Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide at: www.fema.gov/assistance/public/policy-guidance-fact-sheets.

Application Process

Following a President's declaration, the Recipient (the State, Tribal, or Territorial government entity that administers the Public Assistance award) conducts Applicant Briefings to provide information to potential Applicants about the Public Assistance Program. Applicants are SLTT government entities and PNPs that apply for Public Assistance by submitting a Request for Public Assistance via FEMA's Public Assistance Grants Portal (<https://grantee.fema.gov>). Grants Portal is the system Applicants use to submit and manage Public Assistance project applications.

FEMA accepts Requests for Public Assistance up to 30 days from the date the area (county, parish, city, municipality, etc.) was designated in the declaration. After FEMA approves the Request for Public Assistance, the Applicant receives notification of approval and instructions on how to request funding for its incident-related impacts.

Facility Eligibility

In general, SLTT government Applicants may receive Public Assistance grant funding for facilities that the Applicant owns or has legal responsibility for maintaining. PNP Applicants may receive funding for facilities that provide educational, utility, emergency, medical, or custodial care, including for senior citizens or individuals with disabilities, and other essential social-type services to the public.

Work Eligibility

FEMA provides Public Assistance grant funding for:

- Emergency protective measures;
- Debris removal; and



- Permanent restoration of damaged facilities, including cost-effective hazard mitigation measures.

At a minimum, work must meet each of the following three general criteria to be eligible:

- Be required as a result of the declared incident;
- Be located within the designated area; and
- Be the legal responsibility of an eligible Applicant.

Cost Eligibility

FEMA provides Public Assistance funding at a cost share of no less than 75 percent. Eligible costs must be:

- Directly tied to the performance of eligible work;
- Adequately documented;
- Reduced by all applicable credits, such as insurance proceeds and salvage values;
- Authorized and not prohibited under Federal or SLTT government laws or regulations;
- Consistent with the Applicant's internal policies and procedures; and
- Necessary and reasonable to accomplish the work properly and efficiently.

Project Amounts

FEMA establishes a minimum project threshold and a large project threshold for each Federal fiscal year that apply to incidents declared within that fiscal year. The thresholds are based on the Consumer Price Index and are available at: [Per Capita Impact Indicator and Project Thresholds | FEMA.gov](#).

- Project costs must equal or exceed the minimum project threshold to be eligible.
- Small Projects are those with costs above the minimum project threshold and less than the large project threshold.
- Large Projects are those with costs equal to or greater than the large project threshold.

FEMA does not adjust estimated Small Project costs to actual final costs. FEMA adjusts estimated Large Project costs to actual final costs (except for Alternative Procedures Projects described below).

Alternative Procedures

FEMA is currently piloting Alternative Procedures for permanent restoration of damaged facilities, which offers the following benefits when Applicants accept a fixed cost amount on a Large Project:

- Flexibility in meeting post-disaster recovery needs, as opposed to being limited to rebuilding back to what existed prior to the disaster;
- Sharing of funds across all Alternative Procedures Projects;
- Retention and use excess funds to reduce risk and improve future disaster operations; and
- Cost-effective hazard mitigation on replacement projects.

Equitable Delivery of Disaster Services

The Applicant must comply with all laws and authorities prohibiting discrimination, including but not limited to, Title 44 Code of Federal Regulations Part 7 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, which prohibit discrimination based on race, color or national origin (including limited English proficiency); and Section 308 of the Stafford Act, which requires the impartial and equitable delivery of disaster services and activities without discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency, or economic status.