

Free Legal Services Available to Disaster Survivors

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Charleston, W. Va. – Free disaster-related legal advice is available to low-income West Virginia survivors of the severe storms, flooding, landslides and mudslides of July 28-29, 2017. Legal services are made available through a partnership among the West Virginia State Bar Association, Legal Aid of West Virginia, the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Low-income survivors in the four disaster-designated counties of Harrison, Marion, Marshall and Wetzel facing legal issues may call the Legal Services hotline, 877-331-4259, 24 hours a day, seven days a week and leave a voicemail message. Messages are generally returned the next business day.

Examples of legal assistance available include:

- Assistance with securing FEMA and other benefits available to disaster survivors;
- Assistance with life, medical and property insurance claims;
- Help with home repair contracts and contractors;
- Replacement of wills and other important legal documents that were destroyed;
- Assisting in consumer protection matters, remedies and procedures;
- Counseling on mortgage-foreclosure problems; and
- Counseling on landlord/tenant problems.

Survivors should be aware that there are some limitations. For example, assistance is not available for cases where fees could be paid as part of a court settlement. Those cases will be referred to a lawyer-referral service.

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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 mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards. Follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/femaregion3> and the FEMA Blog at <http://blog.fema.gov>.

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private non-profit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding efforts and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover losses not fully compensated by insurance or other recoveries and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. For more information, applicants may contact SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center by calling (800) 659-2955, emailing disastercustomerservice@sba.gov, or visiting SBA's Web site at www.sba.gov/disaster. Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals may call (800) 877-8339.



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