

FEMA Teams Canvassing Disaster-Designated Counties to Help Survivors

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ATLANTA – Outreach teams from FEMA are canvassing Florida communities affected by Hurricane Irma.

The teams are working in federally designated counties to help residents register for disaster assistance and to quickly identify and address immediate and emerging needs. The teams can also provide application updates and referrals to additional community resources for remaining needs.

These mobile team members can be easily identified by their federal photo identifications and FEMA clothing. Florida residents are reminded to ask for photo identification before providing personal information.

Housing inspectors contracted by FEMA will also be working in disaster-designated counties, inspecting damage sustained by survivors who have already registered with FEMA. When FEMA-contracted inspectors arrive at a home, they will display official photo identification. If the photo identification is not displayed, it is important to ask to see it. This helps prevent fraud.

Please keep in mind FEMA employees do not solicit or accept money from disaster survivors. Many legitimate disaster assistance employees may visit your property such as insurance agents, damage inspectors, and FEMA and U.S. Small Business Administration staff.

Here are some tips to remember to safeguard against fraud:

- **Ask to see ID badges.** All FEMA representatives wear a federal photo ID badge. A FEMA shirt or jacket is not proof of identity. If you are unsure or uncomfortable with anyone you encounter, please contact local law enforcement.
- **Beware of people going door-to-door.** People knocking on doors at damaged homes or phoning homeowners claiming to be building contractors could be



FEMA

Page 1 of 3

con artists, especially if they ask for personal information or solicit money. Be sure to verify federal ID badges of disaster assistance staff who may visit your home.

- **FEMA Disaster survivor assistance teams** are in affected communities providing disaster assistance information and helping survivors apply for FEMA aid. They are wearing FEMA shirts and federal photo IDs. Disaster survivor assistance teams never ask for or accept payment for their services.
- **FEMA does not have “approved” contractors.** Beware of contractors who say they are affiliated with FEMA. Don’t sign anything you don’t understand or contracts with blank spaces.

Again, federal workers do not solicit or accept money. FEMA staff never charge applicants for disaster assistance, inspections or help with registration.

If you have knowledge of fraud, waste, abuse or allegations of mismanagement involving disaster relief operations, call the FEMA Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721.

Always use licensed and bonded contractors and ask for credentials. Use Florida contractors if you can. You can verify a Florida contractor’s license online at the [Department of Business and Professional Regulation](#). Never pay for anything in advance of work being done. If you have a complaint about anyone soliciting your business, contact the [Department of Business and Professional Regulation](#).

Florida counties designated for FEMA Individual Assistance include: Brevard, Broward, Charlotte, Citrus, Clay, Collier, DeSoto, Duval, Flagler, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Indian River, Lake, Lee, Manatee, Marion, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Johns, St. Lucie, Sumter, and Volusia.

Survivors who sustained damage or losses caused by Hurricane Irma in those counties can begin applying for assistance online at <http://www.disasterassistance.gov/> or by calling FEMA’s helpline at **800-621-3362** for voice, 711 and video relay service (VRS). Survivors who are deaf, hard of hearing or who have difficulty speaking and use a TTY, should call **800-462-7585**. The lines are open 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. ET until further notice. Survivors may also register by downloading the [FEMA mobile app](#).



FEMA

Page 2 of 3

On Sept. 10, Florida received a federal major disaster declaration for Individual Assistance for Charlotte, Collier, Hillsborough, Lee, Manatee, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Pinellas, and Sarasota counties. All 67 Florida counties were designated for the Public Assistance Program (Categories A-G), including direct federal assistance.

On Sept. 11, Broward, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Palm Beach, Putnam, and St. Johns counties were added for Individual Assistance.

On Sept. 13, Brevard, Citrus, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Hernando, Highlands, Indian River, Lake, Marion, Martin, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Pasco, Polk, St. Lucie, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia counties were added for Individual Assistance.

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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.

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.



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Page 3 of 3