

Two Weeks Left

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Wildfire survivors should call FEMA Helpline or visit DisasterAssistance.gov by Dec. 16

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Individuals and households with losses due to the wildfires in [Fresno](#), [Los Angeles](#), [Madera](#), [Mendocino](#), [Napa](#), [San Bernardino](#), [San Diego](#), [Shasta](#), [Siskiyou](#) and [Sonoma](#) counties have two weeks left to register for assistance from FEMA. The deadline is Dec. 16, 2020.

These counties are included in federal Disaster 4569, declared initially Oct. 16 for seven counties and expanded later.

FEMA monetary awards help eligible survivors pay for rent, home repair/replacement and many other serious disaster-related needs, including replacement or repair of vehicles, funeral expenses, medical or dental expenses and miscellaneous other costs. To be reimbursed by FEMA, survivors should photograph damage and save repair receipts.

Survivors should contact their insurers and file a claim for the disaster-caused damage before they register with FEMA. Survivors with insurance should register with FEMA even when they aren't yet certain whether they will be eligible. FEMA may be able to help with costs that insurance doesn't cover. The agency can determine eligibility once an applicant's insurance claim is settled, but there won't be any FEMA reimbursement for those who fail to register by the Dec. 16 deadline. FEMA cannot pay insurance deductibles.

Survivors can register with FEMA for federal aid in one of three ways:

- Online at DisasterAssistance.gov;
- By downloading the [FEMA app](#) to a smartphone or tablet; or
- By calling the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362 (TTY 800-462-7585) between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. PST. Those who use a relay service such as a videophone, Innocaption or CapTel, should provide FEMA with the specific number assigned to that service when they register.



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The helpline staff can also answer questions about applications already submitted.

To register you will need the following information:

- Social Security number
- Insurance policy information
- Address of the damaged primary dwelling
- A description of disaster-caused damage and losses
- Current mailing address
- Current telephone number
- Total household annual income
- Routing and account number of your checking or savings account (for direct transfer of funds to your bank account)

After you register, FEMA will email you a temporary PIN that you can use to create an account at [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.disasterassistance.gov). The account will enable you to check the status of your application, view messages from FEMA, update your personal information and upload documents FEMA may need to determine your eligibility for grants.

If you are unable to upload your documents, mail them to FEMA at P.O. Box 10055, Hyattsville MD 20782-8055 or fax them to 800-827-8112.

Inspections

During COVID-19, inspections for damaged homes will be conducted by phone. Remote inspections are comparable to traditional, in-person inspections and can expedite recovery assistance, based on eligibility. For security purposes, the inspector will verify your identity by asking a series of qualifying questions and then provide you with the first four digits of your application number to complete verification.

If you reported that you cannot safely live in your home, a FEMA inspector will contact you by phone and ask about the type and extent of damage sustained. Survivors with minimal damage who can live in their homes will not automatically be scheduled for a home inspection when applying to FEMA, but FEMA will provide an inspection if the survivor contacts the agency to report finding more damage than originally reported. Inspectors record damage; they have no role in



determining the amount or type of grants a survivor may receive.

Remote inspections don't affect the FEMA Other Needs Assistance program. This assistance does not require an inspection and includes possible awards for childcare, transportation, medical, dental, funeral expenses, replacement of personal property, or moving and storage assistance.

FEMA will perform remote inspections even if it can't verify an applicant's identity, primary residence or home ownership through automated records searches performed as part of the application process. FEMA will send a letter to applicants requesting documents they must provide to be considered for assistance after the inspection. Inspectors are not allowed to collect documentation from applicants.

U.S. Small Business Administration

Dec. 16 is also the deadline to apply for a disaster loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration. Grants from FEMA are meant to give eligible survivors a start on their road to recovery. The primary source of recovery funding for many, however, is a loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), which makes disaster loans to individuals and businesses of all sizes.

Survivors can find out more and apply for a loan at DisasterLoanAssistance.sba.gov/. For additional assistance, contact the SBA's Virtual Disaster Loan Outreach Center. Customer service representatives are available to assist individuals and business owners, answer questions about SBA's disaster loan program, explain the application process and help each person complete their electronic loan application. The Virtual DLOC is open 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. PST daily. Call 800-659-2955 or email FOCWAssistance@sba.gov.

These services are only available for the California disaster declaration as a result of the wildfires and not for COVID-19-related assistance.

For the latest information on wildfire recovery, visit www.fema.gov/disaster/4569 and follow the FEMA Region 9 Twitter account at twitter.com/femaregion9.

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