

# States Impacted by Ida Receive Full Backing of Federal Force in Relief and Recovery Efforts

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WASHINGTON -- Federal agencies, nonprofits, the private sector and FEMA continue to increase response and recovery efforts six days after Ida made landfall in Louisiana.

Today, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. and FEMA administrator Deanne Criswell are in Louisiana to tour damaged areas and meet with state and local officials in three parishes to discuss recovery efforts. This comes one day after the president approved emergency declarations for [New Jersey](#) and [New York](#) after Ida's remnants caused widespread flooding and tornadoes.

To help Hurricane Ida Louisiana survivors with roof damage, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers activated its Operation Blue Roof program for 13 parishes. Residents can sign up for this free service by completing a [Right of Entry](#) form at [Bluroof.us](#) or calling toll-free **888-766-3258**.

To date, over 25,000 valid requests for contracted crews to work on roofs have been received by the Army Corps.

One day after announcing changes to the agency's Individual Assistance program to reduce barriers to assistance, FEMA is announcing more than \$107 million in grants to Louisiana survivors to help them begin their recovery. Changes in this new policy include expanding acceptance of different forms of documentation to prove ownership or occupancy, while also expanding assistance for a disaster-caused disability.

More than 1,400 FEMA employees are deployed to support Ida response and recovery efforts along the Gulf Coast and in the Northeast. Fourteen Urban Search and Rescue teams are deployed to affected areas in Louisiana and New Jersey. The teams have completed more than 27,000 structural evaluations in



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Louisiana.

**Beware of Scams.** Attempts can be made over the phone, by mail or email, text or in person. Local, state and federal officials never request money for help and always carry identification badges. There is no fee required to apply for or to get help from FEMA, the U.S. Small Business Administration or any state agency.

Survivors who have any suspicion of fraud or scams should immediately call the FEMA Disaster Fraud Hotline at **866-720-5721** or **TTY 844-889-4357**. They may also contact local law enforcement.

Visit [FEMA's Hurricane Ida](#) webpage for information and resources available for residents in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and other areas that may be affected by Ida. The page is available in French, Haitian Creole, Simplified Chinese, Spanish and Vietnamese.

## **Federal Partner Agencies Continue Robust Response to Hurricane Ida**

In Louisiana, there are 43 hospitals running on generator power. FEMA deployed ambulance crews to Louisiana to help with patient transport. If needed, more than 170 ambulances/1,000 paratransit seats and emergency medical service providers are in the area, including 30 air ambulances.

- Louisiana survivors located in one of the designated parishes approved for individual assistance and do not have insurance, you can apply for disaster assistance and get referrals to local, state and federal agencies and voluntary organizations. The fastest way to apply is through [DisasterAssistance.gov](#). To date, 290,000 applications have been received and \$107 million has been approved.
- FEMA has also received more than 8,600 National Flood Insurance Program claims from the Gulf Coast states for processing. If you are a National Flood Insurance Policy holder and have flood damage from Ida and its remnants, learn more about starting your recovery. Contact your flood insurance company to start a claim now. Make sure to ask about advance payments. If you don't know who your flood insurance agent or carrier is, call 877-336-2627 to speak with an adjuster.



- For disaster survivors experiencing emotional distress, the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** activated its Disaster Distress helpline. The multilingual Disaster Distress Helpline provides immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress in an affected disaster area. Call or text **800-985-5990** to connect with a trained crisis counselor, 24 hours a day. Spanish-speakers can call the hotline and press “2” for bilingual support. In addition, third-party interpretation services are available to provide counseling in 100 other languages.

## **Additional Federal Agency Response**

- Over 7,500 **National Guard** members, from 15 different states, are currently activated to support operations continuing to help with search and rescue operations, including assisting law enforcement with security in New Orleans and six parishes. In 31 parishes, the National Guard rescued more than 500 people and 60 pets and cleared hundreds of miles of routes clogged with debris. Guardsmen are distributing food and water to disaster survivors in nine parishes, with plans to expand to other areas.
- More than 750 **American Red Cross** workers are in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas assisting more than 2,400 people in 29 Red Cross and community shelters. With the help of partners, the Red Cross has already provided some 49,500 meals and snacks and distributed more than 16,000 relief items. Anyone in the affected area who needs a safe place to stay should call 211, visit [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org), call **800-733-2767** or download the free Red Cross emergency app for shelter locations.
- **The Salvation Army** has 40 mobile feeding vehicles providing meals, drinks, supplies and emotional and spiritual care to survivors and first responders. The Salvation Army is supporting three Southern Baptist Disaster Relief field kitchens with the capacity to serve 30,000 meals daily. In addition, The Salvation Army has feeding locations in five parishes and roaming feeding trucks in five additional locations which has served more than 35,000 meals to date.
- The **U.S. Department of Agriculture approved several short-term measures to address food needs. The USDA approved the [Disaster Household Distribution](#) program to allow Louisiana officials to work directly with their partners and local food banks to issue up to 800,000 food boxes to individuals in the affected areas. The USDA also approved a [temporary waiver](#)**



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until Sept. 28 to allow participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to purchase hot foods with their benefits. In addition, the USDA activated [the Emergency Food Assistance Program](#) so damaged or destroyed grocery stores can redirect stored supplies of USDA Foods from other states.

- The **Department of Energy** authorized the [Strategic Petroleum Reserve](#) to conduct an exchange with ExxonMobil Baton Rouge to move more crude oil within areas and increase the access to fuel in areas affected by Ida.
- The **Environmental Protection Agency** revised the initial Reid Vapor Pressure for Louisiana and Mississippi to [improve fuel circumstances](#) in the affected area. The agency continues to amplify safety messages urging residents to be aware of indoor air dangers, portable generator safety, building debris chemicals and mold from flood waters.
- The **Federal Communications Commission** is coordinating with government partners to support restoration efforts and lending technical assistance in the field. The FCC also is working directly with carriers to track its implementation of the Wireless Resiliency Cooperative Framework, including disaster arrangements so that those in affected areas can roam on any network that may be available while restoration efforts are underway. The FCC is providing [daily updates](#) about their operational status.
- The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** deployed 185 medical providers and other staff from the National Disaster Medical System to support the triage and treatment of patients and patient movement missions in Louisiana. This includes three teams that will be providing Emergency Department decompression in three hospitals in Thibodaux, Kenner and Raceland. Additionally, HHS is staffing a 250-bed healthcare facility known as a federal medical shelter at the New Orleans Ernest Morial Convention Center.
- The **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development** is [assisting survivors](#) through immediate foreclosure relief, making insurance available for mortgages and home rehabilitation and offering additional flexibilities to affected communities.
- The **U.S. Small Business Administration** is offering low-interest [federal disaster loans](#) to Louisiana business and residents in 25 parishes, per President Biden's major disaster declaration. A virtual Business Recovery Center is open and providing personalized assistance to business owners.
- The **U.S. Department of Transportation** activated an [Emergency Relief Docket](#) for railroads so they can get temporary safety regulations waivers to



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help them speed up service to move goods necessary for emergency relief efforts. Additionally, the **Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration** announced an [emergency declaration](#) that provides truck drivers flexibility to move critical freight to damaged areas. A Routing Assistance Hotline provides a 24-hour toll free number for responders to call and receive safe routes in affected areas. The **Federal Railroad Administration** reports that several routes from New Orleans to Boston remain suspended for track inspection and debris on the railways.

- The **U.S. Department of Treasury Internal Revenue Service** [announced](#) that Louisiana disaster survivors will have additional time to file various individual and business tax returns and to make payments. Survivors who had a valid extension to file their 2020 tax returns will now have until Jan. 3, 2022.
- The **U.S. Coast Guard** continues to work closely with all federal, state, and local partners to manage post-storm response, including search and rescue operations. Additionally, the USCG is conducting port, facilities and waterways assessments. These ports remain closed: Louisiana Offshore Oil Platform, Fourchon and Houma/Terrebonne. The following ports are open with restrictions: Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Plaquemines, South Louisiana and St. Bernard Port.

September is [National Preparedness Month](#), an annual observance to remind all Americans how important it is for individuals, families and communities to be prepared for disasters and emergencies that can happen at any time. For more information and tips about National Preparedness Month, visit [Ready.gov/September](#) or [Listo.gov](#).



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