

Public Assistance Process for Houses of Worship

Release Date: Sep 13, 2022

- Houses of worship and religious nonprofit organizations may be eligible for FEMA's Public Assistance program to cover the costs for emergency protective measures due to the Mississippi Water Crisis in Jackson. To be eligible, the organization must provide either essential social services or critical services as described below.
- FEMA's Public Assistance Program provides federal disaster funding to state, tribal, territorial, and local governments, and certain types of private nonprofits including houses of worship.
- The Public Assistance program is funded by FEMA and administered by the state. FEMA covers 75% of eligible costs with the remaining 25% covered by the state and applicant.

Essential Social Services vs. Critical Services

Essential Social Services: Some houses of worship are considered noncritical essential social services, a category which includes community centers, daycare and food programs.

Critical Services: Private nonprofits and religious organizations that provide a critical service, a category which includes operating a hospital, medical facility, or school, can apply directly for Public Assistance. In some instances, a house of worship may be considered a critical service. For example, a house of worship that operates an accredited school in more than 50 percent of the building may qualify for a FEMA grant. However, this only applies to facilities providing the critical services.

Insurance

FEMA will need to see any insurance policy covering the facility and documentation on any proceeds received. FEMA cannot duplicate benefits and will only cover expenses not covered by insurance.



Application Process

- To begin the process, interested applicants should view the Applicant Briefing video posted online at [Public Assistance - MEMA \(msema.org\)](https://www.msema.org). During the briefing, a MEMA representative provides education on the program, deadlines, eligibility factors, grant administration, and what else to expect throughout the Public Assistance Process.
- Houses of worship that provide critical or essential social services may submit a Request for Public Assistance through the Mississippi Emergence Management Agency by the Sept. 29, 2022, deadline.
- For more information on how to submit a Request for Public Assistance, please visit www.MSEMA.org or call the MEMA Recovery Office at 601-933-6262
- If eligible, FEMA and the state will then coordinate a recovery scoping meeting to determine expenses eligible for reimbursement.

What You will Need to Provide

- Evidence of federal or state tax-exempt status or other documents indicating nonprofit status, such as bylaws or articles of incorporation.
- Pre-disaster evidence of incorporation/chapter/bylaws
- A Data Universal Number Systems/Unique Entity Identifier number established with the government.
- Supporting documentation establishing lease or ownership of the building, proof of use, and proof of insurance.

For a fact sheet about FEMA Public Assistance for houses of worship, follow this link: [Publicassistance-private-nonprofit-houses-of-worship.pdf](#).

For more information on resources, visit [DHS Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships Resources | FEMA.gov](#)

