

JFO One Year and Three Storms Later, FEMA Still in Kentucky Helping Communities, Survivors

Following a year that brought tornadoes, flooding and landslides to Kentucky, FEMA remains on the ground coordinating efforts with the Kentucky Division of Emergency Management (KYEM) to help the Commonwealth and its residents rebuild and recover with an eye on resilience.

At its peak staffing, FEMA had 778 personnel on the ground and in communities helping both local governments and disaster survivors with much needed assistance.

Today, FEMA continues to support the Commonwealth and its residents with nearly 300 FEMA emergency managers working throughout Kentucky. They're helping localities and disaster survivors receive funds to pay for disaster-related expenses; they're hauling and installing direct temporary housing units for flood survivors in the process of rebuilding; and they're looking ahead to mitigate against future storms.

In 2022 alone, 28 counties were eligible for FEMA's Individuals and Households Program, which helps survivors get on their feet and recover after a major disaster.

With each new disaster came more federal assistance. As of Dec. 16, 2022, between two of the major disasters declared—Eastern floods and Western Tornadoes—Kentuckians received more than \$108.1 million in direct federal assistance from FEMA, while federal partners like the U.S. Small Business Administration provided more than \$117 million in low interest disaster loans to homeowners, renters and businesses of all sizes. That's a total of more than \$225 million in federal assistance to Kentuckians across the Commonwealth in the last year.



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In heavily affected counties with few available affordable houses, Direct Temporary Housing has provided mobile homes and travel trailers to 169 households in eligible counties on both ends of the Commonwealth. Of that number, 45 survivor families have already moved out of FEMA-provided housing and into a more permanent housing solution.

Providing housing takes time, but FEMA housing crews in Eastern Kentucky continue locating home sites outside of the flood-zone, hauling mobile homes and travel trailers and installing units complete with utilities.

But FEMA assistance isn't just for individuals and households. The agency's Public Assistance Program (PA) provides funds to the commonwealth, local governments and certain types of private nonprofit applicants to help them pay for damaged infrastructure like roads and schools to defray the costs of response activities. Forty-seven Kentucky counties were eligible for FEMA Public Assistance between the three disasters.

FEMA PA program delivery managers work closely with each applicant that requested funding to assess damage and provide reimbursement for their losses. Between the three active disasters more than 400 requests for public assistance have been filed, and PA program delivery managers are helping applicants get compensated for disaster related losses.

Public Assistance is a cost-sharing program with FEMA reimbursing applicants no less than 75 percent of their eligible costs, with the remainder covered by a non-federal source.

FEMA authorized a 90 percent federal cost share for 42 Kentucky counties affected by the December 2021 severe storms throughout Kentucky, and a 100 percent federal cost share for debris removal and emergency protective measures—including direct federal assistance—for a continuous 30-day period of the Commonwealth's choosing within the first 120 days for the Western Kentucky tornadoes and Eastern Kentucky floods.

In total, FEMA's PA Program has approved more than \$38.3 million throughout Kentucky.



Looking to the future, FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) is working to provide funding to the commonwealth and local governments so they can develop hazard mitigation plans and rebuild in ways that reduce or mitigate future disaster losses in their communities. In this program, homeowners and businesses cannot apply for a grant but a local community may apply for funding on their behalf.

Currently, Hazard Mitigation Grants and Planning is assisting the Commonwealth with an expedited acquisition process. The acquisition program helps communities purchase flood-prone properties, remove the buildings, and maintain the land as open space. For a property owner whose house is in a high flood risk area, having their home purchased and demolished or moved out of the flood-prone area may provide the best solution to repetitive flooding. Thanks to the hard work of FEMA and KYEM and local governments this expedited program was stood up in just 21 days.

FEMA Hazard Mitigation Floodplain Management and Insurance is providing flood maps for direct temporary housing to assist local communities with substantial damage data estimating and to provide training for local floodplain administrators and to provide guidance and answers to questions regarding floodplain ordinances and the National Flood Insurance Program in Eastern Kentucky.

PA Mitigation supports Public Assistance through site inspections and the review of all permanent work projects. PA Mitigation reviews all PA projects—which assist with roads and bridges, water control facilities, buildings and equipment, utilities, parks, recreational areas and other facilities— for appropriate and cost-effective mitigation opportunities and writes hazard mitigation proposals which provide additional funding. To improve safety this program reduces the likelihood of damage in possible future events.

All commonwealth and local governments must follow their approved HMGP plans to receive funding for their hazard mitigation projects.

As with every disaster, recovery can take time, but through programs like IHP, PA and HMGP, FEMA is helping communities rebuild safer and stronger.

For the latest information on Kentucky's recovery from the tornadoes, visit fema.gov/disaster/4663. Follow FEMA on Twitter at [FEMA Region 4](#)



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