

# Biden Harris Administration Provides \$3.8 Million in Assistance for Hawaii Residents in Wake of Devastating Wildfires

---

**Release Date: Août 17, 2023**

WASHINGTON -- One week since President Biden declared a major disaster declaration for the state of Hawaii in the wake of the devastating wildfires, the Biden-Harris Administration and voluntary agencies provided survivors with immediate needs such as food, water and shelter and approved millions of dollars in disaster relief. To date, FEMA has approved more than \$3.8 million in assistance to 1,640 households including more than \$1.57 million in initial rental assistance.

Yesterday, President Biden made additional disaster funding available to the state of Hawaii. This unlocks the federal government's ability to cover all eligible expenses for debris removal and emergency protective measures in Maui County and assistance for emergency protective measures for Hawaii County for 30 days of the governor's choosing within the first 120 days of the disaster.

FEMA also opened a joint Disaster Recovery Center yesterday at the University of Hawaii Maui College, located at 310 W. Ka'ahumanu Avenue, Kahului, Hawaii. Survivors can speak to FEMA specialists, get assistance registering for disaster assistance, get in touch with voluntary organizations and have access to other federal and state resources from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. HST seven days a week.

Agencies including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response, the U.S. Small Business Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are all working in tandem to help support the communities impacted by this tragedy.



**FEMA**

## FEMA Response and Recovery Efforts

- FEMA continues to work closely with state, county and federal partners to aid active response efforts and to help survivors jumpstart their recovery. More than 600 federal responders, including 250 search and rescue team members and K9 teams, are deployed in Hawaii to support residents in their greatest time of need. FEMA's Disaster Survivor Assistance teams are going to shelters and survivors' homes to help people register for assistance.
- More than 5,000 survivors have registered for federal assistance and may be eligible for immediate resources such as hotel rooms or financial assistance. Survivors who have not yet registered can do so 24 hours a day by calling 800-621-3362, by visiting [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://DisasterAssistance.gov) or by using the [FEMA App](#). If people use a relay service, such as video relay (VRS), captioned telephone or other service, they need to give FEMA the number for that service.
- Survivors may also be approved for a one-time immediate payment of \$700 for Critical Needs Assistance, one of several types of federal assistance you may be eligible to receive. Examples of other types of assistance include help with a temporary place to stay, funding home repairs, and emergency needs that insurance and other financial assistance sources may not cover.

## Biden-Harris Administration Actions to Support Resident of Hawaii

- The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR)** deployed 75 experts from the National Disaster Medical System's Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team and a Victim Identification Center team to assist Maui County with victim identification and respectfully processing human remains. ASPR also deployed a portable morgue unit to help with processing human remains.
- **The U.S. Small Business Administration** has more than 30 staff on the ground in Hawaii and are phasing in more. Survivors and businesses who register for FEMA assistance, will also be eligible for low-interest disaster loans. To be considered for all forms of disaster assistance, survivors must contact FEMA first. Information and details on the location of business recovery centers is available by calling the SBA Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955.



- The **U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service** [approved waivers](#) which will allow Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households in Maui to purchase hot foods with SNAP benefits through Sept. 14; raise the maximum monthly and allow certain food substitutions for those using the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program through Oct. 31; and, certain children's food programs may serve meals in a non-congregate setting, adjust the time of meal service, allow parent pick up of meals, and serve meals at school sites due to the unanticipated closures.
- **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development** (HUD) is providing a 90-day relief from foreclosures of Federal Housing Administration-insured mortgages and home equity conversion mortgages. Homeowners affected by the disaster should contact their mortgage or loan servicer immediately. Call the FHA Resource Center at 1-800-304-9320 for additional information. To learn more about disaster relief options for FHA homeowners visit the [FHA Disaster Relief site](#). HUD also released [regulatory and administrative waivers](#) to help communities accelerate their recovery. This includes funding for housing rehabilitation and reconstruction, homebuyer programs replacing disaster damaged residences, infrastructure improvements and assistance to people at risk of homelessness.
- The **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** deployed 27 responders, 15 personnel providing virtual support and 41 contractors to assist with planning and assessments for generator installations and debris collection and removal.

## Additional State and Voluntary Actions

- Maui County government officials are distributing food, water and other supplies at two locations in Lahaina: Gateway Center at 325 Keawe St. and Napili Plaza at 5095 Napilihau St. The Maui Humane Society has pet supplies at both locations.
- American Red Cross and Maui County continue to staff and support six shelters where food, water, hygiene kits and other essential resources are provided to survivors who are unable to return home. FEMA survivor assistance specialists are located at the shelters helping people register for federal assistance. Those affected by the fires may visit a Red Cross shelter to get a hot meal, charge their phone and access other essential support.



- More than 300 Red Cross staff are working with partners to ensure people receive help as quickly as possible and has distributed more than 28,600 meals and snacks to survivors and responded to more than 2,100 requests to help families locate missing loved ones.
- Survivors on Maui who need medication, dialysis, or access to essential healthcare can visit [Rx Open](#) for updated information on the operating status of pharmacies, dialysis centers and community health centers.

## How to Help

- After a disaster, people come together to help. To make the most of your contributions, it's important to follow guidelines for donating and volunteering responsibly. Financial contributions to [recognized disaster relief organizations](#) are the fastest, most flexible and most effective method of donating. Organizations on the ground know what items and quantities are needed, often buy in bulk with discounts and, if possible, purchase through businesses local to the disaster, which supports economic recovery.
- The state of Hawaii has a centralized location where you can find opportunities to volunteer, donate and request support at [hawaii.gov](#).
- FEMA will be offering specialized online trainings for local officials on the federal rules that allow for expedited procurement actions during circumstances that require immediate aid or action. The first of these webinars is Aug. 22. For more information and to register, visit [Hawaii Wildfires: Purchasing Under Exigency or Emergency \(E&E\) Circumstances Training | FEMA.gov](#).
- FEMA is committed to ensuring disaster assistance is accomplished equitably, without discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. Any member of the public may contact the FEMA Civil Rights Office if they have a complaint of discrimination. FEMA's Civil Rights Office can be contacted by emailing [FEMA-CivilRightsOffice@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-CivilRightsOffice@fema.dhs.gov) or calling 833-285-7448. Multilingual operators are available.

To learn more about the Hawaii Wildfires response and recovery efforts, visit [FEMA.gov](#). FEMA also launched a [rumors page](#) to provide accurate information to survivors.

