

COFA Wildfire Survivors May Now Apply for FEMA Disaster Assistance

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HONOLULU – Citizens of the Freely Associated States, collectively known as COFA citizens, may now apply for FEMA disaster assistance for losses caused by the Aug. 8 wildfires and high winds on Maui.

President Biden recently signed the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2024, which extended federal benefits to COFA citizens who legally reside in the United States. Among them are citizens of the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

The change in the law allows COFA citizens who were previously ineligible for FEMA disaster assistance due to their COFA status to now apply for FEMA's Individuals and Households program.

The 60-day application period began **Monday, April 1**, and ends **Friday, May 31**. To apply, eligible COFA citizens must show that their primary residence on Maui was affected by the wildfires.

FEMA assistance may address a range of serious needs, including funeral expenses, temporary housing, replacement of essential personal property, and disaster-related medical, dental, transportation, moving-and-storage and childcare expenses.

The program covers uninsured or underinsured losses. However, FEMA cannot provide financial assistance when any other source has provided assistance or funding for the same disaster-related need. For example, FEMA cannot provide assistance if insurance, voluntary agencies, or nonprofits covered the same need.

To apply, COFA citizens may call **808-784-1952** or visit the Lahaina Disaster Recovery Center in the Civic Center Gymnasium at 1840 Honoapi'ilani Highway. Phone lines and recovery center hours are **8 a.m. to 4 p.m. HST Monday to Friday; 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. HST Saturday; closed Sundays**.



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To demonstrate their COFA status, COFA citizens may show either a valid, unexpired Micronesia, Marshall Islands or Palauan passport, a Micronesia Social Security card, a birth certificate, an admission stamp in their passports or an I-94 form issued by U.S. Customs and Border Patrol.

For more information on documents needed to apply for FEMA assistance, visit [Resources for Citizens of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands](#). Palau citizens can also refer to [Fact Sheet: Status of Citizens of the Republic of Palau \(uscis.gov\)](#).

At the Lahaina Disaster Recovery Center, interpreters are available to help applicants in their preferred languages, including Marshallese, Chuukese, Kosraean, Palauan, Carolinian, Chamorro and American Sign Language.

FEMA's Disaster Survivor Assistance specialists on Maui are also available to help COFA citizens apply for FEMA assistance.

For the latest information on the Maui wildfire recovery efforts, visit [mauicounty.gov](#), [mauirecovers.org](#), [fema.gov/disaster/4724](#) and [Hawaii Wildfires - YouTube](#). Follow FEMA on social media: [@FEMARegion9](#) and [facebook.com/fema](#). You may also get disaster assistance information and download applications at [sba.gov/hawaii-wildfires](#).



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