

Additional Options Available for Applicants to Verify Home Ownership

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GUAYNABO, Puerto Rico – To address the complex nature of home ownership in Puerto Rico and support disaster survivors through the verification process, FEMA coordinated with legal aid groups to provide additional options for survivors.

The resulting “Sworn Declaration” was developed by legal aid groups, including [Ayuda Legal Huracán María](#), [Fundación Fondo de Acceso a la Justicia](#), and [Servicios Legales de Puerto Rico](#), among others. The Sworn Declaration provides a survivor, previously denied financial assistance due to unverified home ownership, an additional method to verify ownership on appeal.

Free legal help is available for hurricane survivors to complete and submit the necessary proof of ownership. Survivors who need assistance with their appeal involving home ownership documentation are encouraged to contact a local legal aid organization, including those cited above.

FEMA is required to verify ownership of a pre-disaster primary residence when determining survivors’ eligibility for financial assistance to repair or replace a damaged dwelling. However, if survivors do not have traditional ownership documentation, they may submit a Sworn Declaration, including any corresponding and supplementary documents. The Sworn Declaration is specifically tailored to address unique homeownership laws in Puerto Rico, including heirship and prescription.

While submitting the Sworn Declaration will not automatically qualify a survivor for housing assistance, it is another helpful tool available for individuals seeking to verify their home ownership status.

The form may be:

- Mailed as part of an appeal to the following address:
FEMA - Individuals & Households Program



FEMA

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National Processing Service Center
P.O. Box 10055
Hyattsville, MD 20782-8055

- Uploaded to the applicant's online FEMA account at DisasterAssistance.gov.
- Delivered in person to a disaster recovery center. To find the nearest one visit www.fema.gov/drc.
- Faxed to 800-827-8112, Attention: FEMA - Individuals & Households Program.

Survivors who have questions about the process should visit a disaster recovery center or call the FEMA helpline at 800-621-3362 (FEMA) or (TTY) 800-462-7585.

For more information on hurricane María recovery, visit fema.gov/disaster/4339.

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Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362) 711/VRS - Video Relay Service). Multilingual operators are available. (Press 2 for Spanish). TTY call 800-462-7585.

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