

COFA Citizens: What to Know About FEMA Disaster Assistance

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COFA citizens who legally reside in the United States have until Friday, May 31, to apply for FEMA disaster assistance if your primary home on Maui had damage caused by the August wildfires. Below is information to help you get the most from FEMA assistance.

Who Can Apply and How

- Among those now eligible to apply are COFA citizens from the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. <https://www.fema.gov/fact-sheet/questions-and-answers-cofa-eligibility-fema-benefits>
- To apply, COFA citizens may call **808-784-1952** or visit the Lahaina Disaster Recovery Center at Lahaina Civic Center Gymnasium, 1840 Honoapi'ilani Highway. Phone lines and 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.**
- COFA citizens who applied for FEMA assistance before **April 1** and have a FEMA registration number can call the **FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362** or visit the Disaster Recovery Center to update your information.
- If you receive a letter from FEMA saying you are ineligible for assistance, don't panic. Your application may have stopped processing because something was missing. This is your opportunity to appeal FEMA's decision. An appeal is a written request to FEMA to review your application for disaster assistance. You have **60 days** from the date on your determination letter to appeal a FEMA decision. <https://www.fema.gov/fact-sheet/how-appeal-femas-decision-4>

What FEMA Will Need When You Apply

Current contact information

Current and pre-disaster address (include ZIP code)

Names of all occupants of the pre-disaster household



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Types of insurance held by the household
Household pre-disaster annual gross income
Losses caused by the disaster
Bank account number and routing number for direct deposit of funds, if requested

Acceptable Documentation to Prove COFA Status

- **Palau and Micronesia:** passport; or printout of an I-94 form issued by U.S. Customs and Border Patrol showing admission to the U.S. under COFA.
- **Marshall Islands:** passport with an I-94 stamp; or printout of an I-94 form issued by U.S. Customs and Border Patrol showing admission to the U.S. under COFA.
- COFA citizens may access their documentation and print a copy of the I-94 form at the CBP website: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>

Get Help in Your Language

- Interpreters at the Lahaina Disaster Recovery Center can help you in many languages, including Marshallese, Chuukese, Kosraean, Palauan, Carolinian, Chamorro and American Sign Language.

Questions and Answers on COFA Eligibility for FEMA Benefits

- **COFA citizens are applying for disaster assistance later than other wildfire survivors. Is that going to affect your benefits? Answers to this and other questions can be accessed here:** <https://www.fema.gov/fact-sheet/questions-and-answers-cofa-eligibility-fema-benefits>

Understanding Your FEMA Letter

- Maui residents who applied for FEMA assistance will receive a determination letter. It is important to read the letter carefully because it will include the amount of assistance FEMA may provide and information on the appropriate use of disaster funds. The letter will also explain your application status and advise how to ask FEMA to reconsider its decision.
<https://www.fema.gov/press-release/20230907/understanding-your-fema-letter>

FEMA Assistance Includes Funeral Expenses



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- FEMA assistance may be available for funeral or reburial costs as a result of the wildfires. FEMA can help with the unexpected and uninsured expenses associated with the passing of an immediate family member during a declared major federal disaster or emergency. <https://www.fema.gov/fact-sheet/fema-assistance-includes-funeral-expenses-0>.

Keep Your Contact Information Current

- Survivors are encouraged to keep your information current because missing or wrong information could delay the delivery of FEMA assistance. When contacting FEMA, be prepared to give the specialist the nine-digit number assigned to you when you applied for disaster assistance.

Disaster Legal Services Available to Maui Survivors

- If you are facing civil legal issues as a result of the wildfires and you cannot afford an attorney, you can get legal advice by calling the Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i's toll-free lines at **808-536-4302** or **800-499-4302**. The Disaster Legal Services national hotline is **888-743-5749**.
- You can also get free legal advice at <https://www.ladrc.org/disasters/hawaii-wildfires/> or <https://hawaii.freelegalanswers.org/>.

Confidential Crisis Counseling Services Available

- Disasters can create a wide range of emotions that may last for many months. If you are feeling hopeless or stressed, help is available. Wildfire survivors can get free, confidential crisis counseling services. Call **Hawai'i Cares** toll free at **800-753-6879** or dial or text **Hawai'i Cares** using the 3-digit calling code **988**. This service is available all day, every day.

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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