

Houses of Worship May Be Eligible for FEMA Help to Cover Tornado Damage

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LITTLE ROCK, Ark. -- Qualifying private nonprofit houses of worship in Arkansas may be eligible for FEMA grants to cover expenses related to the May 24-27 severe storms and tornadoes.

Grants through FEMA's Public Assistance program may cover costs to repair or replace facilities damaged during the storms.

FEMA defines religious facilities as a church, synagogue, mosque, temple or other house of worship without regard to the religious character of the facility. No religious facility or house of worship may be excluded from this definition because leadership or membership in the organization is limited to persons who share a religious faith or practice.

Help with repairs and replacement costs may be available to houses of worship in Baxter, Benton, Boone, Carroll, Fulton, Madison, Marion, Nevada, Randolph, and Sharp counties.

To be an eligible applicant, a house of worship must:

- Be owned or operated by a private nonprofit organization.
- The facility must be open to the public.
- Have been damaged by the May 24-27 severe storms and tornadoes.
- Have either not received funding or received insufficient funding after applying for a U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster loan to repair or replace a facility.

The application must include state and/or U.S. Internal Revenue Service documentation of tax-exempt status, pre-disaster charter and other documentation.



The U.S. Small Business Administration can loan to qualified houses of worship up to \$2 million to repair or replace damaged or destroyed property. SBA can also lend additional funds to help with the cost of improvements to protect, prevent or minimize disaster damage from occurring in the future.

The deadline to apply for property damage is Aug. 12, 2024.

Applicants may apply online and receive additional disaster assistance information at [SBA.gov/disaster](https://www.sba.gov/disaster). Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance.

All applicants – even if they must wait for an SBA loan decision -- are encouraged to make a Request for Public Assistance (RPA) as soon as possible by contacting their local emergency management office. Some activities regarding Emergency Work that was performed in preparation or response to the storm may be eligible without or while pending an SBA decision. The deadline to file an RPA is within 30 days of your county being designated in the declaration.

Other Resources:

Houses of worship administrators can contact their county emergency management office for more information on how to submit a FEMA request for Public Assistance.

- [Public Assistance Policies](#) - Official guidance, policies, news advisories and related publications that govern the program include:
- [Public Assistance Program & Policy Guide](#) (version 4 applicable to emergencies and major disasters declared on or after June 1, 2020.)
- [Public Assistance Program Delivery Guide](#) (draft document published September 2022.)
- Video: <https://youtu.be/JgHWcA5LnOc> .
- Web page: [Assistance for Governments and Private Non-Profits After a Disaster | FEMA.gov](#)
- Procurement Guide: [Purchasing under a FEMA Award: Resources for Private Nonprofits and Religious Organizations](#)
- Downloadable FEMA Fact Sheet: [Public Assistance: Private Nonprofit Eligibility Factsheet \(fema.gov\)](#)



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- Downloadable FEMA Fact Sheet: [Mitigate Disaster Damage with FEMA Public Assistance](#)

