

FEMA Mobile Disaster Centers Reach Out to Help Rural Residents

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LITTLE ROCK, Ark. – Most people associate the use of motor homes with recreational life—accessing parks, lakes and other scenic areas to reduce the stress of the daily grind.

FEMA maintains a national fleet of similar vehicles it rolls out for a different purpose—to reduce the stress on rural residents recovering from natural disasters. Their technical name is Mobile Communications Operations Vehicle, or MCOV. As such, they often are used as command vehicles in various response or recovery situations.

Where federal disasters are declared, MCOVs become Mobile Disaster Recovery Centers (MDRCs).

FEMA stages MCOVs in three major locations: Texas, Georgia and Virginia. MCOVs can be in a disaster area within a day or two of a federal declaration. FEMA drivers are deployed to vehicle locations while the vehicles are double-checked for operation.

Equipped with satellite technology, MCOVs are used as MDRCs because they can go anywhere a motor home can to register applicants for federal disaster assistance. Able to house 10 FEMA computers and a number of others for FEMA's disaster recovery partners, they reach out as circuit riders to visit small communities where there might not even be a building big enough to use for a disaster center.

Disaster survivors do not go into the MCOV, as it is basically a command center for the MDRC. Equipment is deployed out of it into a building or onto a few tables under awnings in a parking lot in a rural community. Centers are always accessible to people who have disabilities or additional communication needs.



MDRC schedules are announced and disaster survivors are welcomed, FEMA applicant services specialists and SBA customer service representatives assist disaster survivors to apply for FEMA grants and/or the SBA's low-interest loans. Representatives also make referrals to voluntary organizations active in disasters and others with information on mitigating risks in future disasters.

Survivors who are not fully insured may qualify for assistance from FEMA and/or SBA. FEMA grants are limited to temporary assistance aimed at getting disaster survivors into a safe, functional place to live. For fuller recovery, SBA offers low-interest disaster loans to business of all sizes, most private nonprofit organizations, homeowners and renters.

SBA disaster loans are the primary source of money to pay for repair or replacement costs not fully covered by insurance or other compensation. Homeowners may borrow up to **\$200,000** to repair or replace their primary residence. Homeowners and renters may borrow up to **\$40,000** to replace personal property.

Businesses may borrow up to **\$2 million** for any combination of property damage or economic injury. SBA also offers low-interest working capital loans (called Economic Injury Disaster Loans) to small businesses, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and most private nonprofit organizations of all sizes having difficulty meeting obligations as a result of the disaster.

The MDRC confirmed schedule for Arkansas is below; later ones may be announced as needed:

Woodruff County - Wednesday, 7/19 through Friday, 7/21

Robert & Dorothy Rowland Entertainment Building

Three County Fairgrounds

997 Poplar St.

McCrory 72101



Prairie County - Saturday, 7/22 through Sunday, 7/23

Courthouse Annex

605 Hwy 38E

Des Arc 72040

White County - Monday, 7/24 through Wednesday, 7/26

White County Emergency Service Office

2301 Eastline Road

Searcy 72143

Hours of operation:

Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Sunday, 1 p.m. to 5 pm.

To register for FEMA disaster assistance:

- Call the FEMA Helpline at **800-621-3362**. Multilingual operators are available. Persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability and use a **TTY** may call **800-462-7585**. If you use **711** or VRS (Video Relay Service) or require accommodations while visiting a Disaster Recovery Center, call **800-621-3362**. The toll-free numbers are open daily from **7 a.m. to 10 p.m.**
 - Help is available in most languages, and information on the registration process is available in ASL at fema.gov/media-library/assets/videos/111546.
- Go online to DisasterAssistance.gov (also in Spanish);
- Download the FEMA [mobile app](#) (also available in Spanish) at Google Play or the Apple App Store.

There are three ways to apply with SBA after you register with FEMA:



FEMA

- Call SBA at **800-659-2955**. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing may call **800 877-8339**.
- Apply online using the Electronic Loan Application via SBA's secure website at: <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>.
- Apply by mail: Complete a paper application and mail it to SBA at **14925 Kingsport Road, Ft. Worth TX 76155-2243**.

For updates on the Arkansas response and recovery, follow the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (@AR_Emergencies) on Twitter and Facebook and adem.arkansas.gov. Additional information is available at fema.gov/disaster/4318.

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FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.



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