

Disaster Aid Does Not Affect Social Security, Medicare Benefits

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CHARLESTON, W.Va.— Those who receive federal disaster assistance as a result of the July 28-29, 2017 severe storms, flooding, landslides and mudslides will not pay additional income taxes or see any reduction in their Social Security checks or any other federal benefits.

Disaster assistance for essential home repairs, replacement of personal property or for other needs does not count as income. Disaster relief payments from the government or donations from charitable organizations will not affect Social Security payments or Medicare benefits.

People can register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency for disaster assistance by using any of the following methods:

- Going **online** at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or downloading the FEMA mobile app.
- **Calling** 1-800-621-FEMA (3362)
 - o People who have a speech disability or hearing loss and use TTY should call 1-800-462-7585.
 - o For those who use 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS), call 1-800-621-3362.
 - o These toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. (local time) seven days a week until further notice.
- **Visiting** one of the three Disaster Recovery Centers at **Marion, Marshall and Wetzel counties, especially when the wait by calling FEMA's helpline is long. Addresses and hours are posted at:**
<http://asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/home.htm>.

Those who have experienced damage from the storms may be eligible for FEMA's Individuals and Households Program. This may cover expenses for temporary housing, home repairs, replacement of damaged personal property and other disaster-related needs, such as medical, dental or transportation costs not covered by insurance or other programs.



Eligibility for FEMA assistance is not dependent on income. The determination on the amount of disaster assistance an eligible applicant receives is based on the amount of loss and damages incurred as a direct result of the recent storms and flooding and the amount of their insurance settlement, if any.

Disaster assistance for essential home repairs, replacement of personal property or for other serious needs does not count as taxable income. West Virginians affected by the severe storms and flooding who receive federal assistance will not lose Social Security or Medicare benefits, will not pay additional taxes, or give up income-based benefit programs.

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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). For TTY call 800-462-7585.

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. Follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/femaregion3> and the FEMA Blog at <http://blog.fema.gov>.

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private non-profit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding efforts and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover losses not fully compensated by insurance or other recoveries and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. For more information, applicants may contact SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center by calling (800) 659-2955, emailing disastercustomerservice@sba.gov, or visiting SBA's Web site at www.sba.gov/disaster. Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals may call (800) 877-8339.

