

# FEMA's Proactive Outreach to Tornado Damaged Communities

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**Madison, Miss.-** FEMA and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) are committed to ensuring that the people affected by the March tornadoes have access to the help available to them from the federal government and the State of Mississippi. Because of this commitment, since the federal disaster declaration on March 26, our proactive outreach has included:

## Face-to-face Outreach

- Disaster Survivor Assistance (DSA) teams visiting almost 14,000 homes, 545 businesses, 108 community-based organizations, 37 government agencies and 936 faith-based groups.
- Taking information directly to survivors. Because so many homes were severely damaged or destroyed, many survivors temporarily relocated to nearby communities. DSA teams and other FEMA personnel visited those areas, offering help, registering survivors for FEMA assistance and conducting needs assessments.
  - Many Rolling Fork survivors relocated to hotels in Greenville because of limited housing in Rolling Fork. FEMA worked with MEMA to locate a mobile Disaster Recovery Center in Greenville, and arranged for Mississippi Vital Records and the Department of Motor Vehicles to be there to help survivors.
- Reaching out to survivors who were living in cars. DSA teams connected with them to verify contact information, assist with application updates, and provide information about shelters and rehousing opportunities.
- Identifying and contacting applicants traditionally challenged by the application and appeals process – those with hearing and vision problems, mobility issues, mental or emotional distress, or who are over age 65. FEMA's Enhanced Applicant Services team contacted them and helped them complete their applications.
  - In total, the EAS team contacted more than 4,000 applicants, which resulted in an additional \$2.2 million in assistance to survivors.



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## Town Halls

Supporting eight informational town hall events:

- Three hosted by Rep. Bennie Thompson and attended by more than 200 people each. FEMA and MEMA staff were onsite to answer questions and help people register.
- Five other town halls, organized by the NAACP, the Center for Justice and local governments, attended by a total of about 800 people.
- Ensuring American Sign Language interpreters attended community meetings so the deaf and hard of hearing could learn about the assistance available to them.

## Media Relations

- Identifying and engaging specific media outlets, including those that are locally-owned.
- Completing 75 interviews and inquiries from various media outlets.
- Placing ads on six local radio stations with coverage of the most-impacted areas, in addition to sending public service announcements to all radio stations covering impacted areas.
- Placing ads in seven newspapers, including two in non-declared counties where survivors were staying in hotels, with circulation to almost 41,000 people.

## Houses of Worship

- Reaching out to 172 houses of worship to ensure assistance information was getting to their members. FEMA teams also told the leaders about federal assistance available to houses of worship that experienced losses.

## Results

To date this outreach has resulted in more than \$11.2 million in federal grants to more than 3,600 survivors in Carroll, Humphreys, Monroe, Montgomery, Panola and Sharkey counties.

For the latest information on recovery, visit [March 24 2023 Severe Weather Disaster Information - MEMA \(msema.org\)](#) and [fema.gov/disaster/4697](#). On



Twitter, follow MEMA [@MSEMA](#) and FEMA Region 4 [@femaregion4](#)).

