

FEMA Urges You to Spend Disaster Funds Wisely

Release Date: March 3, 2017

BATON ROUGE, La. — More than \$1.78 million in federal assistance has been approved by FEMA to help survivors of the February tornadoes recover from the devastation. While assistance is tax-free and grants don't have to be repaid, **FEMA urges you to use the funds quickly, wisely and only for disaster-related expenses.**

When a grant is awarded, FEMA will send you a letter listing approved uses including:

- home repairs (e.g., structure, water, septic and sewage systems)
- rental assistance for a different place to live temporarily
- repair or replacement of a flooded essential vehicle
- medical care for an injury caused by the disaster
- repair, cleaning or replacement of clothing, specialized tools
- necessary educational materials (e.g., computers, school books, supplies)
- moving and storage expenses related to the disaster
- other disaster-related expenses

You may spend your FEMA Housing Assistance grant to achieve the goal of permanent, safe, sanitary and functional housing.

- Rental assistance grants are provided for temporary housing when a disaster leaves your home uninhabitable or inaccessible.
- FEMA does not pay to return your home to its pre-disaster condition.
- You, as a homeowner or renter, can choose to rent an apartment, house, mobile home or some other temporary rental unit.
- If you intend to seek continued rental assistance, you'll need receipts to show you used the grant for rent.



FEMA

Page 1 of 2

Disaster grants should not be used for travel, entertainment, regular living expenses or any discretionary expenses not related to the disaster.

It's important to remember that federal law prohibits duplicating federal grants from other sources, i.e., "double-dipping." FEMA also encourages you to keep your receipts for three years to show how the funds were spent. After every major disaster, FEMA conducts audits of disaster assistance payments to ensure that taxpayer dollars were properly provided by the agency and appropriately used by recipients.

When you get a letter from FEMA, read it carefully. If you have any questions, call the FEMA Helpline, 800-621-3362; TTY users can call 800-462-7585. Help is available in most languages and the phone lines are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week until further notice. You can visit the remaining Disaster Recovery Center in the East New Orleans Regional Library, 5641 Read Blvd., New Orleans 70127. From March 4, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. It will be closed on Sundays.

