

Fact Sheet: FEMA 101: Getting to Know the Agency

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FEMA has a clear mission: help people before, during and after a disaster.

Focused on the importance of preparedness for the whole nation, FEMA has coordinated the federal government's role regarding all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made. The agency was designed to bring a unified structure and order to the process of federal disaster assistance and to work with state, local and tribal governments in the process.

FEMA is divided into 10 regional offices that cover all 50 states, plus its territories.

There are three main programs and resources in which FEMA provides assistance to survivors and communities:

- Individual Assistance
 - Housing Assistance – includes temporary rental assistance, financial help to repair or replace owner-occupied primary residences and lodging expense reimbursement
 - The assistance FEMA offers will not make you whole. Its programs are designed to help survivors move forward in their recovery, helping them get their homes safe, sanitary and functional.
 - Other Needs Assistance – may provide funds for disaster related expenses for medical and dental expenses; funeral and burial costs; repairing or replacing vehicles; and other necessary expenses or serious needs
 - Public Assistance – reimburse state and local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations for response expenses and repairing or replacing eligible disaster-damaged infrastructure.
 - Hazard Mitigation – provides grants for measures that reduce disaster-related loss of life and property. Funding is available for state, territorial and local governments and certain private nonprofits after disaster declarations in areas requested by the governor.



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Clarifying Misconceptions

- FEMA is not a first responder agency. It works in collaboration and under the guidance of local governments. Recovery involves all levels of government and nonprofit organizations.
- FEMA programs offer temporary assistance and do not return individuals to pre-disaster status. It does not replace insurance.
- To qualify for assistance from FEMA's Individuals and Households Program you must be a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national or qualified alien.
- You do not have to be a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national or a qualified alien to get help with emergency life-saving needs such as shelter, water, food, first aid or get crisis counseling, disaster legal services or other short-term, non-cash emergency assistance.
- FEMA is required by law to provide disaster recovery assistance without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status.

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