

Wildfire survivors have 4 weeks to apply for FEMA aid

Release Date: September 23, 2020

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Individuals and households with losses due to the ongoing wildfires in Butte, Lake, Monterey, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma, and Yolo counties, have four weeks to apply for assistance from FEMA. Oct. 21 is the deadline.

FEMA grants help eligible survivors pay for rent, home repair/replacement and many other serious disaster-related needs, including replacement or repair of vehicles, funeral expenses, medical or dental expenses and miscellaneous other costs. To be reimbursed by FEMA, survivors should save receipts and photograph damage.

Survivors should contact their insurers and file a claim for the disaster-caused damage before they register with FEMA. Survivors with insurance should register with FEMA even when they aren't yet certain whether they will be eligible. FEMA may be able to help with costs that insurance doesn't cover. The agency can determine eligibility once an applicant's insurance claim is settled—but there won't be any FEMA reimbursement for those who fail to register by the Oct. 21 deadline. FEMA cannot pay insurance deductibles.

There are three ways for survivors to register: online at disasterassistance.gov, with the FEMA app on a smartphone or tablet, or by a phone call to the **FEMA Helpline, 800-621-3362** (TTY 800-462-7585). If you use 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS), please call 800-621-3362.

Multilingual services are available on the helpline and specialists can answer most questions about FEMA assistance and registration.

To register you will need the following information:

- Social Security number
- Insurance policy information



- Address of the damaged primary dwelling
- A description of disaster-caused damage and losses
- Current mailing address
- Current telephone number
- Total household annual income
- Routing and account number of your checking or savings account (for direct transfer of funds to your bank account)

After you register, FEMA will email you a temporary PIN that you can use to create an account at disasterassistance.gov. The account will enable you to check the status of your application, view messages from FEMA, update your personal information and upload documents FEMA may need to determine your eligibility for grants.

If you are unable to upload your documents, mail them to FEMA at P.O. Box 10055, Hyattsville MD 20782-8055 or fax them to 800-827-8112.

Inspections

During COVID-19, inspections will be conducted by phone. Remote inspections are comparable to traditional, in-person inspections and can expedite recovery assistance, based on eligibility. For security purposes, the inspector will verify your identity by asking a series of qualifying questions and then provide you with the first four digits of your application number to complete verification.

If you reported that you cannot safely live in your home, a FEMA inspector will contact you by phone and ask about the type and extent of damage sustained. Survivors with minimal damage who can live in their homes will not automatically be scheduled for a home inspection when applying to FEMA, but FEMA will provide an inspection if the survivor contacts the agency to report finding more damage than originally reported. Inspectors record damage; they have no role in determining the amount or type of grants a survivor may receive.

Remote inspections have no effect on the types of FEMA Other Needs Assistance that do not require an inspection, including grants for childcare, transportation, medical, dental, funeral expenses, replacement of personal property, or moving and storage assistance.



FEMA

Page 2 of 3

U.S. Small Business Administration

Grants from FEMA are meant to give eligible survivors a start on their road to recovery. The primary source of recovery funding for many, however, is a loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) which makes disaster loans to individuals and businesses of all sizes. Survivors can find out more by contacting the SBA's Virtual Disaster Loan Outreach Center. Customer service representatives are available to assist individuals and business owners, answer questions about SBA's disaster loan program, explain the application process and help each person complete their electronic loan application.

Virtual Business Recovery Center and Virtual Disaster Loan Outreach Center

Mondays – Fridays

5 a.m. to 5 p.m. PT

FOCWAssistance@sba.gov

(916) 735-1500

These services are only available for the California disaster declaration as a result of the wildfires that began Aug. 14, 2020, and not for COVID-19-related assistance.

###



FEMA

Page 3 of 3