

FEMA Assistance for Houses of Worship

Release Date: Aug 29, 2024

FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) program may provide assistance to faith-based organizations that provide essential social services to the public that were affected by Hurricane Debby.

Houses of worship, whether they provide critical or essential social services, may submit a FEMA Request for Public Assistance through Grants Portal, an online recovery management tool. Any questions about the process can be answered by your local and/or state emergency manager.

Houses of worship that provide a noncritical social service, such as community and senior centers operated by nonprofit organizations, must go through the loan application process with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Assistance program before FEMA can determine eligibility for the agency's Public Assistance program, which reimburses expenses for emergency protective measures, debris removal and repair or rebuilding of disaster-damaged property. However, some activities regarding emergency protective measures that were performed in preparation or response to the storm may be eligible without, or while pending, an SBA decision.

SBA's low-interest disaster loans provide up to \$2 million for damaged real estate and the repair or replacement of property, such as furniture, fixtures and other eligible inventory. For information about disaster assistance from SBA, visit [SBA.gov/disaster](https://www.sba.gov/disaster) or call 800-659-2955.

FEMA encourages protecting these damaged facilities from future events by taking hazard mitigation measures during the recovery process.

Eligibility:

- [The house of worship must be owned or operated by a private nonprofit organization.](#)
- It must have sustained damage caused from Hurricane Debby in Baker, Charlotte, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Leon,



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Levy, Madison, Manatee, Sarasota, Suwannee, Taylor, Union or Wakulla counties.

- The facility must be open to the public.
- The application must include state and/or U.S. Internal Revenue Service documentation of tax-exempt status, pre-disaster charter and other documentation.

Requests for Public Assistance

Requests for Public Assistance (RPAs) are being accepted from state, territorial, tribal and local governments, and certain types of private nonprofit organizations, including houses of worship.

The deadline for applicants in **Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Manatee, Sarasota, Suwannee and Taylor** counties to submit an RPA via Grants Portal is **Sept. 9, 2024**. [RPA requests may be submitted at FloridaPA.org](https://FloridaPA.org).

The deadline for applicants in **Baker, Charlotte, Jefferson, Leon, Union and Wakulla** counties to submit an RPA via Grants Portal is **Sept. 27, 2024**. RPA requests may be submitted at FloridaPA.org. These counties are eligible for debris removal and emergency protective measures, but not for restoration of damaged facilities.

What You Will Need to Provide

- Evidence of federal or state tax-exempt status or other documents indicating nonprofit status, such as bylaws or articles of incorporation.
- Pre-disaster evidence of incorporation/charter/bylaws.
- A Data Universal Number Systems number established with the government.
- Supporting documentation establishing lease or ownership of the building, proof of use, and proof of insurance.
- If eligibility is granted, the following will need to be submitted: A list of sites damaged; before-and-after pictures; and information about any historic structures.

