

# Students Affected by Presidentially Declared Disasters

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Students may receive assistance from FEMA for temporary housing and other uninsured or under-insured disaster-caused expenses and serious needs.

## Who can get assistance?

If you are living in housing provided by a higher education institution, you may be eligible for FEMA assistance if:

- You are a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national or qualified non-citizen.
- FEMA can confirm your identity.
- Your housing is in a declared disaster area.
- You don't have insurance, or your insurance doesn't cover your needs.
- You have necessary expenses and serious needs from the disaster.

Some types of assistance are based on whether you are an "independent" or "dependent" student.

## What is an independent student?

The term "independent" refers to students who are financially independent from parent(s) or guardian(s). One of the following conditions must be true for you to be considered "independent." If you:

- Do not have a primary residence elsewhere and are responsible for your own living expense.
- Are at least age 24 by Dec. 31 of the award year.
- Were married prior to the disaster.
- Are in a Masters or Doctoral program.
- Have legal dependents.
- Are an orphan or are a ward of the court.
- Are on active military duty or are a military veteran.
- Have documented determination of independent status by a financial aid administrator.

## What help may independent students get?

"Independent" students may get rental assistance and other needs

assistance:

- **Rental assistance** is help for temporary housing costs. If the home you live in the majority of the year is damaged by the disaster you may receive rental assistance, whether or not your housing was provided by a higher education institution.



# FEMA

- **Other needs assistance** is help for certain daily expenses and disaster damage. This type of assistance can help with costs for serious needs, displacement, medical, dental, funeral, moving and storage, transportation, child care, personal property and other miscellaneous items.
  - Personal property assistance is limited to certain student-owned items and does not cover items owned by the higher education institution or covered by an insurance policy.

## What is a dependent student?

Any students that do not meet FEMA’s “independent” student criteria are considered “dependent” students.

## What help may dependent students get?

“Dependent” students who have disaster related costs may get some kinds of other needs assistance, which is help for certain daily expenses and disaster damage. This type of assistance can help with costs for serious needs, medical, dental, funeral, moving and storage, transportation, child care, personal property and other miscellaneous items.

- Personal property assistance is limited to certain student-owned items and does not cover items owned by the higher education institution or covered by an insurance policy.

## How can I apply?

You can apply by:

- Applying online at [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://DisasterAssistance.gov),
- Calling FEMA’s Helpline at 1-800-621-3362, or
- Visiting a Disaster Recovery Center, if available.



## How can I appeal?

If you don’t agree with FEMA’s decision, you can appeal by showing why you need FEMA assistance. The decision letter you get from FEMA will have more information about the types of documents you should send.

You may use an optional *Individuals and Households Program Appeals Request Form*, which is included in the decision letter you receive from FEMA, or at a Disaster Recovery Center. You can also choose to write and sign a letter to send with your documents to help FEMA understand why you need help.

## How can I send documents?

You can send supporting documents to FEMA by:

- Uploading to your disaster assistance account at [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://DisasterAssistance.gov).
- Mailing to FEMA, P.O. Box 10055, Hyattsville, MD 20782-8055.
- Faxing to 1-800-827-8112.
- Visiting a Disaster Recovery Center, if available.