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News Release

Another Part of Florida's Hurricane Irma Recovery: FEMA's Public Assistance

ORLANDO, Fla. — Many individuals and families in Florida are moving forward in their recovery from Hurricane Irma with help from FEMA, the state, and non-profit entities; individuals remain a priority. But numerous public buildings, roads, and bridges were also damaged or destroyed.

State and local governments spent millions of dollars on overtime for first responders and other workers, and millions more removing debris from streets and public property. Who pays for those expenses?

The Public Assistance program, FEMA's largest grant program, averages \$4.7 billion nationally in assistance each year and accounts for just over half of the grant dollars administered by the agency.

After a declared disaster, the program pays for storm-generated debris removal, the cost of preparing for and responding to the disaster, and the repair or replacement of eligible public infrastructure, including roads and bridges; public buildings and equipment; utilities including water systems and parks and other recreational facilities.

FEMA approves grants and provides technical assistance to the state and applicants. The state helps educate applicants about the program and the application process, and distributes and monitors grant funds.

In addition, PA encourages protection of damaged facilities and infrastructure from future disasters by providing funding for hazard mitigation measures during the recovery process that make buildings or structures more resilient.

Local and state applicants are responsible for identifying storm damage and other eligible costs, for providing documentation and managing the funded projects.

Who is eligible for Public Assistance?

State and local governing entities such as cities, towns, and counties, federally-recognized Indian tribes, and some Private Non-Profit (PNP) organizations can apply for PA grants. PNPs that own or operate facilities that provide a critical or essential public service the government would otherwise provide may

qualify. Libraries, daycare centers, and schools of higher education as well as some community senior centers would fall into the eligible private nonprofit category because each provides a service the government does.

How do funds get to the applicants?

After the submission of a request for Public Assistance through the state and approval by FEMA, the agency works with applicants directly, whether they are state agencies, county or local governments, or eligible private non-profits. A FEMA Program Delivery Manager provides direct customer service to each applicant and serves as the point of contact once eligible damages are agreed upon. They help the applicant collect information, capture disaster-related damages, and provide justification for the project's eligibility, costs and scope of work.

Based on site visits and documentation provided, FEMA determines what kind of work is eligible for federal reimbursement under the law, and helps develop estimates of the costs to repair damage or replace a facility. This process is facilitated by an online record-keeping and review process at a FEMA Consolidated Resource Center (CRC) facility in Virginia.

Documentation can be uploaded to the online system by applicants and FEMA personnel, and reviewed by specialists at the CRC who can communicate with the parties via the online system, providing feedback and requesting any additional information needed. Using this online system, applicants have access to all the documentation necessary to complete the project.

After the CRC reviews the required documentation and approves the project, it then obligates the funds needed and the grant money is transferred to the state. The state is responsible for disbursing the money to applicants.

To ensure greater accountability, FEMA requires the applicant pay a share of the costs. The federal share of assistance in the Florida Hurricane Irma recovery is not less than 75 percent of the eligible cost of a project. The state determines the additional cost share requirements.

Hurricane Irma recovery projects affect the daily lives of Florida residents — those who drive its roads, cross its bridges, and use its buildings — as well as the visitors to the state who do the same. FEMA's Public Assistance program will bring significant benefits to everyone who calls Florida home.

To learn more about FEMA's Public Assistance program, visit <https://www.fema.gov/public-assistance-local-state-tribal-and-non-profit>. For more information on Hurricane Irma and Florida recovery, visit www.FEMA.gov/IrmaFL, [@FEMARegion4 Twitter account](#), or the [Florida Division of Emergency Management website](#).

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FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585.

FEMA's temporary housing assistance and grants for transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

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