



MEMA



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FEMA

Disaster News

June 16, 2011

DR-1972-NR-037

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FEMA EXPANDS OUTREACH IN MISSISSIPPI

Clinton, Miss – In every disaster, some survivors don't get the help they need and deserve because they didn't take advantage of federal and state assistance programs designed to help them.

In some cases, they didn't register with FEMA; in others they didn't complete necessary paperwork. FEMA wants to change that.

"People fall through the cracks for all kinds of reasons," said Ben Dew, a community relations specialist for FEMA in Mississippi. "Some have language or reading problems, while others fear or distrust government officials outside their own community. Whatever the reason, we recognize that we can only do so much and are making a determined effort to enlist local citizens and community organizations to help us reach out to these survivors."

That's why a program called the People Helping People Recover From Disasters Initiative was created. The goal is to forge relationships – before and during disasters – with faith- and community-based organizations in regular contact with or in a better position to reach these survivors than FEMA and its state partners.

On June 9, Dew held a training session in Belzoni with members of the Humphreys County Sheriff's Department. Topics included: How to register with FEMA, how to submit documents, how to complete paperwork and what to include in an appeal letter.

"We sure appreciate you coming," said Humphreys County Sheriff J.D. Roseman. "We know we can go places you can't go. We know we can talk to people you can't. I think this training is a good thing."

One of Chief Roseman's officers said, "I feel like I'm much better prepared now for the next disaster."

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“It’s about trust,” Dew said. “And that’s something you can’t create overnight. But by training local citizens to help us, we’re tapping into the trust that already exists between local citizens and the various community organizations they know, whether it’s churches or charitable organizations or even local law enforcement agencies. We see this as leveraging our assets and our outreach and helping us do a better job.”

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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 public 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 loan officers to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

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