



MEMA



Joint Information Center  
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FEMA

# Disaster News

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## DISASTER RECOVERY CENTERS GET HELP FOR SURVIVORS

**CLINTON, Miss.** – To help speed recovery, joint state and federal Disaster Recovery Centers offer a wide variety of assistance, information and services to survivors of Mississippi's recent tornadoes, storms and flooding.

“Survivors who don’t take advantage of all the help offered at the Disaster Recovery Centers are limiting their ability to recover from their losses,” said Mississippi Emergency Management Agency Director Mike Womack. “You will never know what help you are eligible for until you apply for assistance.”

“The centers are staffed by professionals who are trained to help survivors connect with people, programs and organizations that can help them,” added Terry L. Quarles, federal coordinating officer for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. “The federal government alone has at least 60 different forms of assistance offered by many federal agencies.”

Centers have been established in or near most of the hardest-hit counties. Survivors can get information on assistance for temporary housing, home repairs, replacing property not covered by insurance and many other programs.

Staffing varies at the centers and some may not have people with the specific information that a survivor is seeking. However, staff members can give people a referral so they get the help or information they need.

Some aid recipients have expressed concern that if they accept disaster assistance grants, they might lose Social Security benefits or pay additional taxes. The grants, however, do not affect Social Security benefits and are not taxable.

The first step for getting help is to register for assistance. That can be done before visiting a center by registering with FEMA at **800-621-FEMA (3362)** or online at [www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov). Help is available in most languages. Those with speech or hearing impairment can call (TTY) **800-462-7585**.

**(MORE)**

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Persons affected by the disasters also can apply for federal assistance through a web-enabled mobile device or smartphone. Visit [m.fema.gov](http://m.fema.gov) and follow the link to apply online for federal assistance and other recovery help.

Here are examples of assistance often available at centers or through a referral from a center staffer:

- Legal help.Crisis counseling.
- Filing insurance claims.
- Rental payments for temporary housing for those whose homes are unlivable.
- Grants for home repairs and replacement of essential household items not covered by insurance to make damaged dwellings safe, sanitary and functional.
- Grants for both homeowners and renters to replace personal property and help meet medical, dental, funeral and transportation needs not covered by insurance or other federal or state programs.
- Low-interest loans to cover residential and business property losses not fully compensated by insurance.
- Loans for small business, agricultural cooperatives and most private, non-profit organizations that have suffered disaster-related cash-flow problems and need funds for working capital to recover.
- Loans to farmers, ranchers and aquaculture operators to cover livestock, production and property losses.
- Filing for unemployment.
- Restoration of lost Social Security documents.
- Referrals for Veterans Administration benefits.
- Income tax assistance for filing casualty losses.
- Grants for restoring historic properties.
- Referrals for services and goods offered by charitable organizations.

Survivors also are welcome to make follow-up visits to the centers to check on the status of applications for assistance or to seek additional information.

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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.*

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*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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