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Recovery News

FEMA ASSISTANCE BASED ON INDIVIDUAL LOSS, NEEDS

NEPTUNE, N.J. – Residents of New Jersey now eligible for individual disaster assistance should know that the help they may receive will be based on their own unique circumstances and needs.

“While not everyone may qualify, our ultimate goal is for anyone who suffered damages from Hurricane Irene to receive the maximum assistance available,” said William L. Vogel, federal coordinating officer for the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) disaster operations in New Jersey.

Disaster assistance to individuals is based on a number of factors, and FEMA specialists are trained to seek out and coordinate the eligible assistance from a number of sources. This might include direct financial grants, low-interest loans, charitable contributions from voluntary agencies, and/or other resources that will help residents who are recovering from the disaster.

Registering with FEMA is the first step in the process, whether the loss is large or small and whether or not an individual anticipates federal assistance.

The unique needs of everyone who registers are evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine the types of assistance that are best suited to that individual. The process, and final assistance determination, is set by federal regulation and is strictly confidential. Not everyone who registers will qualify.

Assistance could include grants to help pay for temporary housing needs, essential home repairs and other disaster-related expenses. Low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration also may be available to cover residential and business losses not fully compensated by insurance.

“What you may receive in the way of assistance might be entirely different from what your neighbor receives,” said Lt. Paul Miller, state coordinator of the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management, “even though it appears your damages were similar. Everyone’s needs and everyone’s resources are different.”

Seventeen Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) have opened in the hardest hit areas of New Jersey. To find the nearest DRC to you go to <http://asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/home.htm>. Additional locations will be announced by the FEMA/state joint information center as they are opened.

There are three ways to register – go to www.disasterassistance.gov, to m.fema.gov or call FEMA toll-free, **800-621-3362 (FEMA)**. Those with access or functional needs and who use a TTY may call 800-462-7585 or use 711 or Video Relay Service to call 800-621-3362. Telephone lines are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET; multilingual operators are available.

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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.

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