

# Individual Assistance Programs

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When a state, local, tribal, or territorial government (SLTT) determines an incident exceeds their capability to respond, the Governor or Tribal Chief Executive may request a declaration from the President through FEMA.

The President may provide federal assistance when the magnitude or threat of an incident exceeds the affected state, local, tribal, or territorial, government's capability to respond or recover. For FEMA to provide supplemental federal assistance, the President must declare that an emergency or major disaster exists.

The Individual Assistance mission ensures disaster survivors have timely access to a full range of authorized programs and services to maximize recovery through partnered coordination of SLTT governments, as well as other federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.

## Individual Assistance Programs

FEMA assists individuals and households through the coordination and delivery of Individual Assistance programs, including:

### Mass Care and Emergency Assistance (MC/EA)

Mass Care is composed of seven activities: sheltering (congregate and non-congregate), feeding, distribution of emergency supplies, support to adults and children with disabilities and individuals with access and functional needs, reunification support for adults and children, support to owners and their household pets, service, and assistance animals, and mass evacuee support. In addition to the seven aforementioned activities, MC/EA also supports the National Mass Care Exercise (NMCE) training program and offers partnerships through the following programs: Blue Roof Program and Transitional Sheltering Assistance (TSA).

### Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training Program (CCP)

CCP provides eligible state, territorial, and tribal governments and non-governmental organizations with supplemental funding to assist disaster-impacted individuals and communities in recovering from emergencies and major disasters through the provision of community-based outreach and psycho-educational services. The goal is to aid survivors in recovering from the adverse reactions to disasters and to begin to rebuild their lives. CCP services are non-clinical and anonymous.

### Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA)

DUA provides unemployment benefits and re-employment assistance services to eligible survivors affected by a Presidentially-declared major disaster. These services are provided through coordination with the U.S. Department of



# FEMA

Labor and administered by the state, territorial, and tribal government emergency management officials of the affected area(s). DUA is only available to those eligible survivors who are not eligible for regular state unemployment insurance (UI).

## **Disaster Legal Services (DLS)**

DLS provides legal aid to survivors affected by a Presidentially-declared major disaster through an agreement with the Young Lawyers Division (YLD) of the American Bar Association. DLS is put into effect during Presidentially-declared disasters and is available to survivors who qualify as low-income and whose cases do not generate a fee. DLS attorneys may also refer survivors to local pro-bono and sliding-scale legal resources.

## **Disaster Case Management (DCM)**

DCM provides supplemental funding to a state, territorial, or tribal government or non-governmental organization to support the recovery of survivors following a Presidentially-declared major disaster. DCM is a time-limited process that promotes partnership between a case manager and a disaster survivor in order to assess and address a survivor's verified disaster-caused unmet needs through a disaster recovery plan. This disaster recovery plan connects survivors to local resources and assists in the development of decision-making priorities, providing guidance and tools to disaster survivors.

## **Individuals and Households Program (IHP)**

IHP Assistance provides financial assistance and direct services to eligible individuals and households who have uninsured or underinsured necessary expenses and serious needs. IHP Assistance is not a substitute for insurance and cannot compensate for all losses caused by a disaster; it is intended to meet basic needs and supplement disaster recovery efforts. IHP Assistance is not considered income or a resource when determining eligibility for welfare, income assistance, or income tested benefit programs that the federal government funds, such as Social Security benefits or disability income. IHP Assistance is also exempt from garnishment or seizure, but this exception does not apply to FEMA recovering assistance received in error or fraud.

# **Individual Assistance Service Delivery Channels**

FEMA offers disaster survivors multiple options to access Individual Assistance. Survivors may receive information and services through:

## **Internet or Smartphone Application**

Disaster survivors may apply for IHP Assistance or check their application status online at [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov). Disaster survivors may also access FEMA via smartphone by downloading the application from [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) or through their mobile provider's application store.

## **FEMA Helpline**

Disaster survivors may call FEMA's toll-free Helpline at 800-621-3362 to apply for assistance or check their application status. If you use a video relay service (VRS), captioned telephone service or others, give FEMA your number for that service.

## **Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs)**

DRCs are usually opened quickly after a disaster for a limited period of time. Disaster survivors may apply for assistance in-person at DRCs that are opened in or near their communities after a disaster. They are accessible and equipped to accommodate disaster survivors who need disability-related communication aids. FEMA staff can assist with completing registrations or checking their application status. FEMA coordinates with the state, local, tribal, or territorial government to establish DRC locations.

## **Disaster Survivor Assistance (DSA) Teams**

FEMA may send staff into the affected communities to help disaster survivors apply for IHP assistance. FEMA may also coordinate with the state, local, tribal, or territorial government to send staff into emergency shelters to assist survivors. FEMA staff are equipped with computers or similar devices to assist survivors with registering for IHP Assistance or provide them referrals to other resources.

Because FEMA's programs are not designed to make a survivor whole, we encourage a whole of community approach to disaster recovery by engaging the full capacity of non-governmental organizations and the private sector, including businesses, faith-based and disability organizations, and the general public, in conjunction with the participation of state, local, tribal, or territorial government, as well as other federal agency partners.