



Florida
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Gayle Harrell

State Representative



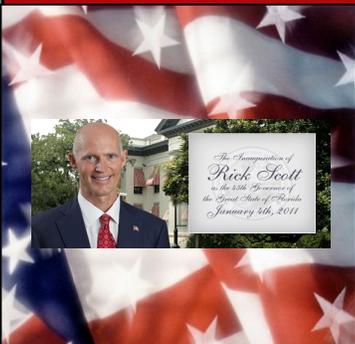
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Good Afternoon,

Irma!!, the largest hurricane to ever hit the state of Florida! We survived it and now are recouping and rebuilding (and hopefully all have our power back on!) We are Floridians and we will overcome!

I want to thank all our first responders, the Emergency Management Teams, and our city and county employees who worked without stopping over a period of days to keep us informed and safe. I was in attendance at the Martin and St Lucie County Emergency Operations Centers every day, right up until the streets became unpassable and the winds were starting to hit our area. I can assure you that your Martin and St Lucie Counties Emergency Management Teams did an outstanding job in getting the critical information out to our residents.

Sheriffs Snyder and Mascara also did an outstanding job is keeping us safe. They stopped and apprehended multiple attempted looters in both counties. And in Martin County, Sheriff Snyder's marine unit had to do an emergency rescue in the middle of the storm saving a sail boater had decided he could ride out the storm on his boat. Bad choice!

I hope you have little to no damage to your home and business or if you did, I want to let you know that we are here to assist you in any way. We are taking this opportunity to send you some information my office has received from FEMA and to give you an update on what has happened this week.

We are undertaking the largest power restoration effort in the history of a single state. Over 6.7 million homes or businesses lost power during the storm. FPL has mobilized the largest restoration workforce ever assembled with more than 18,000 out-of-state restoration personnel working around the clock. As of Friday more that 75 % of all outages have been restored and all of the Treasure Coast should be restored by Sunday, Sept. 17th. Thank you to all the utility companies who have worked 24 hours a day to accomplish this.

As always, if there is anything our office can do to assist you, your family or your business, please do not hesitate to call 772-221-4011. We are here to help you!

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FEMA Disaster Fraud Hotline: 866-720-5721

Key Messages

- ◆ Our top priority continues to be protecting the lives and safety of those affected by Hurricane Irma. Survivors should not return home until local officials deem the area safe for return. Remember that returning home before storm debris is cleared is dangerous.
- ◆ FEMA has received more than **310,000** registrations and approved more than **\$60.4 million** for Florida survivors' recovery through the Individuals and Households Program.
- ◆ In Florida, **46 counties** have been designated for assistance through the Individuals and Households Program. The IHP may provide financial assistance and direct services for losses caused by the disaster that are not covered by insurance or another source.
- ◆ Across Florida and other areas hit by Hurricane Irma, more than **60,000** personnel are activated from more than 250 investor-owned electric companies, public power utilities, and electric cooperatives from all corners of the United States and Canada, who are dedicated to the essential work of power restoration.

Patience is still required, but progress is being made, and private sector partners report that about **70 percent** of power is restored across the affected areas.

- ◆ At the state's request, as of September 14, 2017, FEMA transferred more than **6.6 million meals and more than 4.6 million liters of water** to Florida.
- ◆ FEMA Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) task forces have searched more than **8,000** structures across Florida.
- ◆ Two Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMAT) are engaged in the Florida Keys supporting local medical facilities, and other teams are supporting shelter operations throughout Florida. DMATs are a rapid-response element to supplement local medical care, and deploy to disasters to provide medical care. Two Rapid Deployment Forces are also in Florida. Seven DMAT teams currently staged in Orlando, Florida.
- ◆ A FEMA tribal liaison is deployed to the Seminole Tribe of Florida. The FEMA Tribal Liaison Officer and team are working with both the Seminole Tribe and the Miccosukee Tribe to support operations and coordinate logistical needs.
- ◆ The USS Abraham Lincoln is on station near the Florida Keys conducting helicopter operations, including providing supplies.



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Assistance for Individuals

Registration

- ◆ 46 counties in Florida are designated for Individual Assistance. Homeowners and renters in Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Brevard, Broward, Charlotte, Citrus, Clay, Collier, Columbia, DeSoto, Duval, Flagler, Gilchrist, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Indian River, Lake, Lee, Levy, Manatee, Marion, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Nassau, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Johns, St. Lucie, Sumter, Suwannee, Union, Volusia counties may now apply for federal disaster assistance for uninsured and underinsured damage and losses resulting from Hurricane Irma.
- ◆ Registering online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov is the quickest way to register for federal assistance, including FEMA assistance.
- ◆ If you do not have access to the internet, you may register by calling **800-621-FEMA (3362)** or **800-462-7585 (TTY)**. If you use 711 relay or Video Relay Service (VRS), call **800-621-3362** directly. The toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. ET seven days a week until further notice. If you require an accommodation to apply for assistance, you may request one by calling these toll free numbers.
- ◆ FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams are working in hurricane-stricken neighborhoods to help Florida hurricane survivors register for assistance and to quickly identify and address immediate and emerging needs.
- ◆ The teams can also provide application updates and referrals to additional resources when needs remain.
- ◆ These mobile team members can be identified easily by their photo identifications and FEMA clothing.
- ◆ If you pre-registered with FEMA before the presidential disaster declaration for Hurricane Irma, there is no need to register again.

Multiple forms of assistance and short-term housing options are available to support survivors in building a bridge to recovery:

- * Shelters remain open. Download the FEMA mobile app for directions to open shelters and weather alerts
- * FEMA's Transitional Sheltering Assistance (TSA)
- * Rental Assistance
- * Temporary Blue Roofs
- * Disaster Unemployment Assistance
- * Disaster Distress Helpline
- * Immediate Foreclosure Relief from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- * Loans from the Small Business Administration (SBA)



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Temporary Blue Roofs

- ◆ Operation Blue Roof can make some damaged structures habitable again until more permanent repairs can be made.
- ◆ The program, managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), provides free installation of blue plastic sheeting on damaged roofs of residences, schools, daycare centers, public facilities and, in some cases, churches and other buildings used as shelters or relief locations to help reduce further damage to property until permanent repairs can be made.
- ◆ This program is available at no cost to eligible primary homeowners in **Charlotte, Collier, Hillsborough, Lee, Manatee, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Pinellas, and Sarasota** counties.

Here are some important facts about the program:

- ◆ The sheeting can be put only on pitched, asphalt-shingled roofs; damage to the roof must be less than 50 percent and the area to be covered must be structurally sound for a crew to work on safely.
- ◆ Property owners must remove any fallen trees from a roof prior to sheeting installation. After it is secured, the sheeting becomes the homeowner's responsibility to maintain. All blue roofs carry a 30-day warranty.
- ◆ Homeowners can also cover their roof with free tarps provided by FEMA and issued through their local governments. Residents need to monitor the media for information on where to pick up the tarps.
- ◆ The plastic covering and the tarps are temporary fixes designed to provide protection from the elements until the homeowner can make permanent repairs with a qualified professional.

Transitional Sheltering Assistance

TSA provides short-term lodging for eligible disaster survivors whose residence is uninhabitable or inaccessible.

To be eligible for TSA, individuals and households must:

- Register with FEMA for assistance.
- Pass identity and citizenship verification.
- Have a pre-disaster primary residence located in a geographic area that is designated for TSA.
- Be displaced from their pre-disaster primary residence as a result of the disaster.
- Be unable to obtain lodging through another source.

For those eligible, FEMA will authorize and fund TSA through direct payments to participating hotels/motels. The list of approved hotels is available at DisasterAssistance.gov or call the FEMA Helpline (800) 621-3362 (voice, 711/VRS -Video Relay Service) (TTY: (800) 462-7585).



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Critical Needs Assistance

- ◆ FEMA may provide a one-time \$500 payment per household to survivors who are displaced from their primary dwelling as a result of the disaster, or have immediate critical needs because they are displaced from their primary dwelling.
- ◆ Immediate or critical needs are life-saving and life-sustaining items and may include: water, food, first aid, prescriptions, infant formula, diapers, durable medical equipment, and fuel for transportation.
- ◆ The eligibility period for CNA corresponds to the standard registration period for IHP, which is 60 days from the date of the Presidential disaster declaration.

Individuals and households may be eligible for CNA if all of the following have been met:

- A registration is completed with FEMA;
- The applicant passes identity verification;
- At registration, the applicant asserts that they have critical needs and requests financial assistance for those needs and expenses;
- Their pre-disaster primary residence is located in Florida; and
- The applicant is displaced from their pre-disaster primary residence as a result of the disaster.

Disaster Unemployment

- ◆ Disaster Unemployment helps workers whose primary incomes are lost or interrupted by a federally declared disaster. It differs from regular state unemployment insurance because it provides benefits to people who are self-employed, farmers, loggers and employees who work on commission.
- ◆ Individuals in the 46 counties designated for Individual Assistance in Florida must first apply for regular unemployment insurance by visiting the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity website.

Legal Services

- ◆ Free legal assistance is now available to low-income Florida disaster survivors in the 46

IA-designated counties who need help with home repair contracts and contractors, legal advice on landlord-tenant issues or assistance with life, medical and property insurance claims.

What to Expect After Applying for FEMA Individual Assistance

- ◆ Housing inspectors contracted by FEMA will soon be working in disaster-designated counties, inspecting damage sustained by survivors who have already registered with FEMA.
- ◆ When FEMA-contracted inspectors arrive at a home, they will display official photo identification. If the photo identification is not displayed, it is important to ask to see it. This helps prevent fraud.



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To speed the inspection process, applicants should:

- Ensure their home or mailbox number is clearly visible from the road.
- Keep their appointment or notify the inspector if a postponement is necessary.
- Authorize another adult to act as their agent and be present on their behalf during the inspection if they have evacuated and cannot return for the inspection.
- Be reachable, informing neighbors where they can be contacted if they are not staying in the home.
- Tell the inspector about other property losses or disaster-related needs such as transportation, medical or dental care, tools needed for a trade if not self-employed and educational materials, so inspectors can relay the information to FEMA.
- Take photos of their homes, if possible, which can be used to supplement photos taken by the inspector.
- ◆ Inspectors try a minimum of three times to contact each applicant, calling at different times on different days. If inspectors cannot reach you, they will post a letter at your home with a phone number you should call to reschedule the appointment.
- ◆ The damage inspection generally lasts 20-45 minutes.
- ◆ The inspector does not need to document all damage. As part of the inspection process, homeowners are asked to show proof of ownership, such as a tax bill, a deed, mortgage payment receipt or insurance policy with the property's address.
- ◆ Renters must show proof of occupancy, a lease, rent payment receipt, utility bill or another document confirming the location was their primary residence at the time of the disaster.
- ◆ Both homeowners and renters also must have a valid driver's license or other photo identification.
- ◆ Inspectors document disaster-related damage, but do not determine the applicant's eligibility for FEMA assistance.
- ◆ They check for damage to the structure and building systems, to major appliances and septic systems and wells, and enter information into an electronic device that sends the information to FEMA. This speeds up the process of providing assistance.

Other Agency Support

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)

- ◆ The U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) low-interest disaster loans are the primary source of federal assistance to rebuild disaster-damaged property. SBA offers low-interest disaster loans to homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private nonprofit organizations.



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American Red Cross

- ◆ The American Red Cross Safe and Well website is a free public reunification tool that allows individuals and organizations to register and post messages to indicate that they are safe, or to search for loved ones. Registrations can also be completed by texting SAFE to 78876. Messages exist in both Spanish and English. To speak with someone at the American Red Cross concerning a missing friend or relative, please contact 1-800 RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

Department of Health and Human Services

- ◆ The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Disaster Distress Helpline (1-800-985-5990) remains open 24/7 for free help coping with the stress of the storm.

Other Disaster Assistance Information and Referral Services

- ◆ Floridians seeking information about disaster-related services and unmet needs may call **Florida 211**, a statewide referral service. Call **211** to find resources in your community, such as food, childcare, and crisis counseling.

National Flood Insurance Program

- ◆ National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) flood policyholders may be eligible for reimbursement of actions taken to protect their property. Call your insurance agent to find out more.

Fraud and Misinformation

- ◆ Although many Americans are working hard to help their neighbors now, during chaotic times, some will always try to take advantage of the most vulnerable.
- ◆ Visit <https://www.fema.gov/hurricane-irma-rumor-control> to get the most accurate information from trusted sources.
- ◆ Federal and state workers do not ask for, or accept, money. FEMA staff will never charge applicants for disaster assistance, home inspections, or help filling out applications. Stay alert for false promises to speed up the insurance, disaster assistance, or building permit process.
- ◆ Hurricane survivors are also encouraged to notify local authorities to cases of lawlessness or violence, especially in hurricane shelters. **In an emergency, call 9-1-1.** In Florida, report suspicious/criminal activity to **1-855-352-7233**.

Anyone who suspects fraud should call FEMA's Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721, or the Florida Attorney General's fraud and price gouging hotline at 866-966-7226.



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Debris Removal

- ◆ Individual property owners are responsible for debris removal from their private property unless otherwise requested by the state and approved by FEMA.
- ◆ Your local government will provide information on curbside pickup and disposal. FEMA reimburses local governments for eligible curbside storm-generated debris removal.
- ◆ Separation of debris left at curbside is highly recommended. Examples include: vegetative, electronic goods, hazardous household waste and white goods (refrigerators, washing machines, etc.).

Clean Up Tips

Please keep in mind the following tips to ensure safe and efficient clean-up:

- ◆ Take photos of damage in your home and keep repair receipts.
- ◆ Call your insurance agent and file a claim.
- ◆ Wear protective gear when using mold-cleaning chemicals or cleaning up.
- ◆ Make sure contractors hired to make repairs are licensed and carry general liability insurance, workers' compensation and are bonded.
- ◆ FEMA does not recommend or endorse any contractors.

Assistance to Communities

- ◆ All 67 Florida counties are designated for federal disaster assistance under the FEMA Public Assistance (PA) program. The program covers partial reimbursement for eligible infrastructure repairs and debris clean up.
- ◆ Public Assistance benefits whole communities by reimbursing state and local governments and certain private non-profits at least 75% of eligible costs to restore power and water; repair roads, bridges, schools, and libraries; and clean up parks and recreational facilities.



FEMA

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