

President Declares Major Disaster for Illinois

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WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The head of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) today announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for Illinois to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding during the period of September 13, 2008, and continuing.

FEMA Administrator David Paulison said the assistance was authorized under a major disaster declaration issued for the state by President Bush. The President's action makes federal funding available to affected individuals in Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, LaSalle, and Will counties.

The assistance, to be coordinated by FEMA, can include grants to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs and other serious disaster-related expenses. Low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration also will be available to cover residential and business losses not fully compensated by insurance.

Federal funding also is available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures for all parishes and tribal nations statewide.

Paulison named Elizabeth Turner as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Turner said that damage surveys are continuing in other areas, and more counties and additional forms of assistance may be designated after the assessments are complete.

Residents and business owners who sustained losses in the designated counties can begin applying for assistance tomorrow by registering online at www.fema.gov or by calling 1-800-621-FEMA(3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. The toll-free telephone numbers will operate 24-hours a day, seven days a week, until further notice.

Federal Aid Programs For Illinois Disaster Recovery

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Following is a summary of key federal disaster aid programs that can be made available as needed and warranted under President Bush's major disaster declaration issued for Illinois.

Assistance for Affected Individuals and Families Can Include as Required:

- Rental payments for temporary housing for those whose homes are unlivable. Initial assistance may be provided for up to three months for homeowners and at least one month for renters. Assistance may be extended if requested after the initial period based on a review of individual applicant requirements. (Source: FEMA funded and administered.)
- Grants for home repairs and replacement of essential household items not covered by insurance to make damaged dwellings safe, sanitary and functional. (Source: FEMA funded and administered.)
- Grants to replace personal property and help meet medical, dental, funeral, transportation and other serious disaster-related needs not covered by insurance or other federal, state and charitable aid programs. (Source: FEMA funded at 75 percent of total eligible costs; 25 percent funded by the state.)
- Unemployment payments up to 26 weeks for workers who temporarily lost jobs because of the disaster and who do not qualify for state benefits, such as self-employed individuals. (Source: FEMA funded; state administered.)
- Low-interest loans to cover residential losses not fully compensated by insurance. Loans available up to \$200,000 for primary residence; \$40,000 for personal property, including renter losses. Loans available up to \$2 million for business property losses not fully compensated by insurance. (Source: U.S. Small Business Administration.)
- Loans up to \$2 million for small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives and most private, non-profit organizations of all sizes that have suffered disaster-related cash flow problems and need funds for working capital to recover from the disaster's adverse economic impact. This loan in combination with a property loss loan cannot exceed a total of \$2 million. (Source: U.S. Small Business Administration.)
- Loans up to \$500,000 for farmers, ranchers and aquaculture operators to cover production and property losses, excluding primary residence. (Source: Farm Service Agency, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture.)
- Other relief programs: Crisis counseling for those traumatized by the disaster; income tax assistance for filing casualty losses; advisory assistance for legal, veterans benefits and social security matters.

Assistance for the State and Affected Local Governments Can Include as Required:

- Payment of not more than 75 percent of the approved costs for hazard mitigation projects undertaken by state and local governments to prevent or reduce long-term risk to life and property from natural or technological disasters. (Source: FEMA funded, state administered.)

How to Apply for Assistance:

- Those in the counties designated for assistance to affected residents and business owners can begin the disaster application process by registering online at www.fema.gov or by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. The toll-free telephone numbers are available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (local time) Monday through Sunday until further notice. Applicants registering for aid should be prepared to provide basic information about themselves (name, permanent address, phone number), insurance coverage and any other information to help substantiate losses.
- Application procedures for local governments will be explained at a series of federal/state applicant briefings with locations to be announced in the affected area by recovery officials. Approved public repair projects are paid through the state from funding provided by FEMA and other participating federal agencies.

FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.