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State News Desk: 916-845-8434
FEMA News Desk: 916-837-8270

News Release

Government Benefits Unaffected by FEMA Assistance

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Applying for federal disaster assistance from FEMA will not affect other federal benefits that California survivors may receive.

FEMA disaster grants are not taxable income. Accepting a FEMA grant will not affect eligibility for Social Security (SSI/SSDI), Medicare, Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and other federal welfare and entitlement programs.

Disaster grants help survivors pay for temporary housing, essential home repairs, essential personal property replacement, including your assistive equipment (e.g., wheelchairs, hearing aids, etc.) and other serious disaster-related needs not covered by insurance or other sources.

You can apply for disaster assistance at www.DisasterAssistance.gov, by calling 800.621.3362, or by using the [FEMA mobile app](#). If you use a relay service, such as video relay service (VRS), captioned telephone service or others, give FEMA the number for that service. Lines are open from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. local time, seven days a week.

The deadline for applications is March 16, 2023.

For an American Sign Language video on this topic, go online to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ii7nc94B30c>.

For more information about California's recovery from the storms and floods, visit www.fema.gov/disaster/4683. You may also follow twitter.com/CalOES, facebook.com/CaliforniaOES, [@FEMARegion9/Twitter](https://twitter.com/FEMARegion9) and Facebook.com/FEMA.

Flood survivors who apply for disaster assistance from FEMA may be referred to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) for information on how to apply for a disaster loan. It's important to submit the loan application as soon as possible. If your application is approved, you do not have to accept the loan but failure to return the application may disqualify you from other possible FEMA assistance.

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FEMA's mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters.

All FEMA disaster assistance will be provided without discrimination on the grounds of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment), sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age, disability, limited English proficiency or economic status. If you believe your civil rights are being violated, call the Civil Rights Resource line at 833-285-7448.

Recently, U.S. SBA Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman [announced a policy change](#) granting 12 months of no payments and 0% interest. This pertains to all disaster loans approved in response to disasters declared on or after September 21, 2022, through September 30, 2023. This covers SBA disaster loans currently available for Hurricane Fiona and Hurricane Ian. This

policy change will benefit disaster survivors and help them to decrease the overall cost of recovery by reducing the amount of accrued interest they must repay. Details are available through the SBA Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955. Individuals with verbal or hearing impairments may dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET, Monday to Friday, or email: disastercustomerservice@sba.gov

The U.S. Small Business Administration is the federal government's primary source of funds for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps businesses of all sizes, private, nonprofit organizations, homeowners and renters, fund repairs or rebuilding efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover losses not fully compensated by insurance or other recoveries and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and download applications at <https://disasterloanassistance.sba.gov/>. Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance. For people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 711 to access telecommunications relay services.