

Individual Assistance

When a state, local, tribal, or territorial government (SLTT) determines an incident exceeds their ability to respond or recover, the Governor or Tribal Chief Executive may request a declaration from the President through FEMA. For FEMA to provide supplemental federal assistance, the President must approve an emergency or major disaster declaration.

The Individual Assistance (IA) mission ensures disaster survivors have timely access to a full range of authorized programs and services to help with their recovery through partnered coordination of SLTT governments, other federal agencies, local governments, 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):** The provision of life-sustaining services to survivors with a disaster-caused inability to attain basic needs, MC/EA is composed of seven activities: sheltering; feeding; distribution of emergency supplies; support for individuals with disabilities and individuals with access and functional needs; reunification activities for adults and children; support for household pets and service animals; and mass evacuee support.
- **Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training Program (CCP):** CCP provides supplemental funding through a federal award to eligible state, territorial, and tribal (STT) governments to assist disaster survivors and communities in recovering from the mental health effects of disasters through community-based outreach and educational services. The purpose of CCP is to alleviate disaster mental health effects for survivors.
- **Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA):** DUA provides unemployment benefits and re-employment assistance services to eligible survivors who became unemployed as a direct result of a Presidentially declared major disaster. These services are provided through coordination with the U.S. Department of Labor and administered by the STT government emergency management officials of the affected area(s). DUA is only available to survivors who are not eligible for regular state unemployment insurance.
- **Disaster Legal Services (DLS):** DLS provides legal aid to survivors affected by a Presidentially declared 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 an STT 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 provides financial assistance and direct services to eligible individuals and households affected by a disaster 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 can help survivors jump-start their road to recovery. IHP assistance is not taxable and is not counted as income or a resource when determining eligibility for income-tested benefit programs such as Social Security or disability income. It also does not have to be paid back, unless received in error or fraud.

Applying For Disaster Assistance and Accessing Other Programs

FEMA offers disaster survivors multiple ways to apply for disaster assistance and access other services. Survivors may receive information and services through:

- **Internet or Smartphone Applications:** Disaster survivors may apply for disaster assistance or check their application status online at [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.fema.gov/disaster-assistance). Disaster survivors may also access FEMA via smartphone by downloading the FEMA application from [FEMA.gov](https://www.fema.gov) or their mobile phone's application store.
- **FEMA Helpline:** Disaster survivors may call FEMA's Helpline at 1-800-621-3362 to apply for assistance or check their application status. If video relay service, captioned telephone service, or other communication services are needed, survivors can give FEMA their number for that service.
- **Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs):** Disaster survivors may apply for assistance in-person at DRCs in or near their communities, if available. FEMA staff at DRCs can assist with completing applications or checking a survivor's application status. DRCs are accessible and equipped to accommodate disaster survivors who need disability-related communication aids. FEMA coordinates with the SLTT government to establish DRC locations and they are usually opened quickly after a disaster for a limited period of time.
- **Disaster Survivor Assistance (DSA):** An expeditionary cadre that supports a community-led and local government-coordinated approach through teams of responders that can quickly establish a presence focused on addressing needs of disaster survivors. These FEMA teams prioritize assisting survivors at state, territorial, tribal and locally established fixed locations and venues to more efficiently serve communities affected by disasters.

Because FEMA's programs are only intended to start a survivor on their path to recovery, FEMA encourages a whole community approach to disaster recovery by engaging the full capacity of non-governmental organizations and the private sector, including businesses, faith-based and voluntary organizations, and the general public together with the SLTT government and other federal agency partners.