

FEMA DSA Teams Helping New Jersey Hurricane Ida Survivors

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Trenton, NJ – FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance teams are assisting survivors in New Jersey counties affected by Hurricane Ida. These teams help survivors register for federal assistance, identify potential needs and make connections with local, state, federal and voluntary agencies with resources to assist them.

The DSA teams provide survivors a means to access and apply for disaster assistance.

They are operating at fixed locations such as community centers, libraries, covered parking lots, etc. The teams are following CDC safety guidelines for COVID-19 including social distancing and use of protective equipment. Locations are determined by local officials and near the most heavily impacted areas.

DSA helps survivors in different ways:

- Conduct outreach in the 12 designated counties of Bergen, Essex, Gloucester, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Union and Warren.
- Assist survivors to register for FEMA assistance.
- Check the status of an application already in the system and can make minor changes to applications.
- Make callouts to faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, private sector (businesses) and public libraries that may have the capability to distribute disaster-related information to survivors in the impacted counties.
- Identify organizations providing disaster-related services and/or resources to the general public for immediate and long-term recovery.
- Gather situational awareness about impacts to communities.
- Provide flyers in English, Spanish and nine other languages explaining how to apply for disaster assistance.
- Provide civil rights and disability integration assistance information to ensure equal access.

Information provided by the teams are tailored to the individual survivor's needs and



may include information on making temporary repairs to a disaster-damaged house, pay for another short-term place to live while permanent repairs are made and/or help with serious, disaster-related needs not covered by other programs.

DSA teams never **require** survivors to provide personal information. DSA team members can easily be identified by their federal photo identifications and FEMA clothing. New Jersey residents are reminded to ask for official photo identification before sharing personal information.

FEMA employees do not solicit or accept money from disaster survivors. FEMA staff never charge applicants for disaster assistance, inspections or help with registration.

Survivors do not need to contact a DSA team member to register with FEMA. Residents who sustained damage or losses caused by Hurricane Ida can register with FEMA in the following ways:

- Online at DisasterAssistance.gov.
- Use a cell phone to register through <http://m.FEMA.gov>; click “Apply Online for FEMA Assistance,” and you will be directed to DisasterAssistance.gov.
- If it is not possible to apply online, call **800-621-3362** (TTY: 800-462-7585). The toll-free telephone lines are currently operating 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Multilingual operators are available. If you use a relay service, such as video relay service (VRS), captioned telephone service or others, give FEMA the number for that service.

By registering with FEMA, survivors may qualify for federal grants to pay for essential home repair or replacement or to rent a temporary home. In addition, help may be available to pay for other disaster-related needs, such as medical, dental, transportation and funeral expenses, moving and storage fees, personal property loss and childcare, not covered by insurance.

Registering with FEMA is also the first step in qualifying for help from the U.S. Small Business Administration. Low-interest disaster loans from SBA are available to businesses of all sizes (including landlords), homeowners, renters and private nonprofit organizations to cover losses not fully compensated by insurance. Low-interest disaster loans help fund repairs or rebuilding efforts and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged real estate and personal property.

