



FEMA

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Disaster News

NON-CITIZENS MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR DISASTER RECOVERY AID

PASADENA, Calif. -- People who are not U.S. citizens may be eligible for disaster assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) following the California wildfires that began in October.

Disaster assistance is available to residents and businesses in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernadino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties, which were designated disaster areas by President Bush.

The aid is available to U.S. citizens, non-citizen nationals, and qualified aliens. Their immigration status will not be jeopardized by applying for FEMA assistance.

Qualified aliens include:

- Legal permanent residents (those with green cards);
- Those with refugee or asylum status;
- Those whose deportation has been withheld;
- Those on parole into the U.S. for at least one year for humanitarian purposes;
- Those with conditional entry;
- Cuban-Haitian entrants; and
- Those with petitions for relief based on battery or extreme cruelty by a family member.

Non-citizen parents of a minor child who is a U.S. citizen can apply for assistance on the child's behalf. The guardian only certifies for the child. No information will be gathered on the adult's status.

The application for assistance from the FEMA requires applicants to certify that they are U.S. citizens, non-citizen nationals, or qualified aliens. FEMA conducts random audits of applications to verify U.S. citizenship and qualified alien documentation issued by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. However, assistance can be given as long as someone in the household has qualified. No information will be gathered regarding the status of others in the household.

Assistance for eligible individuals and households includes funds for temporary housing and necessary home repairs, funds for the repair or replacement of personal property and other disaster-related needs, disaster unemployment assistance, low-interest loans for homeowners, renters and businesses from the U.S. Small Business Administration, and other programs.

Undocumented immigrants affected by the wildfires may still be eligible for programs run by state, local or voluntary agencies. They may also be eligible for short-term, non-cash aid from FEMA, such as disaster legal services, crisis counseling, food, water, and shelter.

Applicants with damage from the disaster should register for state and federal assistance at **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)**, or **(TTY) 1-800-462-7585**. The toll-free lines are open 24/7 every day until further notice. They can also register online at www.fema.gov.

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.

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinates overall state-agency response to major disasters in support of local government. OES is also responsible for maintaining the State Emergency Plan and coordinating the California's preparedness, mitigation and recovery efforts.

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