



# FEMA Benefits for Immigrants and Tenants\*

## Do I qualify for government benefits (FEMA) if I am not a US citizen or legal resident?

- **All people**, with any immigration status or no status at all, qualify for emergency and short-term non-monetary assistance provided by FEMA:
  - Food and water
  - This should include Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (D-SNAP), food benefits for those affected by disasters (check with State of NC for application requirements)
  - Notification of emergencies
  - Shelters
  - And other forms of emergency assistance that are not monetary
- FEMA also offers **monetary assistance** to those who need help paying rent or repairing or replacing their home. This is called the Individuals and Households Program. More about the program is found [here](#) in many languages. Citizens, permanent residents (with "green cards"), asylees, refugees, people with a "T" visa, and certain other people with legal status can qualify for benefits from this program.
- Persons who have no legal status or with a temporary status (H-2A, H-2B, tourist visa, or student visa, etc.) are NOT eligible for the FEMA Individuals and Households cash assistance program.
- **However, an undocumented person can request FEMA monetary assistance on behalf of their children who are US citizens or legal residents if they live in their home.**
- Also, any adult member of the household who is a citizen or legal resident may apply for benefits (even if some members of the household are undocumented).
- Undocumented persons seeking assistance for their minor children or other persons in the household should **not share information or sign any document related to their own immigration status.** FEMA will not require information about immigration status from those who are not seeking benefits for themselves.
- Undocumented people who are seeking assistance on behalf of a minor child under the Individuals and Households cash assistance program **will have to provide a Social Security number for the child.**

## Will FEMA share my personal information with ICE/immigration?

- **No. FEMA does not share your information or your family's information with ICE or immigration.** There are laws that prevent FEMA from sharing your information with other agencies. Also, FEMA has said several times (even this year), that it **does not share information** with other agencies, and that applicants' information is confidential.

## Can I qualify for FEMA benefits if I am a tenant (and I do not own my house or mobile home)?

- **Yes, a tenant may qualify for the following FEMA benefits:**
  - Assistance in paying rent for temporary housing for applicants who have been displaced by the disaster;
  - Repair or replacement of necessary personal property (clothing, appliances, furniture, tools, etc.)
  - Educational materials necessary for the school;
  - Costs of a vehicle or transportation;
  - Moving costs and storage costs;
  - Medical and dental costs related to the disaster;
  - Funeral costs related to the disaster

## Can I qualify for FEMA benefits if I am the owner of my house or my mobile home?

- **Yes. The benefits include:**
  - Temporary housing (a place to live for a limited period of time); Money to rent another place to live.
  - Repairs: Money is available to homeowners to repair damage caused by the disaster that is not covered by insurance. The goal is to make the home safe, sanitary and functional.
  - Replacement: Money is available to homeowners to replace their house that was destroyed by the disaster and that is not covered by insurance. The goal is to help homeowners with funds to replace their destroyed home.

\*FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) is the government agency that distributes both immediate relief and monetary relief to people affected by natural disasters. Read more to find out if you qualify to receive assistance from FEMA.

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- Owners also qualify for some of the same benefits mentioned above (medical costs, funeral costs, costs of replacing personal property, etc.).

## Can I qualify for FEMA benefits to fix my house or my mobile home if I am “renting to own” or buying my house in installment payments?

- It may depend on the language of the contract that you have with the seller of your house or mobile home and what responsibilities you have taken on.
- Under FEMA rules, an “owner-occupant” may claim FEMA benefits, and that can include someone who does not hold legal title to the property in his name but is responsible for the payment of taxes or maintenance of the residence.
- According to FEMA, homeowners may show a “tax bill, mortgage payment receipt or insurance policy with the property’s address” to prove ownership.

## Can I accept FEMA benefits and also accept other types of assistance?

- **Insurance:** If you have a renter’s insurance or homeowners’ insurance policy, you must submit a claim to your insurance company after the disaster. FEMA will reduce the benefits you receive in proportion to the money you receive from your insurance company. The insurance company should be your first resource for assistance.
- **Charitable donations:** A person can receive charitable donations *and* FEMA benefits if the charitable donations are general and are not directed to a specific purpose. If charitable donations are generally given for relief and relief after a disaster, they do not affect your receipt of FEMA benefits. If donations are specifically directed to a specific repair or repair project, it is possible that they will affect your FEMA benefits.
- **People affected by the disaster should request any type of assistance that is available to them.** If you apply for FEMA benefits, answer all the questions honestly and with complete information, and report any other insurance or charitable donation benefits you have received.

### RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES AFFECTED BY THE DISASTER:

- Ready NC: Disaster assistance information:
  - English: <https://readync.org>
  - Español: <https://readync.org/SP/>
- Frequently Asked Questions: Disaster Assistance (FEMA):
  - English: <https://www.disasterassistance.gov/help/faqs>
  - Español: <https://www.disasterassistance.gov/es/ayuda/preguntas-comunes>
- Call FEMA: 1-800-621-FEMA for more information.

### RESOURCES ABOUT FEMA AND IMMIGRANTS (LAWS AND POLICIES):

- National Immigration Law Center: Disaster Assistance – Immigrant Eligibility:
  - <https://www.nilc.org/issues/economic-support/disaster-help/> (English only)
- FEMA Citizenship/Immigration requirements:
  - <https://www.fema.gov/faq-details/FEMA-Citizenship-Immigration-requirements-1370032118159> (English only)

### GENERAL LEGAL INFORMATION FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY DISASTER:

- Legal Aid of NC Disaster Relief Information:
  - <http://www.legalaidnc.org/get-help/self-help-library/disaster-relief> (English only)
- NC Justice Flyer about Tenants Rights After a Disaster:
  - English and Spanish: <https://www.ncjustice.org/publications/resources-for-natural-disasters/>

