

FEMA Temporary Rental Assistance

OCTOBER 4, 2017

Q: What is FEMA temporary rental assistance?

FEMA's temporary rental assistance offers grants to eligible Texas homeowners and renters who were displaced from their residence while repairs are made or they transition to other permanent housing. The money may be used to rent a house, an apartment, a manufactured home, another dwelling or a recreational vehicle. These grants do not need to be paid back.

Q: What is the first step that I must take to get this assistance?

If you are a resident in one of the 39 counties designated for Individual Assistance in the federal disaster declaration for Texas, you should register with FEMA. The designated counties are: Aransas, Austin, Bastrop, Bee, Brazoria, Calhoun, Chambers, Colorado, DeWitt, Fayette, Fort Bend, Galveston, Goliad, Gonzales, Hardin, Harris, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Karnes, Kleberg, Lavaca, Lee, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Newton, Nueces, Orange, Polk, Refugio, Sabine, San Jacinto, San Patricio, Tyler, Victoria, Walker, Waller and Wharton.

To register:

- Go online to DisasterAssistance.gov.
- Download the FEMA app for smartphones.
- Call [1-877-462-7287](tel:18774627287) between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. Central Daylight Time. Those who use 711 or Video Relay Services may call [1-877-462-7287](tel:18774627287). Those who use TTY may call [1-877-462-7287](tel:18774627287). Due to high demand, lines may be busy. Please be patient, and try calling in the morning or evening when call volume may be lower.
- Visit a State of Texas/FEMA Disaster Recovery Center location, which may be found at: www.fema.gov/DRC.

Q: How do I receive the rental assistance?

You have two ways to receive FEMA temporary rental assistance: You can choose to have funds electronically transferred to you; or you can receive paper checks. If the U.S. Postal Service cannot deliver mail to your affected residence, then your local post office will hold the paper checks for you to pick up there. It is important for you to keep bank and contact information current so you receive the funds. You can update your information online at DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling.

Q: How long will the first installment of FEMA temporary rental assistance funds cover?

If a FEMA-contracted inspector determines that your residence is uninhabitable due to damage caused by Hurricane Harvey and its aftermath, the first installment of FEMA

temporary rental assistance funds is for two months. If your residence is uninhabitable due to a power outage or is inaccessible, you may be eligible for one month of FEMA temporary rental assistance.

Q: What if I can't find a place to rent?

If you are unable to find a house or an apartment for rent, the agency may consider reimbursing you for a temporary stay in a hotel or other lodging on a case-by-case basis.

Q: What if I need help for a longer period?

At this point you only need to take two steps to receive additional federal funding:
1. Complete a Declaration of Continuing Need for Rental Assistance form. This is a legal document mailed to you about 15 days after you received the first installment of FEMA temporary rental assistance.

2. Return the completed form to FEMA in one of these ways:

- Mail it to: FEMA, P.O. Box 10055, Hyattsville MD 20782-8055;
- Fax it to 800-827-8112; or
- Upload it to your FEMA Disaster Assistance Center account, available online at DisasterAssistance.gov. Click on "Check Status" to log in or to create an account.

If you did not receive the form or have questions, contact FEMA at _____ (voice, 711 or Voice Relay Service) or TTY at _____ or visit a Disaster Recovery Center. To find the nearest center use: www.fema.gov/DRC.

Q: What are the eligibility requirements for additional rental assistance?

You must meet these conditions:

- You were initially awarded FEMA temporary rental assistance, and you used the funds as they were intended by the agency.
- You are unable to return to your pre-Harvey residence because it is unlivable, cannot be accessed or is not usable due to the hurricane and flooding.
- You do not have money for housing without assistance.
- You are not being given temporary rental assistance from any other source

You may receive up to 18 months of continued FEMA temporary rental assistance, plus the security deposit, allowing you time to make progress toward finding long-term solutions.

Q: If I receive temporary rental assistance through my insurance company, may I also receive FEMA temporary rental assistance?

Under federal law, if an insurance company provides temporary rental assistance, the agency cannot duplicate those funds with FEMA temporary rental assistance.

However, if you exhaust temporary rental assistance from your insurance company, the agency may then be able to provide you with FEMA temporary rental assistance.

Q: If I receive FEMA temporary rental assistance, do I need to keep my receipts?

Yes. You must keep receipts so you can prove that the FEMA temporary rental assistance funds were used for their intended purpose.

Q: Do I have to pay taxes on FEMA temporary rental assistance?

These payments are grants. They are not taxable.

Q: If FEMA can't help me with all of my housing needs, where may I go for help?

The agency may refer you to charitable or volunteer groups to address unmet housing needs.

If you have registered with FEMA, you can discuss charitable or volunteer referrals with a FEMA employee by calling _____ or visiting a Disaster Recovery Center. You can find the closest center by visiting www.fema.gov/DRC or by calling _____. Texans who still have critical unmet needs – including temporary housing – are encouraged to call United Ways of Texas, which can provide access to other assistance provided by voluntary agencies, faith-based groups and other organizations. Dial _____.

For more information on Hurricane Harvey and Texas recovery, visit the Hurricane Harvey web page at www.fema.gov/disaster/4332