FEMA Rental Assistance Helps Louisiana Flood Survivors

Thursday, March 24, 2016

What is the first step survivors must take to get FEMA assistance for a temporary place to stay?

Both homeowners and renters must first apply with FEMA to determine eligibility for temporary rental assistance. They can register online at DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling toll-free 800-621-3362 from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. Multilingual operators are available. Survivors who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability and use a TTY may call 800-462-7585. Those who use 711 or Video Relay Service may call 800-621-3362.

What can Louisiana flood survivors do if their residence is uninhabitable?

Some Louisiana flood survivors may receive temporary rental assistance from FEMA to pay for a place to stay. If they are unable to find a house or apartment for rent, FEMA may consider on a case-by-case basis reimbursing survivors for temporary stays at other lodging.

How do eligible applicants receive assistance to pay for a temporary place to stay?

Survivors have two ways to receive financial help to pay for temporary rental assistance. They can choose to have the funds electronically transferred to them or receive paper checks. If the postal service cannot deliver to an affected residence then it will hold the check at the post office for survivors to pick up.

It is important for survivors to keep banking and contact information current so they receive the grant funds. They can update information online at DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling 800-621-3362.

How long does temporary rental assistance last?

The first installment of temporary rental assistance funds is for two months if a FEMA inspector determines the home is uninhabitable due to damage caused by the disaster.

If the home is uninhabitable due to a power outage or is inaccessible, they may be eligible for one month of rental assistance.

What must eligible applicants do if they need temporary rental assistance for more than two months?

Eligible applicants will receive a packet from FEMA about 15 days after receiving their first temporary rental assistance grant. The packet contains instructions on how applicants must demonstrate to FEMA their continued financial need for temporary housing assistance. FEMA will continue to send the packets if an applicant continues to receive temporary housing assistance.

It is important for survivors to keep their contact information current so they receive the packet. They can update their contact information online at DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling 800-621-3362.

If survivors receive housing assistance through their insurance company, can they also receive temporary rental assistance from FEMA?

By federal law FEMA cannot duplicate housing benefits if the insurance company provides assistance. However, if a survivor exhausts housing assistance funds from their insurance company, FEMA may then be able to provide temporary rental assistance.

Do survivors need to keep receipts if they receive temporary rental assistance?

Yes. Survivors must keep receipts so they can prove the FEMA temporary rental assistance grant was used for its intended purpose.

How do eligible applicants locate available rental resources?

FEMA routinely updates an online housing portal that lists available rental resources. They can access the portal online at asd.fema.gov/inter/hportal/home.htm.

Applicants may also call 800-621-3362 or visit a disaster recovery center. They may locate their closest center by visiting asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/home.htm or by calling 800-621-3362.

Survivors can learn more about centers by watching a video at the following link: http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/videos/79681

Applicants can also locate housing on their own that is within the temporary rental assistance grant FEMA provides to them.

What if Louisiana flood survivors have housing needs FEMA cannot meet?

FEMA may refer survivors to charitable or volunteer groups to address unmet housing needs. Survivors who have registered with FEMA can discuss charitable or volunteer referrals by calling 800-621-3362 or visiting a disaster recovery center. They may locate their closest center by visiting asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/home.htm or by calling 800-621-3362.