



Florida Recovery Efforts Five Years After Katrina and Wilma

Five years ago, Hurricane Katrina devastated communities throughout the Gulf Coast, and came on the heels of one of the most destructive disasters in our nation’s history. Florida faced the dual challenge of helping its residents prepare for and recover from Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma, while also supporting the needs of the many Gulf Coast residents displaced by Hurricane Katrina’s landfall. Under the leadership of the Obama Administration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has launched a number of initiatives to improve the pace of ongoing, and future, recovery efforts to help rebuild the communities that are the economic engines of the Gulf Coast. All of these efforts have focused on finding innovative solutions to better support state and local officials, remove bureaucratic red tape, and give residents the assistance they need to move forward.

INITIATIVES

Support for States Sheltering Evacuees

In November, 2009, FEMA announced a final rule that streamlines the reimbursement process for states (host-states) that provide shelter for residents evacuated from presidentially declared disaster areas. Under the new rule, host-states can be directly reimbursed by FEMA for the base salary costs for state and local employees providing assistance as part of the host-state sheltering grant from FEMA, rather than reimbursing through a lengthier, more time-intensive, mutual aid process that requires reimbursement through the impacted state.

Expanding Access to Critical Information

In April 2010, Administrator Fugate announced the launch of FEMA's new mobile Web site, m.fema.gov. The mobile Web site makes it easier to access critical information regarding emergency preparedness and what to do before and after a disaster right on a Smartphone. The mobile Web site was further expanded in July to include a new feature to the m.fema.gov mobile platform, making it easier for disaster survivors to apply for help directly from FEMA and other federal partners through their web enabled mobile phone devices such as BlackBerry®, Apple iPhone®, and Windows Mobile® device. As Smartphones become cheaper and more prevalent, and wireless networks more resilient, these devices are becoming more than just simple communication tools – they can be life lines during emergencies.

Planning for the Needs of all Members of the Community

Administrator Fugate forged a working relationship with the National Commission on Children and Disasters in an effort to focus on planning for children in disasters. As an outcome of his meetings with the Commission, Administrator Fugate created the FEMA “Children’s Working Group” to explore and implement planning and response strategies specific to children throughout the agency and ensure that during a disaster the unique needs of children are not only considered, but fully integrated into how FEMA administers this support to states and the public. Under Administrator Fugate’s direction, FEMA established the Office of Disability Integration and Coordination to increase capacity for meeting the emergency preparedness and disaster response and recovery related access and functional needs of children and adults with disabilities.

For more information on FEMA initiatives, visit www.fema.gov/rebuildinglives.

Katrina* and Wilma Recovery: Florida 2005-2010

- ◆ **589,486 Floridians registered for assistance**
- ◆ **\$342 million distributed for families and individuals**
- ◆ **\$306 million reimbursed to Florida to save lives, protect property and remove debris**
- ◆ **\$1.47 billion obligated to help communities repair and rebuild**
- ◆ **\$104.2 million to mitigate against future damages**

**Hurricane Katrina declared for Public Assistance only*