



Texas Recovery Efforts Five Years After Katrina-Rita

Five years ago, Hurricane Rita devastated communities throughout Texas, and came on the heels of one of the most destructive disasters in our nation's history. Texas faced the dual challenges of helping its residents in prepare for and recover from Rita, while also supporting 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.

Streamlined Process for Accelerating Recovery Projects

On August 6 2009, Secretary Napolitano announced a new arbitration process to expedite resolution of outstanding public assistance projects from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, as an alternative to the previous bureaucratic appeals process. Under this new process, neutral, third-party panels adjudicate disputes – allowing some of the most difficult and complex disputes to get resolved. To date, no projects are pending on the arbitration process in Texas.

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.

Katrina and Rita Recovery: Texas 2005-2010

- ◆ **480,000 Texans registered for assistance**
- ◆ **\$623 million distributed to families and individuals**
- ◆ **\$647.7 million reimbursed to Texas to save lives, protect property and remove debris**
- ◆ **\$266.3 million obligated to help communities repair and rebuild**
- ◆ **\$103 million to mitigate against future damages**

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