

Beware of Fraud, Scams When Seeking Disaster Assistance

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Oklahoma City, OK – State and federal recovery officials urge residents affected by the disaster to watch for and report any suspicious activity or potential fraud.

As government agencies and charitable groups begin providing disaster assistance, scam artists, identity thieves and other criminals may attempt to prey on vulnerable survivors. The most common post-disaster fraud practices include phony housing inspectors, fraudulent building contractors, bogus pleas for disaster donations and fake offers of state or federal aid.

Local, state, tribal and federal government officials advise all residents that no individual with a government disaster assistance agency will call or text asking for financial account information.

Survivors also should keep in mind that federal and state workers never ask for or accept money and always carry identification badges. There is no fee required to apply for or to get disaster assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the U.S. Small Business Administration or the state.

Scam attempts can be made over the phone, by mail or email, text or in person. Unfortunately, there seems to be no limit to the inventiveness of those wanting to commit fraud. Residents are asked to remain alert, ask questions and require photo identification when someone claims to represent a government agency.

Those who question the validity of a contact or suspect fraud are encouraged to call the toll-free FEMA Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721. Complaints also may be made by contacting local law enforcement agencies.

Individual Assistance for homeowners and renters can include grants to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs and other serious disaster-related expenses not met by insurance or other assistance programs. Low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration are available to businesses, private



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nonprofit organizations, homeowners and renters to cover residential and business losses as a result of the disaster.

Affected residents and business owners in the newly designated counties may apply for disaster assistance by calling FEMA's toll-free registration number, 800-621-FEMA (3362) or TTY 800-462-7585. An application may also be completed online by going to www.DisasterAssistance.gov.

To apply for SBA low-interest disaster loans, applicants can visit their nearest disaster recovery center for one-on-one assistance or apply online using SBA's secure website at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>.

In addition, applicants can get more information on SBA disaster assistance by calling SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955, by visiting www.sba.gov/disaster, or by emailing disastercustomerservice@sba.gov. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing may call (800) 877-8339.

Find out more at <https://www.fema.gov/okmit> and <https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4438>. Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/femaregion6 and the FEMA Blog at <http://blog.fema.gov>.

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FEMA's mission is to help before, during and after disasters.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585.

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps businesses of all sizes, private non-profit organizations, homeowners and renters fund repairs or rebuilding efforts and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover losses not fully compensated by insurance or other recoveries and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. For more information, applicants may contact SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center by calling 800-659-2955, emailing disastercustomerservice@sba.gov, or visiting



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SBA's website at [SBA.gov/disaster](https://www.sba.gov/disaster). Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals may call 800-877-8339.



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