

Nonprofits, Including Houses of Worship, May Request FEMA Public Assistance

Release Date: Mar 23, 2022

Kentucky's private nonprofits, including houses of worship, may be eligible for federal assistance to help with recovery from the **Dec. 31-Jan. 2** tornadoes and flooding. FEMA's Public Assistance program may reimburse for eligible costs of emergency work and repairing or replacing facilities damaged or destroyed in the disaster. The level of assistance depends on the damage sustained in the disaster and the type of service nonprofits offer the community.

In the Feb. 27 presidential disaster declaration, the following 13 counties were designated for emergency work and the repair or replacement of disaster-damaged facilities: **Boyd, Breathitt, Carter, Christian, Clay, Floyd, Green, Johnson, Knott, Lawrence, Owsley, Pike and Taylor.**

EMERGENCY WORK – This covers the categories of debris removal and emergency protective measures. Nonprofits may apply to FEMA for emergency work reimbursements.

REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT OF FACILITIES – These Public Assistance categories cover disaster damage to a community's infrastructure. The projects can be as simple as repaving a road or as complex as rebuilding a hospital. Applicants, including nonprofits, are ranked according to the most vital needs for community recovery:

- **Critical Services.** These services have the highest priority under Public Assistance. They include vital activities needed for a community's post-disaster recovery. Private non-profits may provide services in this critical group, for example, if they operate a hospital, a utility providing electricity or water service, a private elementary or secondary school or other institutions of higher education.
- In some instances, a house of worship may be considered a provider of a critical service. For instance, a mixed-use house of worship that also operates



FEMA

Page 1 of 3

an accredited school on the premises may qualify for reimbursement if their damage was a direct result of the disaster.

- **Essential services.** Private nonprofits in this category, including houses of worship, provide non-critical but essential social services. Examples of their activities include senior centers and community centers, food programs, educational-enrichment activities, custodial and daycare services, residential services for the disabled, assisted living and low-income housing, homeless shelters and rehabilitation services, and performing and community arts centers.
- Private nonprofits in the non-critical but essential category must first apply for an SBA low-interest loan. If they don't qualify for a loan or for a sum that falls short of their project costs, nonprofits will be referred to FEMA to help cover eligible work.

HOW NON-CRITICAL NONPROFITS MAY REQUEST FEMA PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

- Houses of worship and other nonprofits must submit a Request for Public Assistance to the Commonwealth of Kentucky within **30 days after Feb. 27**, the date the affected counties were designated in the federal disaster declaration. The deadline to submit Requests for Public Assistance is **Tuesday, March 29**. Applicant briefings are also scheduled through **March 29**.
- Kentucky Emergency Management processes all requests from nonprofit organizations before forwarding them to FEMA. Meanwhile, non-critical organizations are urged to submit their loan applications to the Small Business Administration as soon as possible. FEMA will need to see SBA's final determination, whether it's an approval or denial of a loan, to determine eligibility for FEMA assistance. SBA is able to loan up to \$2 million to private nonprofit organizations for property damage.
- All nonprofits are required to first submit their damage assessments to their insurance provider. FEMA will ask to see their full insurance policy and any documentation on the proceeds they received. FEMA cannot provide financial assistance when any other source has provided assistance for the same disaster-related need or when such assistance is available from another source.



- **Houses of worship** owned or operated by a private nonprofit must have sustained damage from the **Dec. 31-Jan. 2** tornadoes and flooding, and they must provide a service open to the public.
 - They must have proof of good standing with the commonwealth or U.S. Internal Revenue Service by a letter or other document establishing their tax-exempt status and pre-disaster articles of incorporation. They must also demonstrate that they own or have legal responsibility for the work facility.

Nonprofit organizations can contact their local or county emergency management agency to learn more about obtaining FEMA Public Assistance.

For a fact sheet about FEMA Public Assistance for houses of worship, follow this link: [Public-assistance-private-nonprofit-houses-of-worship.pdf](#).

