

FEMA, Federal Partners Continue Ian Response and Urgent Community Recovery

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WASHINGTON -- FEMA has approved more than \$70 million for Florida survivors to jump start recovery efforts, as Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams check on survivors, assist with federal disaster assistance applications and answer questions about types of federal assistance available. Teams are visiting shelters now to help survivors apply for assistance.

FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell will travel with President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. to Florida Wednesday to survey heavily damaged areas and meet with response officials about ongoing efforts to help survivors and hard-hit communities.

Disaster Recovery Centers will begin opening today. Centers are accessible offices staffed by state, federal and volunteer organizations that let everyone access recovery information.

Operation Blue Roof is now available to homeowners in Charlotte and Lee counties. Homeowners can sign up online at blueroof.us or call 1-888-ROOF-BLU (1-888-766-3258) for more information.

Safety Considerations for Residents

- **Beware of fraud and scams.** All FEMA employees carry official identification. Federal and local disaster workers do not solicit or accept money. Call the FEMA helpline at 800-621-3362 right away if an inspector comes to your house, but you haven't applied for assistance. This might be a sign of identity theft. Don't trust those who offer financial help and then ask for money or personal information.



- **Clean mold and flooded items.** Make sure you disinfect anything that's touched floodwater. Any structure that's been flooded may have mold. Scrub mold off hard surfaces with detergent and water and dry completely.
- **Be alert for rumors.** Do your part to stop the spread of rumors by finding and sharing information from trusted sources and discouraging others from sharing information from unverified sources. Find facts about common disaster related rumors at [FEMA.gov](https://www.fema.gov).
- **Only use a generator outdoors and far from open doors and windows.** Generators help during a power outage but can present serious health and safety risks.. Visit [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) to learn how to use a generator safely.

State, Federal Response Actions

- Rescue efforts, with a focus on hospitals, healthcare facilities and barrier island communities and power restoration continue to be a priority. More than 3,600 people and 185 pets have been rescued by state and federal teams. Visit [missing.fl.gov](https://www.missing.fl.gov) if you or someone you know needs assistance or a safety check. Safe and found persons can be reported safe at [safe.fl.gov](https://www.safe.fl.gov).
- More than 2,600 FEMA staff are supporting Ian response efforts. More than 1,300 other federal staff are assisting with the Ian response. More than 1,800 emergency management personnel from 26 states were deployed to Florida through an Emergency Management Assistance Compact.
- The U.S. Coast Guard is coordinating Combat Rubber Raiding Craft and civilian tour boats to evacuate survivors, provide food, water and medivac service on Pine Island. The National Guard and the Coast Guard are landing helicopters on barrier islands to perform search-and-rescue missions. A Fish and Wildlife Service Incident Management Team and heavy equipment task force conducting road clearance, debris removal and transportation of personnel and supplies to Sanibel Island to support first responder activities.
- Florida officials provided 4,000 gallons of diesel to Lee County to power emergency generators to supply water to nearby hospitals. The state is also delivering 1.2 million gallons of water from Lakeland to Fort Myers for hospitals without water.
- Field kitchens in the hardest hit counties are operational. Feeding partners distributed 96,000 meals and 1,000 Meals-Ready-to-Eat yesterday.



- The Department of Agriculture approved a waiver to allow purchase of hot foods with SNAP benefits and will issue food replacement funds to impacted households. The Florida Department of Children and Families is operating Family Resource Support Centers for access to resources and support. Centers are staffed with disaster recovery specialists.

Resources to Jumpstart Recovery

- Florida survivors can apply for federal assistance at www.disasterassistance.gov, by calling 800-621-FEMA (3362) or by using the FEMA App. Survivors using a relay service, such as a video relay service, captioned telephone service or others, give the FEMA operator the number for that service. To reduce your wait time on phone, try calling early in the morning or later at night.
- FEMA National Flood Insurance Program policyholders can start a claim when evacuated. They should ask their agent about advance payments to receive up to \$20,000. If you need help with reaching your flood insurance agent or carrier, call 877-336-2627. Visit Floodsmart.gov to start a flood insurance claim,
- Small Business Administration disaster loans are available to businesses, homeowners, renters and nonprofit organizations in some Florida counties. The SBA opened a Business Recovery Center in Hillsborough County on Monday. Applicants may also apply at sba.gov under declaration #17644. For help, call 800-659-2955 or send an email to DisasterCustomerService@sba.gov.
- Floridians who use Veterans Affairs medical centers and clinics and need urgent care services should call 877-741-3400. Find a list of open VA centers or pharmacy refill locations at VA.Gov.
- Mental health resources are available. Survivors experiencing emotional distress can call or text the [Disaster Distress Helpline](http://DisasterDistressHelpline) at 800-985-5990. The national hotline provides free 24/7, crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster. Deaf and Hard of Hearing callers can use a videophone or [ASL Now](http://ASLNow).
- If you need assistance locating a missing friend or relative call the Red Cross at 800-733-2767 and provide as much detail as you can to assist us in potentially locating your missing loved one(s). You can also complete a form at missing.fl.gov for yourself or with the last known location of your loved one(s).



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- [The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children](#) has free reunification assistance for children and families impacted by disasters. If you or someone you know is missing a child related to a disaster or any other incident, please immediately call 911 and then 800-THE-LOST for assistance.
- If you need assistance with damage from Hurricane Ian, call the Crisis Cleanup Hotline at 800-451-1954. You will be connected to volunteers from local relief organizations, community groups and faith communities.
- When lives are upended by a flood or hurricane, treasured possessions such as family heirlooms, photos and other keepsakes become more cherished. [FEMA.gov](#) has multilingual resources to help salvage hurricane and flood-damaged items.
- FEMA [published an Ian webpage](#) that includes information on how to donate, volunteer, dispel rumors and find assistance. The page is available in multiple languages.
- The Internal Revenue Service announced Hurricane Ian survivors now have until Feb. 15, 2023, to file various individual and business tax returns and make tax payments.

How You Can Help

To make the most of your contributions, follow guidelines for donating and volunteering responsibly.

- **To volunteer as part of the Hurricane Ian recovery, visit Florida's official volunteer portal at [VolunteerFlorida.org](#).** A list of agencies with volunteer opportunities can be found on the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster website at [www.nvoad.org](#).
- **Cash is the best donation.** After a disaster, people always want to help, but it's important to donate responsibly. When people support voluntary organizations with financial contributions, response organizations can purchase what they need. Find national and local charities at [www.nvoad.org](#).

