

Recovery Efforts Continue Six Months After March Tornadoes

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On March 31, severe storms and tornadoes moved across the state of Arkansas, causing devastating damage to central Arkansas and the eastern half of the state. Six months later, the state of Arkansas and FEMA continue with recovery efforts.

Recovery Takes the Whole Community

Disaster response and recovery require the collective efforts of the whole community to ensure that survivors receive the assistance they need. FEMA collaborates with state and local agencies to work towards the common goal of providing a swift recovery for all those affected. This collaborative effort begins immediately and continues through long-term recovery endeavors spanning months and years.

The strong response at the time of the storm is a true testament to the preparedness of the state of Arkansas and its solid partnership with FEMA and other federal partners. Personnel from FEMA, the American Red Cross and other organizations were on the ground the night of the storm to assist impacted residents. On April 2, within 48 hours of the storms, the President signed a Major Disaster Declaration activating federal resources to support the state's response and recovery.

The Response

In the hours after the severe storms, the Arkansas Division of Emergency Management (ADEM), in partnership with the American Red Cross, provided non-congregate sheltering (hotel rooms) to shelter impacted survivors. At the peak of the sheltering mission, more than 1,200 survivors were in 50 hotels throughout the state. Less than six months after the storms passed, all survivors were checked out of non-congregate sheltering and were back in a home or housed in a FEMA temporary housing unit.



As of October 11, 3,591 applicants have been approved for more than \$9.4 million in disaster assistance through FEMA's Individual Assistance (IA) Program. To best assist affected residents in getting assistance, five Disaster Recovery Centers opened in impacted areas from April 11 to June 28. FEMA, state and U.S Small Business Administration (SBA) staff engaged with more than 5,000 residents while they were open.

On April 20, FEMA approved the state's request for Direct Temporary Housing Assistance for Cross County, allowing FEMA to bring in temporary housing units. A total 43 households were approved and accepted temporary units. All households were housed in under six months, making it one of the fastest housing missions completed by FEMA.

FEMA's Public Assistance program provides funding to state and local governments for debris removal, emergency protective measures and the restoration of disaster-damaged, publicly owned facilities. To date, FEMA has obligated more than \$13.4 million to the state for various projects including park restoration and debris removal.

Voluntary Agencies Serve Impacted Areas

Voluntary agencies play a critical role in disaster response and recovery. Following the storms, 66 Points of Distribution operated by local government and non-governmental organizations provided more than 80,000 pounds of relief supplies to more than 50,000 survivors. To date, the state and FEMA have engaged with more than 500 local, state and National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOADs), faith and community-based organizations and non-profits, sharing information on individual assistance programs and technical assistance on volunteer/donations management. More than \$4.1 million have been donated to assist survivors with long-term recovery.

Small Business Administration

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) representatives were on the ground within days of the declaration to begin supporting disaster survivors. SBA operated four Business Recovery Centers and supported all state and FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers. To date, SBA has approved 377 home and business loans for more than \$23.5 million.



Long-Term Recovery

Just two weeks after the declaration was approved, FEMA activated its Interagency Recovery Coordination (IRC) group, ensuring interagency coordination for post-disaster recovery support resources.

By July, the IRC team coordinated with 64 federal, state and local governmental/non-governmental organizations providing more than \$2.8 million in long-term recovery assistance for disaster-impacted areas in Arkansas.

Recovery from the March storms and tornadoes is ongoing, the focus is now on long-term recovery. FEMA and the state will continue to support Arkansas' impacted residents and communities as they work to rebuild their lives and homes.

For the latest information visit fema.gov/disaster/4698. Follow the FEMA Region 6 Twitter account at twitter.com/FEMARegion6 or on Facebook at facebook.com/FEMARegion6/.

