

# FEMA Responds to Severe Winter Weather

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WASHINGTON -- Since President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.'s Feb. 19 major disaster declaration in Texas, more than \$600,000 has now been awarded in grants for survivors. The declaration provides assistance for disaster survivors in 77 counties. This assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of this storm.

If you received damages from the Texas winter storms and have insurance - file a claim. When you apply for FEMA disaster assistance, you will also need to provide your claim information. The Texas Department of Insurance can provide contact information for insurance companies and answer questions about how to file a claim. Call 800-252-3439 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CST, Monday through Friday. Survivors can also view insurance company contact information online.

Survivors who have underinsured or uninsured losses in the 77 counties approved for assistance may apply online at [www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov) or by calling 1-800-621-3362 (TTY: 800-462-7585).

The quickest way to apply for disaster assistance is online at [DisasterAssistance.gov](http://DisasterAssistance.gov). Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program recipients in Texas may apply for replacement benefits for food lost or destroyed by dialing 2-1-1.

Local resources and volunteers may be able to assist with needs not covered by insurance. Visit Texas 211 for a list of resources searchable by zip code or call 2-1-1.

Cash donations to the non-profit of your choice is the best way to help. To find a list of trusted organizations that can put your generous contributions to the best



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possible use, visit [National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster](#).

## **Winter Storm Impact on COVID-19 Vaccination Efforts**

Lingering power outages continue in areas impacted by the winter storm. More than 3,000 vaccine centers are located in areas that experienced power outages. FEMA continues working with our state partners to ensure they have everything necessary to safely reopen any closed facility.

## **FEMA Response Actions**

FEMA has been on the ground in Texas now for more than a week, moving water, fuel, blankets, commodities and emptying warehouses and purchasing new supplies to help winter storm survivors. The best and fastest way for individuals with damaged property to start recovery is by contacting their insurance company and taking photos of any damage. If individuals are not insured or are underinsured, they should then seek individual assistance by visiting [www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov).

## **FEMA Assistance to Texas**

FEMA has provided personnel, equipment and resources to the state to alleviate impacts from these storms. As of Feb. 21, FEMA provided 60 generators, 10,000 gallons of winterized diesel and 10,000 gallons of gasoline for the last seven days to the state of Texas to support critical infrastructure. FEMA is coordinating flights of water to multiple locations in Texas. The agency has provided over 4 million liters of water, more than 126,900 blankets and more than 1 million meals.

A FEMA staging management team and an incident support base team are in Seguin, Texas to support the state's winter storm response. Additionally, one Incident Management Assistance Team is in Austin and one is in Houston to support response and recovery efforts.

FEMA activated the National EMS contract to support the state with 50



ambulances.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture approved [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP) recipients to apply for replacement benefits for food lost or destroyed due to the severe winter weather by dialing 2-1-1. SNAP recipients need to apply for replacement food benefits for regular SNAP allotments and SNAP emergency allotments that were provided in response to COVID-19.

To assist people in the impacted area in coping with the stress of the winter storms, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration activated the [Disaster Distress Helpline](#). This toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support line provides immediate crisis counseling and support. Residents in affected areas may call or text 800-985-5990 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

## **Stay Safe in Winter Weather**

While temperatures are forecast to rise over the coming days, residents in impacted areas should remain vigilant to continued risks. Listen to state and local officials about warming centers and road conditions in your area.

If you do not have power, avoid carbon monoxide poisoning and fires. Use a generator safely. Never use a generator inside a home, basement, shed or garage, even if doors and windows are open. Keep generators far away from windows, doors and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors. Grills, camp stoves or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal burning devices should never be used inside a home, garage, basement, crawlspace or any partially enclosed area. These should only be used outdoors and at least 20 feet away from windows. Never use a gas stovetop or oven to heat your home and do not run a car in a closed garage.



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## Find Immediate Help

Check on neighbors who may need assistance such as infants, children, older adults and people with disabilities. If you have immediate needs including food and shelter, state resources are available: To find [2-1-1](#) services available in your area or to search for resources, visit [211.org](#) or dial 2-1-1.

Residents in Texas can [find the closest warming shelter online](#).

Oklahoma residents can visit the [Department of Emergency Management](#) site for updated locations.

Water system outages and boil water advisories remain an ongoing issue across the region. For more information on water safety and treatment, visit [Ready.gov/water](#).

## Donate Blood

The severe cold, snow and ice canceled blood drives across the nation. As weather improves, it's vital that eligible individuals give blood to ensure patients have continued access to the treatments they need. Appointments can be made by contacting: American Association of Blood Banks: [www.aabb.org](#); 301-907-6977, America's Blood Centers: [americasblood.org](#); 202-393-5725 or American Red Cross: [www.redcrossblood.org](#); 800-RED-CROSS (800-733-2767.)

## Avoid Scams

Do not trust anyone who offers financial help and then asks for money or personal information. The Department of Homeland Security, FEMA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention staff never charge for disaster assistance.



The best information on legitimate sources of help in your area will come from local officials. Do not disclose information to any unsolicited telephone calls and e-mails.

Beware of visits, calls or emails from people claiming to be from FEMA asking for your Social Security number, bank account or other sensitive information. Giving out this type of information can lead to identity theft.

The Texas Department of Insurance is warning people to be aware of potential [contracting scams](#) as they begin making repairs. They are operating a help line to prevent contractor scams: 800-252-3439.

## Background

Last week, President Biden approved emergency declarations for [Louisiana](#), [Oklahoma](#) and [Texas](#). These declarations authorize FEMA to provide emergency protective measures for mass care and sheltering and direct federal assistance.

