

Tips for Appealing a Decision from FEMA

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If you applied to FEMA for disaster assistance after Hurricane Ida swept through Mississippi, you may have already received a letter of determination -- and maybe you do not agree with the finding. You have the right to appeal the decision.

Often, these letters are sent when your application is missing some information. Maybe you didn't show proof of who you are, or proof you own or rent your home, or proof you lived in your home for a major part of the year before the disaster.

Here are some tips for writing a letter to appeal a FEMA decision.

An important part of the process is knowing the deadline to plead your case: 60 days from the date of the determination letter.

FEMA might have said the application or assistance to you was ineligible, or that FEMA is holding off on deciding about your application. Often the reason is as simple as a lack of supporting documents or information. Read FEMA's letter from beginning to end to help you understand what the agency is asking you to do.

Your signed and dated appeal letter itself is not enough to get FEMA to reconsider its decision. You need evidence to support what you are claiming. You must provide the documents or information FEMA requests. Your appeal needs to be in writing.

Here's what to include with your letter:

- A copy of the FEMA letter saying you're ineligible for assistance, or that the agency didn't reach a decision, or the amount awarded that you feel is insufficient.
- Correspondence from your insurance company that shows you received just a fraction of what you need for repairs, not enough to help you temporarily move



into another place, or not enough to replace certain belongings. Keep in mind that FEMA cannot give you an award for something your insurance company has already paid.

- A copy of a utility bill, driver's license, lease or rental agreement, bank statement, local school document, motor-vehicle registration, or employer's letter. All can be used to prove the damaged home or rental was your primary residence, meaning you lived there during a major part of the year.
- A proof of homeownership, like mortgage or insurance documents, tax receipts, deed, receipts for major repairs within the last few years, or a court document. If your papers were lost or destroyed, click on www.usa.gov/replace-vital-documents for information on how to replace them.

Sign and date your appeal letter. Don't forget to include your nine-digit FEMA application number on every page along with your disaster number (DR-4626-MS) . Mail the package to:

- FEMA National Processing Service Center, P.O. Box 10055, Hyattsville, MD 20782-8055
- Or fax it to 800-827-8112, Attention: FEMA

If you have set up a FEMA online account at www.DisasterAssistance.gov, you can upload the documents there.

You may receive a call or letter from FEMA asking for more information. Or FEMA may schedule another inspection of your home. In any case, you can expect a decision letter within 90 days after FEMA receives your appeal.

For the latest information on Mississippi's recovery efforts, visit www.fema.gov/disaster/4626. Follow FEMA on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/FEMARegion4> and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/fema.

