

Citizenship and Eligibility for FEMA Assistance

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FEMA is committed to helping Cook County homeowners and renters recover from the Sept. 17-18, 2023, severe storms and floods, including U.S. citizens, non-citizen nationals and qualified aliens.

Who is eligible for assistance?

Usually, you or a member of your household must be a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national or qualified alien to apply for assistance.

However, if you do not meet the status of either U.S. citizen, non-citizen national or qualified alien, your household may still apply for and be considered for assistance if:

- Another adult member of your household meets the eligibility criteria and certifies their citizenship status during the application process or signs the Declaration and Release form, or
- The parent or guardian of a minor child who is a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national or a qualified alien applies for assistance on behalf of the child, if they live in the same household. The parent or legal guardian must register as the co-applicant, and the minor child must be under age 18 at the time the disaster occurred.

Who falls under qualified alien status?

“Qualified alien” includes:

- A legal permanent resident (“green card” holder)
- An asylee, refugee or an alien whose deportation is being withheld
- An alien paroled into the U.S. for at least one year
- An alien granted conditional entry (per law in effect prior to April 1, 1980)
- A Cuban or Haitian entrant



- Aliens in the U.S. who have been abused, subject to battery or extreme cruelty by a spouse or other family/ household member or have been a victim of a severe form of human trafficking.

Non-Citizen nationals

A non-citizen national is a person born in an outlying possession of the U.S. (e.g., American Samoa) on or after the date the U.S. acquired the possession, or a person whose parents are U.S. non-citizen nationals. All U.S. citizens are U.S. nationals; however, not every U.S. national is a U.S. citizen.

Qualified minor children

The parent or guardian of a minor child living in the same household may apply for assistance on behalf of the minor child who is a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified alien. The minor child must be under age 18 as of the first day of the incident period on Sept. 17, 2023.

Resources

See Citizenship and Immigration Status Requirements for Federal Public Benefits for more information in multiple languages at

<https://www.fema.gov/assistance/individual/program/citizenship-immigration-status>

If you're unsure of your immigration status, talk to an immigration expert to learn if your status falls within the immigration status requirements for FEMA disaster assistance. Visit nvoad.org/ to learn about other voluntary organizations.

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Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency, or economic status.

Reasonable accommodations, including translation and American Sign Language interpreters will be available to ensure effective communication with applicants with limited English proficiency, disabilities, and access and functional needs. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-3362. If you use video relay service, captioned telephone service or others, give FEMA your number for that service.

