

Arbitration Available for Disputed Compensation Offers

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SANTA FE, NM – Claimants impacted by the Hermit’s Peak/Calf Canyon Fire and subsequent flooding may request arbitration if they remain dissatisfied with the Administrative Appeal decision on their claim.

Arbitration is a legal process where two parties agree to have a neutral third party hear their dispute and make a final, binding decision. By choosing arbitration, claimants resolve their dispute without going to court.

FEMA has awarded a service contract to JAMS, a firm based in Irvine, California, that will provide a pool of arbitrators to review and issue decisions on disputed compensation offers that claimants received but have not accepted.

FEMA will maintain a roster of arbitrators and will have the flexibility to increase the roster, depending on the volume of cases. The arbitrators will be randomly assigned to cases and issue binding decisions.

“This contract allows us to mobilize the extensive experience and expertise of JAMS as a means for resolving differences as we seek to compensate claimants,” said Michael Plostock, Director of the Claims Office. “JAMS will provide highly qualified arbitrators, who are independent from the Claims Office, and I’m confident they will issue fair and objective decisions.”

Arbitration can only be requested for issues that have been raised and decided upon through the Claims Office Administrative Appeal process.

Claimants must submit a request for arbitration in writing and can be delivered in person to a Claims Office or sent by email to: fema-hermits-peak-arbitration@fema.dhs.gov or by mail to: **Arbitration Docket FEMA Hermit’s Peak/Calf Canyon P.O. Box 1329, Santa Fe, NM 87504.**



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All arbitrators are active members of the bar and in good standing within a state, the District of Columbia or a U.S. territory. The pool of arbitrators won't be limited to those licensed in New Mexico so as not to restrict the diversity and depth of expertise needed for a variety of cases.

Arbitrators' identities will not be disclosed to preserve impartiality and shield them from external pressures.

Aside from being bar members, arbitrators have:

- At least 10 years legal experience in areas such as complex civil litigation, insurance claims or relevant fields.
- At least five years of experience in arbitration or as a judge to ensure competence in resolving disputes.

Anyone impacted by the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire and subsequent flooding is encouraged to start a claim with the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Claims Office if they haven't already. Per the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire Assistance Act, the deadline to submit a Notice of Loss **to start a claim is December 20, 2024.**

The Claims Office continues to observe an increase in claim submissions, temporarily leading to longer wait times and often preventing same-day issuance of Letters of Determination (LODs) for claims. We are actively working to reduce wait times and shorten processing times of claims.

Claims Office compensation is not taxable. Receiving payment from the Claims Office will not impact eligibility for government assistance programs. Contact a tax professional for specific tax-related questions. Questions and concerns can also be addressed by calling your claim Navigator or the Claims Office **Helpline at 505-995-7133.**

The Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Claims Office is committed to meeting the needs of people impacted by the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire and subsequent flooding by providing full compensation available under the law as expeditiously as possible. At the time of publication, the FEMA Claims Office has paid more than \$1.2 billion to claimants.

For information and updates regarding the Claims Office, please visit the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Claims Office website at fema.gov/hermits-peak. For



information in Spanish, visit fema.gov/es/hermits-peak. You can also follow our Facebook page and turn notifications on to stay up to date about the claims process, upcoming deadlines and other program announcements at facebook.com/HermitsPeakCalfCanyonClaimsOffice.



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