

# Understanding a FEMA Decision Letter

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A letter from FEMA saying you are *not approved* for disaster assistance after the March and April severe storms, tornadoes and flooding may not be a denial or final decision. Sometimes, FEMA just needs more information or supporting documentation from you.

Here are some common reasons applicants receive a letter saying they are “not approved” for assistance at this time, and some suggestions for how they can respond to FEMA.

## **You haven’t sent FEMA the requested documents or information**

Read your FEMA letter thoroughly and send FEMA the requested information. If that information is not available, let FEMA know why.

## **Your damage or loss is covered by insurance or other sources**

By law, FEMA cannot provide financial assistance if you received funding for the same disaster-caused need from other sources. If you received funding from insurance, local or state programs, or financial assistance from voluntary agencies, FEMA cannot cover those same expenses.

If you received funds from other sources, send FEMA documentation showing how those funds were used. The documentation must prove the funds you received were not enough to cover your disaster-related expenses, or that the funds were intended to be used for another purpose.

## **More than one application was filed for your household**

Typically, FEMA allows only one application per household or address.

Ensure the one application for your household includes details of losses from all individuals in the home so that all possible assistance can be considered. If you



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Page 1 of 5

did not file more than one application, call the **FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362 and let FEMA know**. There may be a fraudulent application filed for your address. Helpline operators are available from **6 a.m. and 10 p.m. CT every day**.

### **FEMA couldn't verify that you are the homeowner**

FEMA asks for proof of ownership from disaster survivors who apply for financial assistance to help with repairs to their damaged homes. FEMA verifies ownership using public and government records or by reviewing documents you submit. FEMA may also verify ownership at the time of an inspection of the damaged property.

Contact FEMA to submit documents that prove you own your home. Documents you can use to verify ownership include:

- deed or title
- mortgage document
- homeowner's insurance statements
- property tax receipt or tax bill
- manufactured home certificate or title
- home purchase contracts (e.g., bill of sale)
- last will and testament (and death certificate) naming you the heir to the property.

### **FEMA was unable to verify your identity or occupancy**

By verifying your identity, FEMA prevents fraud and ensures you receive eligible disaster assistance. FEMA verifies your identity and occupancy using public and government records or by reviewing documents you submit. FEMA may also verify occupancy at the time of inspection of the damaged property.

- Contact FEMA to submit documents that prove your identity and occupancy.

### **The damaged home was not your primary residence**

FEMA provides disaster assistance to eligible applicants for a primary residence—where you live for more than six months of the year. FEMA will not



consider more than one primary residence for survivors and their spouse.

Contact FEMA to submit documents that verify your residency.

### **Insufficient damage to be eligible for FEMA assistance**

You may have insufficient damage if your home is safe to occupy and the damage doesn't affect whether you can live in the home. Damage to non-essential areas, landscaping or spoiled food is not eligible for FEMA assistance.

If you applied for federal disaster assistance but told FEMA you have no damage caused by the disaster, FEMA will find you ineligible for assistance.

FEMA provides grants only for repairs to make a home safe, accessible and functional. FEMA does not provide assistance for non-essential household items and personal property.

If your housing needs have changed, contact FEMA quickly to update your housing and explain why you need assistance.

### **A FEMA inspector was unable to reach you at the contact information you provided**

It is important to return FEMA phone calls and requests for information in a timely manner. If FEMA cannot reach you, or you do not provide the requested information, FEMA may find you ineligible for assistance. You, or a representative you identify, must be present at any appointment with FEMA officials or home inspectors. Please make sure to answer calls from FEMA. Note that FEMA calls may come from an unfamiliar number.

If you still need a home inspection, call the **FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362** to request one. Home inspectors do more than look at your home's damage; they can verify ownership, your identity and may find additional items that are potentially eligible for assistance.

### **Additional Information**



## If you disagree with a FEMA decision, you have the right to appeal

You can appeal any FEMA decision or award amount by sending documents that show you qualify and need more help. You may send FEMA estimates for repairs, receipts, bills, etc. Each decision letter you receive from FEMA explains types of documents that may help you appeal the decision or award amount for that type of assistance.

Supporting documents may include:

- receipts
- bills
- repair estimates
- property titles or deeds, or
- any other information that may support the reasons for the appeal.

To send appeals or supporting documents to FEMA:

- **Upload** to your disaster assistance account at [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://DisasterAssistance.gov)
- **Mail:** FEMA, P.O. Box 10055, Hyattsville, MD 20782-8055
- **Fax:** 800-827-8112
- Visit one of the many locations providing in-person survivor assistance across the impacted region.

## To apply for FEMA assistance

- Visit [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://DisasterAssistance.gov)
- Download the [FEMA App](#)
- Call the FEMA Helpline at **800-621-3362**. Lines are open from **6 a.m. and 10 p.m. CT every day**. Operators speak most languages; if you use a relay service, captioned telephone or other service, you can give FEMA your number for that service.
- Visit one of the many locations providing in-person survivor assistance across the impacted region. To find locations and hours, visit [fema.gov/disaster/4865](https://fema.gov/disaster/4865) or [fema.gov/disasters/4873](https://fema.gov/disasters/4873), scroll to the bottom of the page and click the link under **"In-person Survivor Assistance."**



To view an accessible video on how to apply, visit [Three Ways to Apply for FEMA Disaster Assistance - YouTube](#).

For the latest information about Arkansas' recovery, visit [fema.gov/disaster/4865](https://fema.gov/disaster/4865) or [fema.gov/disaster/4873](https://fema.gov/disaster/4873). Follow FEMA Region 6 on social media at [x.com/FEMARegion6](https://x.com/FEMARegion6) and at [facebook.com/FEMARegion6/](https://facebook.com/FEMARegion6/)



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