

Reasonable Accommodations for Disaster Survivors

Introduction

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is committed to ensuring equal access to federal disaster assistance programs, information, services, and facilities, regardless of disability. FEMA provides equal access in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits federal agencies, as well as recipients of federal funding, from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities.

Who is a person with a disability?

A person with a disability is an individual who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.

What is a reasonable accommodation?

A reasonable accommodation is a modification (change, exception, or adjustment) to a rule, policy, practice, service, or procedure that is necessary to allow individuals with disabilities equal access and opportunity to FEMA and FEMA-funded programs, information, services, and facilities.

What is available to disaster survivors who identify as having a disability-related or language need?

Disaster survivors may apply for FEMA disaster assistance by calling FEMA's Helpline at 800-621-3362, visiting [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.fema.gov/disaster-assistance), using the FEMA mobile app, or visiting a local Disaster Recovery Center.

When applying for and receiving disaster assistance, the applicant may report a disability or language need that requires an accommodation in order to interact with FEMA staff and/or access FEMA programs. A reasonable accommodation should generally be available from when the request is made through the completion of the recovery process. FEMA provides the following services in order to meet the needs of all disaster survivors:

- American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter and/or Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)
- Real time captioning services, remote or in-person
- Assistive listening and/or reading devices
- Documentation in Braille and/or large print
- Physical accessibility components (such as wheelchair, restrooms, paths of travel) for FEMA facilities, to include Disaster Recovery Centers.
- Translation services in 250 languages to assist survivors with limited English proficiency.

If a needed accommodation is not already available within FEMA's assistive services, FEMA coordinates these requests with other program areas to resolve the accommodation need.

What can I do if FEMA denied my request?

FEMA may deny a request for a reasonable accommodation or modification if the request was not made by or on behalf of a person with a disability, if there is no disability-related need for the accommodation or modification, or the accommodation would fundamentally alter the nature of a program or result in an undue burden on FEMA.

When a person with a disability believes that they have been subjected to a discriminatory practice regarding equal access, including a wrongful denial of a request for reasonable accommodation, they may [file a complaint](#) with FEMA Office of Equal Rights (OER), External Civil Rights Division (ECRD).



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