

Determined Ineligible for FEMA Disaster Assistance? You can Appeal the Decision

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Harrisburg, PA. – You've been waiting for a letter from FEMA's Individuals and Households Program (IHP) telling you how much your disaster assistance will be, and it says you are ineligible. What next?

You have the right to appeal the decision within 60 days of the date of the determination letter. It may only be a minor glitch that needs to be fixed, maybe a signature is missing, or a document needs to be supplied. Read the determination letter carefully. The letter will give you the reason for the decision and recommend actions that may change the decision.

Appeal a FEMA Decision

The appeal must be filed in the form of a letter, signed by the applicant, within 60 days of the date on FEMA's decision letter. You need to clearly state why you disagree with the decision and supply the documents which support your explanation. Include any requested information with your letter. Be sure to include the following:

- Applicant's full name, current address, and phone number
- Address of the applicant's pre-disaster primary residence (damaged property)
- Applicant's registration number (on every page)
- FEMA disaster declaration number –4618-DR-PA (on every page)
- Applicant's signature and the date
- Reason for appeal (Ownership, Occupancy, home repair amount)
- Supporting documentation

If the person writing the appeal letter is not the applicant or a member of the applicant's household, a statement signed by the applicant must be included granting the writer authorization to act on your behalf.



Your appeal letter is not enough to get FEMA to reconsider its decision. You need evidence in your appeal to support what you are claiming. When you submit your appeal, it is important to include the documents or information FEMA requests. Here's what to include with your letter:

- Insurance letters: Documents from your insurance company that show your policy coverage and/or settlement is not enough to make essential home repairs, provide a place to stay, or replace certain contents. FEMA is unable to duplicate benefits. However, those who may be underinsured may still receive help after their insurance claims have been settled.
- Proof of occupancy: The following documents may provide proof of occupancy: Utility bill, driver's license, lease or bank statement, local school documents (public or private), motor vehicle registrations, court documents and additional forms of documentation, including letters from employers, federal or state benefit providers and social service organizations (such as community assistance programs and non-profits.). Other such proof of occupancy could include: A signed statement from a commercial or mobile home park owner and/or self-certification for mobile homes and travel trailers. Any of the above can be used to prove the damaged property was your primary residence. *All bills and/or statements must be dated within 3 months of the disaster.*
- Proof of ownership: Mortgage or insurance documents, tax receipts or a deed, receipts for major repairs or improvements, or a mobile home park letter or a court document. FEMA will accept a public official's letter, and allow survivors with heirship properties, mobile homes, or travel trailers, who do not have the traditional documentation of ownership verification, to self-certify ownership. If your documents were lost or destroyed, click on <https://www.usa.gov/replace-vital-documents> for information on how to replace them.

You have 60 days from the date on your FEMA determination letter for FEMA to receive your appeal of the first decision. Sign and date your appeal, include the supporting documents and remember to include your nine-digit FEMA application number and disaster number (DR-4618-PA) on every page.

- There are three ways to submit your appeal: mail, fax, or upload to Disaster Assistance.gov
- Mail: FEMA National Processing Service Center, P.O. Box 10055, Hyattsville, MD 20782-8055



- Fax: 800-827-8112, Attention: FEMA (Please ensure all faxes include the cover sheet provided with your FEMA decision letter).
- Upload documents to your DisasterAssistance.gov account.

To set up a FEMA online account or to upload documents online, go to www.disasterassistance.gov, click on “Check Status” and follow the directions

Your appeal may also be submitted at a Disaster Recovery Center or Document Drop-off Center where staff are also available to assist you with ensuring all necessary documents are included. Individuals can find their nearest recovery or document drop-off center by visiting <https://egateway.fema.gov/ESF6/DRCLocator>

What's Next?

You've written your appeal and sent it to FEMA within 60 days after you received their determination letter. You may receive a call or letter from FEMA asking for more information, or FEMA may schedule another inspection of your primary home. Whichever the case, once you've sent FEMA an appeal, you can expect a decision letter within 90 days after FEMA receives it.

For more information about FEMA's support to Pennsylvania's recovery, visit www.fema.gov/disaster/4618

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FEMA's mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters. FEMA Region 3's jurisdiction includes Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia.

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