

Private Nonprofit Arkansas Houses of Worship May Be Eligible for FEMA Help to Cover Tornado Damage

Release Date: ?? 24, 2023

LITTLE ROCK, Ark.— Qualifying private nonprofit houses of worship in Arkansas may be eligible for FEMA grants to cover expenses related to the March 31 severe storms and tornadoes.

Grants through FEMA's Public Assistance program may cover costs to repair or replace facilities damaged during the storms.

FEMA defines religious facilities as a church, synagogue, mosque, temple or other house of worship without regard to the religious character of the facility. No religious facility or house of worship may be excluded from this definition because leadership or membership in the organization is limited to persons who share a religious faith or practice.

Help with repairs and replacement costs may be available to houses of worship in Cross, Lonoke and Pulaski counties.

To be an eligible applicant, a house of worship must:

- Be owned or operated by a private nonprofit organization.
- The facility must be open to the public.
- Have been damaged by the March 31 severe storms and tornadoes.
- Have either not received funding or received insufficient funding after applying for a U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster loan to repair or replace a facility.
- The application must include state and/or U.S. Internal Revenue Service documentation of tax-exempt status, pre-disaster charter and other documentation.



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SBA's can provide as much as \$2 million in loans for damaged real estate and the replacement of property. The interest rate is 2.375% with terms up to 30 years. The deadline to apply for property damage is June 1, 2023. The deadline to apply for economic injury is Jan. 2, 2024.

Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and download applications at <https://disasterloanassistance.sba.gov/>. Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance. For people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services. Completed applications should be mailed to the U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

All applicants – even if they must wait for an SBA loan decision -- are encouraged to make a Request for Public Assistance (RPA) as soon as possible by contacting their local emergency management office. Some activities regarding Emergency Work that was performed in preparation or response to the storm may be eligible without or while pending an SBA decision. The deadline to file an RPA is May 2, 2023.

Other Resources

Houses of worship administrators can contact their county emergency management office for more information on how to submit a FEMA request for Public Assistance.

- [Public Assistance Policies](#) - Official guidance, policies, news advisories and related publications that govern the program include:
- [Public Assistance Program & Policy Guide \(PAPPG\) FEMA's Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide](#) (version 4 applicable to emergencies and major disasters declared on or after June 1, 2020.)
- [Public Assistance Program Delivery Guide \(fema.gov\)](#) (draft document published September 2022.)
- Video: <https://youtu.be/JgHWcA5LnOc>.



- Web page: [Assistance for Governments and Private Non-Profits After a Disaster | FEMA.gov](#)
- Procurement Guide: [Purchasing under a FEMA Award: Resources for Private Nonprofits and Religious Organizations](#)
- Downloadable FEMA Fact Sheet: [Public Assistance: Private Nonprofit Eligibility Factsheet \(fema.gov\)](#)

Downloadable FEMA Fact Sheet: [Mitigate Disaster Damage with FEMA Public Assistance](#)



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