

Citizenship and Immigration Status Requirements for FEMA Disaster Assistance

To be eligible for FEMA's Individuals and Households Program (IHP) assistance, disaster survivors must be U.S. citizens, non-citizen nationals or qualified aliens.

Qualified aliens are defined as:

- Legal permanent residents (“Green Card” holders);
- Asylees, refugees, or alien whose deportation is being withheld;
- Certain aliens paroled into the U.S. for at least one year;
- Certain aliens granted conditional entry (per law in effect prior to April 1, 1980);
- Certain Cuban/Haitian entrants;
- Certain battered aliens or their spouses or children;
- Certain victims of abuse and extreme cruelty; and
- Certain victims of a severe form of human trafficking, including persons with “T” and “U” visas.

If an applicant does not meet the required citizenship or immigration status criteria, the household still may apply for and be considered for certain forms of IHP assistance if at least one household member (including minor children) is a citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified alien at registration intake, as long as they live in the same household. An IHP application based on a minor child’s eligibility must list the parent or guardian as the co-applicant and be supported by the child’s birth certificate and a copy of the child’s social security card or documentation from the Social Security Administration or other federal entity containing the full or last four digits of the child’s social security number. The eligible minor child must be under age 18 as of the first day of the incident period or disaster declaration day, whichever comes first.

Assistance for survivors who meet the eligibility criteria may include, but are not limited to, assistance for temporary housing, home repair, personal property, disaster unemployment assistance and low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration.



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Other Individual Assistance programs such as Crisis Counseling Assistance, Disaster Legal Services, Disaster Case Management and Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) are available to individuals and families regardless of citizenship status. Short-term, non-cash assistance—such as search and rescue, medical care, congregate shelter, food, water and hazard clearance—is available. Additionally, voluntary agencies provide help regardless of citizenship/immigration status.

Survivors who do not qualify for IHP may still call the FEMA Helpline for referrals to voluntary agencies. All FEMA disaster assistance will be provided without discrimination on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, nationality, age, disability, limited English proficiency and economic status. If a survivor believes their civil rights are being violated, they may call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362 or 800-462-7585 (TTY). Press 2 for Spanish.

Applicants should consult an immigration expert concerning whether or not their immigration status falls within the Qualified Alien category.