



November 14, 2016
DR-4291-VA NR-10
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News Release

FEMA Urges You to Spend Disaster Funds Wisely

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. – Nearly \$4 million in federal assistance has been approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help Virginians recover from the effects of Hurricane Matthew. Assistance is tax-free and grants do not have to be repaid, **FEMA urges you to use the funds quickly, wisely and only for disaster-related expenses.**

FEMA will send you a letter listing approved uses if awarded a grant including:

- home repairs (e.g., structure, water, septic and sewage systems)
- rental assistance for a different place to live temporarily
- repair or replacement of a flooded essential vehicle
- medical care for an injury caused by the disaster
- repair of occupational specialized tools
- necessary educational materials (e.g., computers, school books, supplies)
- moving and storage expenses related to the disaster
- other disaster-related expenses

You may spend your FEMA grant in any way that helps you achieve the goal of permanent, safe, sanitary and functional housing. Remember to keep your receipts for verification of how you spent the disaster funds.

- Rental assistance grants provide for temporary housing when a disaster leaves your home uninhabitable or inaccessible.
- As a homeowner or renter, you can choose to rent an apartment, house, mobile home or some other temporary rental unit.
- If you intend to seek continued rental assistance, you will need receipts to show you used the grant for rent.

Disaster grants are **not** for regular living expenses, such as utilities, food, medical or dental bills not related to the disaster, travel, entertainment or any discretionary expense not related to the disaster.

It is important to remember that federal law prohibits duplicating federal grants from other sources. FEMA also encourages you to keep your receipts for three years to show how you spent funds.

When you get a letter from FEMA, read it carefully. If you have any questions, call the FEMA Helpline, 800-621-3362, TTY users can call 800-462-7585. You can also visit one of the three Disaster Recovery Centers. To locate the closest center, call the Helpline or visit [DRC Locator](#), or download the FEMA APP to your mobile device.

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FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

*Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at **800-621-3362** (voice, 711 or video relay service). TTY users can call **800-462-7585**.*

The SBA is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps businesses of all sizes, private non-profit organizations, homeowners and renters fund repairs or rebuilding efforts and can cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged real estate and personal property. These disaster loans cover losses not fully compensated by insurance or other recoveries and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations.