



**Cal OES**  
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE  
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES



**FEMA**

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News Desk: 202-716-4407

# News Release

## **SONOMA COUNTY RESIDENTS MAY REGISTER FOR DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

**Sacramento**—Residents of Sonoma County who suffered damage or losses from the devastating fires that began October 8, 2017 and continue to burn, can now register for disaster assistance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), if they are able to do so.

The amendment to the presidential disaster declaration of October 9, 2017 now makes federal assistance available to eligible individuals and business owners in Sonoma County. Damage assessments are continuing in other areas, and more counties and additional forms of assistance may be designated.

Survivors who primarily reside in Sonoma County can apply online at [DisasterAssistance.gov](http://DisasterAssistance.gov) or by phone at **800-621-3362** or (TTY) **800-462-7585**. Applicants who use 711 or Video Relay Service may call 800-621-3362. The toll-free numbers are open **7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week**.

Applicants will be asked for the following information:

- Social Security number
- Address of the damaged **primary** residence
- Description of the damage
- Information about insurance coverage
- A current contact telephone number
- An address where they can receive mail
- Bank account and routing numbers for direct deposit of funds

Disaster assistance for homeowners and renters may include grants to help pay for:

- Temporary housing
- Essential home repairs
- Uninsured and underinsured personal property losses



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- Other serious disaster-related needs not covered by insurance.

Low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) are available for businesses of all sizes (including landlords), private non-profit organizations, homeowners and renters. Disaster loans cover losses not fully compensated by insurance or other recoveries.

FEMA grants do not have to be repaid. FEMA assistance is nontaxable and will not affect eligibility for Social Security, Medicaid or other federal benefits.

Registering with FEMA is required for federal aid, even if a survivor has registered with another disaster-relief organization, such as the American Red Cross.

Survivors should register even if they have insurance. FEMA cannot duplicate insurance payments, but underinsured applicants may receive help after their claims have been settled.

For more information on California recovery, visit the disaster web page at [www.fema.gov/disaster/4344](http://www.fema.gov/disaster/4344), Twitter at <https://www.twitter.com/femaregion9> and the CalOES website, <http://www.caloes.ca.gov/>.

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*All FEMA disaster assistance will be provided without discrimination on the grounds of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment), religion, national origin, age, disability, limited English proficiency, economic status, or retaliation. If you believe your civil rights are being violated, call 800-621-3362 or 800-462-7585(TTY/TDD).*

*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.*

*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 cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged 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. For more information, applicants may contact SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center by calling 800-659-2955, emailing [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov), or visiting SBA's website at [www.sba.gov/disaster](http://www.sba.gov/disaster). Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals may call 800-877-8339.*



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# Fact Sheet

## **Understanding Individual Assistance and Public Assistance**

The **Federal Emergency Management Agency** may provide two types of assistance, following natural disasters with a presidential disaster declaration: Individual Assistance and Public Assistance.

**Individual Assistance** is provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) directly to eligible individuals and families who have sustained losses due to disasters.

- Homeowners and renters in designated counties who sustained damage to their primary homes, vehicles and personal property as a result of the recent storms may apply for disaster assistance.
- Disaster assistance may include grants to help pay for temporary housing to include rental and lodging expense, emergency home repairs, uninsured and underinsured personal property losses, and medical, dental and funeral expenses caused by the disaster, along with other serious disaster-related expenses.
- Disaster assistance grants are not taxable income and will not affect eligibility for Social Security, Medicaid, medical waiver programs, welfare assistance, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, food stamps, Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance.
- Low-interest disaster loans from the Small Business Administration (SBA) may be available for businesses of all sizes (including landlords), private non-profit organizations, homeowners and renters. Low-interest disaster loans help fund repairs or rebuilding efforts and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged real estate and personal property. Economic Injury disaster loans are available to businesses and private nonprofits to assist with working capital needs as a direct result of the disaster.

**Public Assistance** can reimburse for emergency protective measures, debris removal, and infrastructure repairs or replacement needed due to disaster-related damage.

- FEMA will provide reimbursement of at least 75 percent of eligible costs, with the state and local governments sharing the remaining 25 percent of costs. Eligible entities include state governments, local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations, such as schools and public utility districts.
- Although funds are awarded to government entities and certain private nonprofits, the Public Assistance program is intended to benefit everyone — neighborhoods, cities, counties and states. Public Assistance dollars help clean up communities affected by disaster-related debris, repair roads and bridges and put utilities and water systems back in order.