



FEMA

News Release

1-2700
7-0488

TROPICAL STORM IRENE END OF WEEK SUMMARY

BURLINGTON, Vt. – Just three weeks after Sept. 1—the date Vermont received a major disaster declaration due to the effects of Tropical Storm Irene—FEMA has approved nearly **\$14 million in assistance grants to individuals and families.**

That includes over **\$13 million for housing assistance** to help repair, rebuild or replace housing and for rental assistance, as well as more than **\$708,000 for assistance with other needs**, such as replacement of personal property or medical expenses.

Other numbers:

- 5,468 registrations have been received.
- 2,187 Vermonters have been approved for housing assistance, and 112 have received the maximum individual housing program award of \$30,200. The average housing award is just under \$6,000.
- 1,049 Vermonters have been approved for temporary rental assistance grants.
- There are 13 inspectors in the field and 3,360 property inspections to document damage have been completed. The turnaround time for applicants to receive inspections is just over two days.
- **The U.S. Small Business Administration** has issued 4,912 loan applications to homeowners and businesses in Vermont. To date a total of 345 have been returned, and 31 applications totaling **\$1,808,500** have been approved in low-interest loans.

Following is a summary of some disaster assistance available:

- **Disaster Unemployment** is available to those whose jobs were permanently or temporarily lost due to the disaster, including those who are self-employed. Anyone who lost work and lived, worked, or was scheduled to work in a county that has received a federal disaster designation may apply for benefits by calling the Vermont **Department of Labor's Claim Assistance Line at 1-877-214-3330**. The filing deadline for assistance is **October 7, 2011**.

(MORE)

TROPICAL STORM IRENE END OF WEEK SUMMARY – Page 2

- **Renters** – not just homeowners – in 12 Vermont counties who had damage due to Tropical Storm Irene are encouraged to register with FEMA. Renters may receive grants to replace lost property or if they were displaced from their homes, they may be eligible for funds to help them with temporary rental assistance. These funds are for a limited period until the renter’s previous home is habitable or another permanent rental is found.
- **Housing Hotline:** The state and FEMA have established a toll-free number and a fax number to receive calls from anyone who has housing available to rent or wishes to offer housing at no cost for Vermonters displaced by the flood. The toll-free phone number is **866-330-5286** and the fax number is **540-686-4467**.
- **Legal Services:** Those facing legal issues due to Tropical Storm Irene may call **(800) 889-2047** for free legal advice. Those who qualify for assistance will be matched with Vermont lawyers volunteering their time. Legal assistance may include help with insurance claims, home repair contracts and contractors, replacement of wills and other legal documents destroyed in the disaster and counseling on mortgage-foreclosure problems and landlord/tenant problems.
- **The U.S. Small Business Administration** provides low-interest disaster loans to homeowners, renters and businesses of all sizes. If you are referred to SBA after you register with FEMA, you should fill out the paperwork to see whether the SBA can offer you a loan. *If you do not fill out an SBA packet it may close the door to other FEMA grants.* For more information, call **800-659-2955** (800-877-8339 for people with speech or hearing disabilities). Applications can also be downloaded from www.sba.gov or completed online at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ele/>.
- **Economic Injury Disaster Loans:** The SBA offers these loans to small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture, and most private non-profit organizations. Economic Injury Disaster Loans are intended to help meet working capital needs if you’ve lost business income because of the disaster. The loans are available regardless of whether the business suffered any physical property damage.
- **National Flood Insurance Program:** State and federal officials are encouraging Vermont residents in NFIP-participating communities to sign up for federally-backed flood insurance before **Sept. 30**, when the program is set to expire. While funding for the National Flood Insurance Program has traditionally been extended by Congress, officials warn that during the period between its expiration and when a new funding measure is approved, residents seeking flood insurance may be unable to acquire it.
 - Those communities that have chosen not to participate in NFIP or have been suspended from the program due to noncompliance of the guidelines – “sanctioned communities” – can file a **“resolution of intent”** to join, or rejoin.
 - Until the resolution is filed, residents will not be eligible for some FEMA assistance.

(MORE)

TROPICAL STORM IRENE END OF WEEK SUMMARY – Page 3

- **The final deadline to join the NFIP in order to apply for FEMA assistance for Tropical Storm Irene is March 31, 2012.** Communities interested in joining should contact the Rivers Program at the **Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation at: 802-241-1554**

- Eleven disaster recovery centers are currently open and 2,456 visits have been made to them. Visiting a center is not necessary to receive disaster assistance, but those who would like to speak to a recovery specialist face-to-face can visit one for more information. To find one in your area, go to www.fema.gov/drclocator.

Community relations teams are also reminding Vermonters that they **cannot** register for FEMA assistance by calling 211. FEMA's registration number is: **800-621-FEMA (3362)**. If you have a speech disability or hearing loss and use a TTY, call 800-462-7585 directly; if you use 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS), call 800-621-3362. Lines are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week until further notice, and multilingual assistance is available.

Online registration is available at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or at FEMA's mobile website, m.fema.gov for Smartphone or tablet users. FEMA also has an app for android phones, which can be downloaded at market.android.com/details?id=gov.fema.mobile.android.

Online registration helps to reduce the number of forms you have to fill out, shortens the time it takes to apply for aid and allows you to check the progress of your application online.

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-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585; or call 800-621-3362 if using 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS).

FEMA's temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA loan officers to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

SBA disaster loan information and application forms may be obtained by calling the SBA's Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 (800-877-8339 for people with speech or hearing disabilities) Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET; Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. ET or by sending an e-mail to disastercustomerservice@sba.gov. Applications can also be downloaded from www.sba.gov or completed on-line at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>.

###