

Iowa Disaster Assistance Registration Deadline Extended by Two Weeks

DES MOINES – Iowans in five western counties impacted by severe flooding from May 25 to Aug. 1, 2011, will have two more weeks to register for disaster assistance, state and federal recovery officials announced Friday.

The new deadline to register for assistance is Jan. 3, 2012, and applies to residents in the Iowa counties of Pottawattamie, Mills, Monona, Fremont and Harrison.

The Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division (HSEMD) asked the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to extend the registration period, which was set to end Dec. 19, 2011, because disaster recovery officials began getting information suggesting that some Iowans weren't aware they could be applying for help.

The cases generally involve individuals and families whose homes did not sustain actual flood damage but were unlivable because of outages involving essential utilities or severe, prolonged flooding that made the house inaccessible.

"We know some Iowans incurred costs to temporarily live somewhere else until they could get back home," said HSEMD's Pat Hall, state coordinating officer for the disaster. "Those folks may not know it's possible to get financial assistance to help cover the costs of that temporary housing. That's why we are urging anyone in those five counties who was impacted to call and register before the deadline passes."

Temporary housing assistance can be provided if a FEMA inspector verifies that the home was inaccessible due to road closures, floodwaters or if essential utilities such as power, water and gas were temporarily turned off for safety reasons. FEMA is reviewing current registrations for assistance to determine if there are persons who might be eligible under those circumstances.

"Iowans who visited our Disaster Recovery Centers or called the FEMA Helpline inquiring about reimbursement for these temporary expenses helped us realize there was a need that was not being met," said FEMA's Michael Scott, federal coordinating officer. "We reviewed those inquiries and determined that we may be able to help with some of these costs."

Persons who think they might have eligible temporary housing costs that have not already been reimbursed can call FEMA's Helpline at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) to check the status of their case and to find out what kind of documentation is required to submit a claim.

Others who were impacted by the flooding but have not yet registered at all, also should apply to FEMA before the Jan. 3 deadline in one of the following ways:

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- Call FEMA’s toll-free Registration Helpline 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). Hours of operation are 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. CST, seven days a week. Those with a speech disability or hearing loss who use a TTY can call 1-800-462-7585, or use 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS) to call 1-800-621-3362.
- Register online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov, or by smartphone at m.fema.gov
- Information on SBA programs can be obtained by calling: 1-800-659-2955, for speech and hearing impaired individuals TTY 1-800-877-8339, or by visiting the SBA website at www.sba.gov/services.disasterassistance.

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.

HSEMD’s mission is to lead, coordinate and support homeland security and emergency management functions in order to establish sustainable communities and ensure economic opportunities for Iowa and its citizens.

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