

Must I Be a U.S. Citizen to Get FEMA Help?

As Texans recover from February's severe winter storms, many survivors are wondering if they can qualify for FEMA disaster assistance if they are not United States citizens. Some may make assumptions based on rumors and may avoid seeking federal help, even though it may be available to them.

Non-Citizens May Be Eligible

FEMA is committed to helping all eligible disaster survivors recover from the severe winter weather. These include:

- U.S. citizens,
- Non-citizen nationals, and
- Qualified aliens

A qualified alien is a lawful permanent resident. It could also be someone with legal status for reasons which may include asylum, refugee, parole, withholding of deportation and Cuban/Haitian entrants.

Adults who do not meet the citizenship or immigration status at the time of application, may still apply for certain forms of assistance, if another adult household member is a citizen or if the household has a minor child who was born in the United States and has a Social Security number.

- FEMA or the Social Security Administration can help you get [Social Security Numbers for Children](#).
- A minor child must have lived with the parent or guardian applying on their behalf since Feb.11, 2021, the date of the onset of severe weather. The parent or guardian must register as the co-applicant.
- Individuals may consult an immigration expert to verify if they meet the immigration status requirements for FEMA disaster assistance

How to Register with FEMA

If you meet these eligibility criteria and live in one of the 126 counties that are eligible for federal assistance, you may complete an application for FEMA Individuals and Households Program assistance. For a list of designated counties, visit <https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4586>.

- Those with cell phones or internet access can register with FEMA by visiting [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4586), or downloading the FEMA app.
- You can also register by calling 800-621-3362 (TTY for the hearing-impaired, call 800-462-7585). Those who use a relay service such as a videophone, InnoCaption or CapTel should alert FEMA as to the specific number assigned to that service. Multi-lingual operators are available. Toll-free lines are open 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily.



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Other Programs and Volunteer Agencies

Other individual assistance programs are available, regardless of citizenship status. Programs like the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Crisis Counseling Assistance at <https://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/ccp> and Disaster Legal Services at americanbar.org/younglawyers . Other short-term, non-cash emergency help, may also be available.

Voluntary organizations offer help regardless of citizenship status. To find voluntary organizations in your county:

- Call the American Red Cross at 800-733-2767 or visit [local American Red Cross chapter](#) for information about your local Red Cross chapter.
- Dial 2-1-1 from any phone to find your local [United Way](#) or visit 211.org to find the phone number for the service in your area.
- To learn about help available from other state and local volunteer agencies, visit <https://www.txvoad.org/> or [FEMA-Texas Referrals](#) .

For the latest information on the Texas severe winter storms, visit <https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4586> or follow the FEMA Region 6 Twitter account at twitter.com/FEMARegion6 .

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