



FEMA

Georgia Disaster Grants Should Be Used For Intended Purpose

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ATLANTA, Ga. -- Disaster recovery officials urge recipients of federal grants to keep receipts and other documentation for at least three years as proof the funds were spent as intended.

More than **\$53.2 million** in disaster recovery grants was distributed by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) following the September storms and floods.

"Those approved for federal grants received a helping hand from taxpayers," said GEMA Director Charley English. "So it's important the grants are used wisely."

Upon releasing the funds by direct deposit or check, FEMA sent every recipient a letter providing important information about the grant and outlining how the money can be spent.

"The grants are for repairs, temporary housing and other approved disaster-related costs," said Gracia Szczech, head of FEMA flood recovery in Georgia. "Call FEMA's Helpline if you have any questions."

Applicants also should update addresses and phone numbers by calling 800-621-FEMA (3362), TTY 800-462-7585. Otherwise, they may miss important correspondence or telephone calls regarding their payments or applications for assistance.

Housing funds may be used for:

- Repairs to return the home to a safe and functional condition: These may include repairs to windows, doors, water and ventilation systems, or other structural parts of a home;
- Reimbursement for lodging expenses directly related to the disaster: Receipts for these expenses will be requested if the home sustained damages; and,
- Rental assistance: Applicants who must remain in temporary housing for a longer period than the initial assistance covers may request more assistance until their home can be re-occupied or other permanent housing arrangements can be made.

Other Needs Assistance funds may be used for:

- Personal property, specialized tools for employment, household items, appliances, and vehicle repair or replacement;
- Medical, dental and funeral expenses; and,
- Moving expenses.

Recipients are required to sign a declaration and a release certifying that all funds will be spent on the expenses for which they are intended.

By law, FEMA grants, which are taxpayer dollars, cannot duplicate payments from other sources. For example, if a grant recipient receives an insurance settlement covering expenses already paid for by FEMA, those funds must be reimbursed to FEMA.

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.

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