

FEMA Assistance for Houses of Worship

Houses of worship and other private nonprofit organizations impacted by the Maine severe storms and flooding from Dec. 17-21, 2023, may be eligible for FEMA assistance to help pay for emergency protective measures, debris removal and restoration of facilities damaged by the disaster.

FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) program may provide assistance to faith-based organizations that provide essential social services to the public.

Houses of worship, whether they provide critical or essential social services, may submit a FEMA Request for Public Assistance through Grants Portal, an online recovery management tool, within 30 days of the date of a presidential disaster declaration. Any questions about the process can be answered by your local and/or state emergency manager.

Houses of Worship that provide a noncritical social service, such as community and senior citizen centers of nonprofits must go through the loan application process with the Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Assistance program before FEMA can determine eligibility for the agency's Public Assistance program, which reimburses expenses for emergency protective measures, debris removal and repair or rebuilding of disaster-damaged property. However, some activities regarding emergency protective measures that were performed in preparation or response to the storm may be eligible without or while pending an SBA decision.

SBA's low-interest disaster loans provide up to \$2 million for damaged real estate and the repair or replacement of property, such as furniture, fixtures, and other eligible inventory. For information about disaster assistance from SBA, visit [SBA.gov/disaster](https://www.sba.gov/disaster) or call (800) 659-2955.

FEMA encourages protecting these damaged facilities from future events by taking hazard mitigation measures during the recovery process.

Eligibility:

1. The house of worship must be owned or operated by a private nonprofit organization.
2. It must have sustained damage caused by the Maine severe storms and flooding from Dec. 17-21, 2023.
3. The facility must be open to the public.
4. The application must include state and/or U.S. Internal Revenue Service documentation of tax-exempt status, pre-disaster charter and other documentation.



The **deadline to apply** for the Maine severe storms and flooding from Dec. 17-21, 2023, is **February 29, 2024**.

What You will Need to Provide

- Evidence of federal or state tax-exempt status or other documents indicating nonprofit status, such as bylaws or articles of incorporation.
- Pre-disaster evidence of incorporation/charter/bylaws.
- A Data Universal Number Systems number established with the government.
- Supporting documentation establishing lease or ownership of the building, proof of use, and proof of insurance.
- If eligibility is granted, the following will need to be submitted: A list of sites damaged; “before and after” pictures; and information about any historic structures.

Other Resources:

[Public Assistance Policies](#) - Official guidance, policies, news advisories and related publications that govern the program include:

- [Public Assistance Program & Policy Guide \(PAPPG\)](#) (version 4 applicable to emergencies and major disasters declared on or after June 1, 2020.)
- [Public Assistance Program Delivery Guide \(fema.gov\)](#) (draft document published September 2022.)
- Web page: [Assistance for Governments and Private Non-Profits After a Disaster | FEMA.gov](#)
- Procurement Guide: [Purchasing under a FEMA Award: Resources for Private Nonprofits and Religious Organizations](#)
- Downloadable FEMA Fact Sheet: [Public Assistance: Private Nonprofit Eligibility Factsheet \(fema.gov\)](#)
- Downloadable FEMA Fact Sheet: [Mitigate Disaster Damage with FEMA Public Assistance](#)

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FEMA’s mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters.

All FEMA disaster assistance will be provided without discrimination on the grounds of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment), sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age, disability, limited English proficiency, economic status. If you believe your civil rights are being violated, you can call the Civil Rights Resource line at 833-285-7448.