

FEMA Assistance for Houses of Worship

FEMA's Public Assistance Program may provide assistance to faith-based organizations and other private nonprofit organizations that provide essential social services to the public who were affected by the June 14-15 storms.

OVERVIEW

The mission of FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) Program is to provide assistance to State, Local, Territorial, or Tribal (SLTT) governments and certain types of private nonprofit organizations, including houses of worship, so that communities can quickly respond to and recover from disasters.

FEMA's PA Program may cover costs to repair or replace damaged facilities or provide funding for hazard mitigation measures during the recovery process. Private nonprofit organizations, including houses of worship, interested in applying for a grant should submit a Request for Public Assistance via grantee.fema.gov or contact the West Virginia Division of Emergency Management at wvpa@wv.gov.

The deadline for applicants to submit a Request for Public Assistance is Oct. 11, 2025.

ELIGIBILITY

Only certain private nonprofit organizations are eligible applicants for Public Assistance. To be eligible for FEMA Public Assistance, an applicant (organization or house of worship) must show that it:

- Has a ruling letter from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service that was in effect as of the declaration date and granted tax exemption under sections 501(c), (d), or (e) of the Internal Revenue Code; or documentation from state substantiating it is a non-revenue producing, nonprofit entity organized or doing business under state law.
- Owns or operates a facility that provides an eligible service.
- Eligible jurisdictions include Marion and Ohio Counties.

If the organization is not required to obtain 501(c)(3) status or tax-exempt status under applicable state law, the organization must provide articles of association, bylaws or other documents indicating that it is an organized entity, and a certification that it is compliant with Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3) and state law requirements.

Eligibility Requirements

- The house of worship must be owned or operated by a private nonprofit organization and have sustained damage caused by the storms.
- The facility must be open to the public.
- The application must include state and/or U.S. Internal Revenue Service documentation of tax-exempt status, pre-disaster charter and other documentation.



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APPLICATION PROCESS

Following a President's disaster declaration, the West Virginia Division of Emergency Management, with support from FEMA, conducts Applicant Briefings to provide information about the Public Assistance Program to potential applicants. Applicants apply for PA by submitting a Request for Public Assistance via FEMA's [Public Assistance Grants Portal](#). Grants Portal is the system applicants use to submit and manage PA project applications. **The deadline for applicants to submit a Request for Public Assistance is Oct. 11, 2025** for Marion and Ohio counties.

FEMA reviews applications for eligibility and determines the status of an application. Then, the applicant receives notification of their application status and instructions on next steps, including how to request funding for its incident-related impacts if approved.

Houses of worship that are interested in applying for FEMA Public Assistance are encouraged to watch this [brief video](#).

Organizations that provide non-critical services, including houses of worship, must apply for a low-interest disaster loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to be considered for Public Assistance grants. Grants may be available to these organizations for repair or replacement costs that SBA loans do not cover. Organizations can apply to FEMA and the SBA at the same time. For information about disaster assistance from SBA, visit [SBA.gov/disaster](https://www.sba.gov/disaster) or call 800-659-2955.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO PROVIDE

To apply for FEMA Public Assistance, applicants must 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 Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from sam.gov.
- 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.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FEMA announced on January 2, 2018, that private nonprofit organization houses of worship are eligible for disaster assistance without regard to their secular or religious nature. Private nonprofit organization houses of worship may be eligible for PA as facilities that provide a non-critical, essential social service to the general public and are treated like any other eligible, non-critical private nonprofit organization facility. Houses of worship cannot be deemed ineligible because leadership or membership in the organization operating the house of worship is limited to persons who share a religious faith or practice. Private nonprofit organization houses of worship applicants need to meet the general Public Assistance eligibility requirements as well as the generally applicable private nonprofit organization requirements.

Resources

- [Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide](#)
- [Public Assistance: Private Nonprofit Eligibility Factsheet](#)
- [Assistance for Governments and Private Non-Profits After a Disaster](#)

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