

Letter From FEMA Is The Starting Point

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Trenton, NJ – After registering with FEMA, disaster survivors receive a letter from FEMA concerning the status of their application. The letter is a starting point about whether or not the applicant will receive disaster assistance.

Applicants should read the letter carefully. Even if the letter says that you are ineligible, the reason might simply be that you have not provided all the information or documentation required. It does not necessarily mean "case closed." When applicable, the letter explains what additional information is needed or how to appeal a decision that you do not qualify for assistance.

Ask for help if you don't understand the letter. Call the helpline at **800-621-FEMA (3362)** or **TTY 800-462-7585** or visit a Disaster Recovery Center where you can talk with a FEMA representative about your particular situation.

To find the nearest center, log on to www.fema.gov/drclocator.

You may not have qualified for financial help right away, but that decision may change if you submit additional documents. Some of the reasons for an initial ineligible decision can be that you:

- Have not submitted a settlement or denial determination from your insurance company.
- Did not provide FEMA with all the information needed to process your application.
- Have not provided proof of ownership or occupancy.
- Did not provide records that showed the damaged property was your primary residence at the time of the disaster.
- Did not sign essential documents.

FEMA can never duplicate assistance from insurance or other government sources, but FEMA may be able to cover some of your uninsured losses.

Providing the requested information or taking the required actions outlined in the letter might change FEMA's determination. The letter also explains how to appeal a determination. Appeals must be filed within 60 days of the date of the ineligible decision.

Remember: the letter from FEMA is a starting point. You should:

- Read the letter carefully.
- Ask questions and ask for help.
- Tell FEMA if you think the decision is incorrect. You have the right to ask FEMA to reconsider the decision.

This video, http://www.fema.gov/medialibrary/media_records/6486 gives more information about how to appeal a FEMA determination.

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