

Disaster Declaration Offers Federal Aid to 2020 Wildfire Survivors

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SACRAMENTO, Calif. – An Oct. 16 federal disaster declaration opens the nation’s aid process to California wildfire survivors in seven counties.

The disaster [declaration](#) covers the Bobcat, Creek, El Dorado, Oak, Slater and Valley fires beginning Sept. 4 when intense fire-prone weather brought record temperatures and powerful winds to the West. You may be eligible for federal assistance if you have uninsured losses and live in the counties of Fresno, Los Angeles, Madera, Mendocino, San Bernardino, San Diego and Siskiyou. This declaration is also referred to as Disaster 4569 by FEMA for tracking purposes.

This is separate from Disaster 4558, declared Aug. 22, which offered aid to those who suffered losses in wildfires starting earlier that month in the counties of Butte, Lake, Lassen, Monterey, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma, Trinity, Tulare and Yolo. These fires include the CZU Lightning Complex, SCU Lighting Complex, August Complex Fire, LNU Lightning Complex, North Complex, Sheep, Dolan and SQF Complex.

Monetary awards may help eligible survivors with financial assistance that includes rent, home repair, home replacement and other disaster-related needs such as childcare, medical and dental expenses.

Before you apply, contact your insurance company and file a claim for the disaster-caused damage. Take photographs or video of the damage and keep all receipts related to home repair.

You can apply in one of three ways: online at DisasterAssistance.gov, by downloading and using the [FEMA app](#) on your smartphone or tablet, or by calling the **FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362** (TTY 800-462-7585) between 7 a.m. and 10:30 p.m. PDT. The helpline has specialists who speak many different languages. If you use a relay service such as a videophone, InnoCaption or CapTel, provide FEMA the specific number assigned to that service when you register.



To register online:

- Go to DisasterAssistance.gov.
- Click the blue Apply Online button at the bottom of the page.
- Review the disaster survivor application checklist and complete an application to learn if you are eligible to receive disaster assistance.

Be prepared with the following information:

- Social Security Number
- Insurance policy information
- Address of the damaged primary dwelling
- A description of disaster-caused damage and losses
- Current mailing address
- Current telephone number
- Total household annual income
- Routing and account number of your checking or savings account (for direct transfer of funds)

You may then create a personal account at DisasterAssistance.gov to stay in touch.

To create one:

- Click the green Check Status button at bottom of DisasterAssistance.gov.
- Click the blue Create Account button at bottom of page.
- Enter your date of birth and Social Security number, which you provided when registering.
- Answer four security questions that are generated from public record data to verify your identity.
- Create a user ID and password.
- Enter an email address. FEMA will send a temporary PIN to it within 24 hours. Follow the instructions in the email to finish creating your account.

If you are unable to upload your documents, mail them to FEMA at P.O. Box 10055, Hyattsville MD 20782-8055 or fax them to 800-827-8112.

Inspections

During COVID-19, inspections of damaged/destroyed properties will be conducted by phone. Remote assessments are comparable to traditional, in-person inspections and can expedite recovery assistance, based on eligibility. For security purposes, the



inspector will verify your identity by asking a series of qualifying questions and provide you with the first four digits of your application.

If you report that you cannot safely live in your home, a FEMA inspector will contact you by phone to ask about the type and extent of damage. Survivors whose homes suffered minimal damage and can live in them will not automatically be scheduled for a home inspection but may request one. Some aid is available without an inspection, including grants for childcare, transportation, medical, dental, funeral expenses, moving and storage assistance.

Small Business Administration assistance

Some applicants for federal aid will be referred to the U.S. Small Business Administration. Before FEMA can consider giving a survivor monetary awards for repair or replacement of personal property and vehicles or moving and storage expenses, the person must apply to SBA for a loan and be turned down. Fill out an application at disasterloanassistance.sba.gov. You do not have to take a loan if offered one.

Survivors can find out more by contacting the SBA's Virtual Disaster Loan Outreach Center, which helps homeowners, renters and business owners answer questions about SBA's disaster loan program, explain the application process and help each person complete an electronic loan application.

Virtual Business Recovery Center and Virtual Disaster Loan Outreach Center

Mondays – Sundays

5 a.m. to 5 p.m. PDT

FOCWAssistance@sba.gov

800-659-2955

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