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American Red Cross (ARC). A quasi-governmental agency whose mission is to provide humanitarian assistance during war and disaster. The ARC operates under a congressional charter and is supported by the public. Internationally, it operates in accordance with the Treaty of Geneva.

Applicant. An individual, family, State or local government, or private nonprofit organization applying for assistance as a result of a declaration of a major disaster or emergency.

Applicant Briefings. Meetings for all potential applicants for Public Assistance. The Governor's Authorized Representative conducts these meetings, which address application procedures, administrative requirements, funding, and program eligibility criteria.

Application Period. Period of time during which individuals and/or small business owners within a declared area can apply for assistance. This period is typically 60 days from the date of declaration; however, it may be extended in cases of severe disasters.

Camp. A temporary location at a geographical site, within the general incident area and separate from the Incident Base, which is equipped and staffed to provide sleeping, food, water, and sanitary services to incident personnel.

Community Relations. This part of the Emergency Response Team strives to help affected individuals and the communities where they live in understanding the relief process. Community Relations is an information collection and dissemination function that creates FEMA visibility and establishes confidence that disaster assistance is being delivered as quickly as possible. Community Relations involves identifying community and organization leaders, assessing needs, resolving or referring problems, setting realistic expectations, and building a positive image of people helping people.

Congressional and Legislative Affairs. Situated in the External Affairs Office, this part of the Emergency Response Team provides the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) with support in dealing with the congressional delegation, coordinates with the Regions and with Headquarters, and supervises the Congressional Member Specialists.

Crisis Counseling (CC). A program under FEMA's Individual Assistance administered by the National Institutes of Mental Health. This program provides individual and group treatment procedures that are designed to improve the mental and emotional health crises and their subsequent psychological and behavioral conditions resulting from a major disaster or its aftermath.

Damage Assessment. The process of determining the extent of damage and the amount of loss to individuals, businesses, the public sector, and the community resulting from a disaster or emergency event.

Declaration. The formal action by the President to make a State eligible for major disaster or emergency assistance under the Stafford Act.

Disaster Assistance Employee (DAE). (See Stafford Act Employee.)

Disaster Assistance Programs. Programs available to aid disaster victims. Federal programs fall under Public Assistance Support, Mitigation, and Human Services. Other agencies, such as the Small Business Administration, also provide disaster assistance programs.

Disaster Finance Center (DFC). A facility that processes all financial transactions related to the disaster.

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Disaster Information Helpline. A toll-free number (1-800-521-3362) set up for disaster victims who have already applied for disaster assistance through FEMA or need general disaster information.

Disaster Information Support Center (DISC). The DISC consolidates, at one central location, designated Information System (IS) hardware, software, and related equipment for rapid shipment to support disaster response and recovery requirements as directed by FEMA authorities.

Disaster Recovery Center (DRC). A temporary facility, established in the disaster area, where disaster victims can obtain assistance information and apply for assistance.

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA). Financial assistance and/or reemployment services to individuals who are unemployed as a result of a major disaster and who are ineligible for regular unemployment assistance (e.g., self-employed individuals).

Eligible Community. A community for which the Federal Insurance Administrator has authorized the sale of flood insurance under the National Flood Insurance Program.

Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The physical location at which the coordination of information and resources to support domestic incident management activities normally takes place. An EOC may be a temporary facility or may be located in a more central or permanently established facility, perhaps at a higher level of organization within a jurisdiction. EOCs may be organized by major functional disciplines (e.g., fire, law enforcement, and medical services), by jurisdiction (e.g., Federal, State, regional, county, city, tribal), or some combination thereof.

Emergency Response Team (ERT). An interagency team, consisting of the lead representative from each Federal department or agency assigned primary responsibility for an ESF and key members of the FCO's staff, formed to assist the FCO in carrying out response coordination responsibilities. The ERT provides a forum for coordinating the overall Federal response, reporting on the conduct of specific operations, exchanging information, and resolving issues related to ESF and other response requirements. ERT members respond and meet as requested by the FCO. The ERT may be expanded by the FCO to include designated representatives of other Federal departments and agencies as needed.

Emergency Response Team-Advance Element (ERT-A). The portion of the Emergency Response Team (ERT) that is the first group deployed to the field to respond to a disaster incident.

Emergency Support Function (ESF). The functional area of response activity established to facilitate the delivery of Federal assistance required during the immediate response phase of a disaster to save lives, protect property and public health, and maintain public safety. ESFs represent those types of Federal assistance that the State will most likely need because of the overwhelming impact of a catastrophic or significant disaster on its own resources and response capabilities or because of the specialized or unique nature of the assistance required. ESF missions are designed to supplement State and local response efforts.

External Affairs (ESF #15). This ESF ensures that sufficient assets are deployed to the field to provide accurate, coordinated, and timely information to affected audiences, including governments, media, the private sector, and the local populace.

Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO). The senior Federal official appointed by the President in accordance with the provisions of the Stafford Act to coordinate the overall response and recovery activities. The FCO represents the President for the purpose of coordinating the administration of Federal assistance activities in the designated area. Additionally, the FCO is delegated and performs responsibilities for the FEMA Director as well as those responsibilities delegated to the FEMA Regional Director.

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Federal/State Meeting. A meeting of representatives from all Federal, State, and voluntary agencies offering programs for people and communities affected by the disaster.

FEMA-State Agreement. A formal legal document between FEMA and the affected State outlining the understandings, commitments, and binding conditions for assistance applicable as the result of the major disaster or emergency declared by the President. It is signed by the FEMA Regional Director, or designee, and the Governor.

Flood Insurance. Insurance coverage provided under the National Flood Insurance Program.

Hazard Mitigation (HM)(Mit). Any measure that will reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to life and property from a disaster event. Mitigation is the FEMA department that assists States, communities, and individuals with information and, if applicants are eligible, provides funds to protect their communities and homes from future damage.

Helpline. A toll-free number, 1-800-621-3362, set up for disaster victims who have already applied for disaster assistance through FEMA or who need general disaster information.

Home Repairs. Disaster loans or grants may be made available to homeowners to repair or replace homes damaged by the disaster. Home Repair Assistance is money to restore essential living areas to a habitable condition. The amount of the check is based on damages incurred, as determined by a FEMA inspection.

Housing Assistance (HA). FEMA administers the HA Program. If the applicant does not have insurance to cover temporary living expenses, then HA may provide funds for rental assistance to homeowners and renters whose homes have been damaged so severely that they cannot or should not be lived in. Homeowners may also receive money to repair their homes in order to make them safe, sanitary, and secure to live in. HA includes the mobile home program, and minimal repairs.

Incident Period. The time interval stated in the FEMA/State Agreement during which a disaster-causing incident occurs. The incident period may be extended due to cascading effects or long-term recurrence of the same disaster.

Individual and Households Program (IHP). Federal assistance provided to families or individuals following a disaster or emergency declaration. Under a major disaster declaration, assistance to individuals and families is available through grants, loans, and other services offered by various Federal, State, local, and voluntary agencies.

Individual Assistance (IA). Those services and programs that benefit individuals, households, businesses, and farmers. FEMA's Individual Assistance programs include "Assistance to Individuals and Households" (providing for housing assistance and other needs), crisis counseling, legal services, disaster unemployment assistance, and referrals to other appropriate forms of aid. Other Federal agencies' Individual Assistance programs include tax refund assistance (Internal Revenue Service), disaster loans (the Small Business Administration and Farm Service Agency), veterans' assistance (Veterans Affairs), and health and Social Security recipients' assistance (Health and Human Services).

Joint Field Office (JFO). The office established in or near the designated area to support Federal and State response and recovery operations. The JFO houses the FCO, the ERT, the State Coordinating Officer (SCO), and support staff.

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Joint Information Center (JIC). A facility established to coordinate all incident-related public information activities. The JIC is the central point of contact for all news media at the scene of the incident. Public information officials from all participating Federal, State, and local agencies collocate at the JIC and work together to keep news media representatives informed of activities and events.

Local Hire (LH). A person who is working within the disaster area and who has been hired locally as a temporary FEMA employee.

Mission Assignment. The mechanism used to support Federal operations in a Stafford Act major disaster or emergency declaration. It orders immediate, short-term emergency response assistance when an applicable State or local government is overwhelmed by the event and lacks the capability to perform, or contract for, the necessary work.

Mobile Home Assistance. FEMA may provide short-term rental or purchase of mobile homes or trailers to families or individuals who are eligible.

Mobilization Center. An offsite temporary facility at which response personnel and equipment are received from the Point of Arrival and are pre-positioned for deployment to an incident logistics base, to a local Staging Area, or directly to an incident site, as required. A mobilization center also provides temporary support services, such as food and billeting, for response personnel prior to their assignment, release, or reassignment and serves as a place to out-process following demobilization while awaiting transportation.

National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The Federal program, created by an act of Congress in 1968, that makes flood insurance available in communities that enact satisfactory floodplain management regulations.

National Processing Services Center (NPSC). The center responsible for processing registrations for assistance that have been filed by individuals affected by a disaster. This processing includes:

- Gathering and reviewing information in order to consider the eligibility of applicants who have been referred to the Disaster Housing Assistance program.
- Responding to the questions, concerns, and issues of those who have been referred to the Disaster Housing Assistance program.
- Maintaining records for individuals who have been referred to the SBA.
- Maintaining records for applicants who have been referred to the Individual and Households Program along with various other Federal, State, local, and voluntary agencies engaged in providing assistance to those individuals affected by a disaster.

National Response Coordination Center (NRCC). A multiagency center located at FEMA Headquarters that provides overall Federal response coordination of Incidents of National Significance. The NRCC operates on a 24/7 basis and monitors potential/developing incidents. It supports response efforts of regional and field components, and resolves Federal assistance conflicts and implementation issues.

National Teleregistration Center (NTC). Promotes a nationwide toll-free telephone number (1-800-621-FEMA) or (1-800-621-3362) that applicants can use to apply for disaster assistance.

Other Needs Assistance (ONA). Individual assistance program intended to meet the necessary expenses and serious needs of disaster victims. ONA operates within established grant limits that are funded through a 75% Federal/25% State cost share.

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Participating Community. A community in which the administrator has authorized the sale of flood insurance. (See also Eligible Community.)

Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA). The damage assessment performed by Federal, State, and local representatives in disaster situations clearly beyond the recovery capabilities of State and local governments. PDAs are used to determine the extent of damage caused by the incident. Generally, PDAs are performed following an event but before a declaration. In the case of catastrophic events, however, the PDAs may be completed after the declaration.

Preparedness. Those activities, programs, and systems that exist before an emergency and that are used to support and enhance response to an emergency or disaster.

Project Worksheet (PW). Identifies the eligible work under the Public Assistance Program and prepares a quantitative estimate for that work. Synonymous with the term “Damage Survey Report.”

Public Assistance (PA). Under a major disaster declaration, Public Assistance may be approved to fund a variety of projects, including:

- Debris clearance, when in the public interest, on public or private lands or waters.
- Emergency protective measures for the preservation of life and property.
- Repair or replacement of public roads, streets, and bridges.
- Repair or replacement of public water control facilities (dikes, levees, irrigation works, and drainage facilities).
- Repair or replacement of public buildings, utilities, and related equipment.
- Repair or restoration of public recreational facilities and parks.

Recovery. Activities traditionally associated with providing Federal supplemental disaster recovery assistance under a disaster declaration. These activities usually begin within days after the event and continue after the response activities cease. Recovery includes individual and public assistance programs that provide temporary housing assistance, grants, and loans to eligible individuals and government entities to recover from the effects of a disaster.

Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC). Regional center that serves as the Federal Government’s immediate emergency operations center in an affected region. This facility operates during the initial period following an incident, and is also operational for pre-incident events such as a hurricane.

Reservist. (See Stafford Act Employee.)

Response. Activities to address the immediate and short-term effects of an emergency or disaster. Response includes immediate actions to save lives, protect property, and meet basic human needs.

Situation Report (SITREP). A summary of the disaster situation, status of operations, and identification of future priorities for response and recovery operations.

Small Business Administration (SBA). The SBA lends money to homeowners and renters at low interest rates to repair or replace homes and/or personal belongings not covered by insurance. The SBA also offers low-interest business loans to qualifying businesses and nonprofit organizations that suffered physical and/or economic injury damages/losses not covered by insurance.

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Social Security Benefit Assistance. The Social Security Administration Regional Commissioner provides staff support to process Social Security claims, provide advice and assistance in regard to regular and survivor benefits payable through Social Security programs, process disaster-related death certificates, resolve problems involving lost/destroyed Social Security checks, make address changes, and replace Social Security cards.

Stafford Act. Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, PL 100-707, signed into law November 23, 1988; amended the Disaster Relief Act of 1974, PL 93-288. A Federal statute designed to supplement the efforts of the affected States and local governments in expediting the rendering of assistance, emergency services, and the reconstruction and rehabilitation of devastated areas.

Stafford Act Employees (SAE). This term refers to the Reservists, CORE, and local hire personnel working within a disaster area. Also known as DAEs (Disaster Assistance Employees).

Staging Area. A temporary location at an incident where personnel and equipment resources are kept while awaiting tactical assignment. In all cases, personnel and equipment resources in a Staging Area are always in or on available status (i.e., ready to go out on assignment within 3 minutes). The Operations Section manages Staging Areas.

State Coordinating Officer (SCO). The person appointed by the Governor to act in cooperation with the FCO to administer disaster recovery efforts.

Veterans Benefit Assistance. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides a variety of disaster assistance specifically targeted to veterans and their survivors. These benefits include medical assistance, burial assistance, priority in acquiring VA-owned properties, health care supplies and equipment, prescription medications and other medical items, and temporary use of housing units owned by the VA.

Voluntary Agency (VOLAG). Any chartered or otherwise duly recognized tax-exempt local, State, or national organization or group that has provided or may provide needed services to the States, local governments, or individuals in coping with an emergency or a major disaster.

Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD). The organization that brings together State voluntary organizations. Its purpose is to foster more effective cooperation, coordination, and communication between volunteer agencies and State and local governments.