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**FEMA**

# Recovery News

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## STATE GRANT PROGRAM GIVES FUNDS TO CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE VICTIMS

**PASADENA, Calif.** – The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has begun awarding grants to individuals and households through the State Supplemental Grant Program (SSGP), officials with the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (OES) announced today.

The State of California’s SSGP may provide assistance to those who have additional eligible losses after receiving the maximum grant award from the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Individuals and Households Program.

So far, nearly \$1.3 million in grants have been approved, with the majority of those being the maximum grant award of \$10,000.

“These additional funds provided by the California Department of Social Services will assist many Californians who were the unfortunate victims of these devastating wildfires,” said CDSS Director John Wagner.

“We are proud to be one of the few states that have a state grant for disasters, one that supplements the federal dollars to help individuals and families rebuild from such a devastating loss,” said Henry Renteria, Director of OES and State Coordinating Officer for the fire recovery effort.

There is no separate application process and applications will be forwarded from FEMA to CDSS. The state grants will not duplicate benefits. The maximum grant from the State is \$10,000.

Every recipient receives a letter from CDSS prior to receiving the money outlining the following categories for using the funds.

Housing - such as:

- Repairs to return the home to a safe and functional condition: These may include repairs to windows, doors, water and ventilation systems, or other structural parts of a home;
- Reimbursement for hotel or motel lodging expenses if their home was damaged as a direct result of the disaster: Receipts for these expenses are required; and
- Rebuilding a home that has been completely destroyed.

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Personal Property – such as:

- Specialized tools for employment;
- Household items and appliances;
- Vehicle repair or replacement;
- Medical, dental and funeral expenses; and
- Moving expenses and other disaster-related needs.

Rental Assistance:

- Applicants who must remain in temporary housing until their home can be re-occupied or their permanent housing arrangements can be made may request additional rental assistance. Applicants must provide verification of their permanent housing progress and can only receive rental assistance up to their SSGP maximum.

State grants are tax-free and are not loans. They are not counted as income for welfare or for other federal and/or state benefit programs and cannot be garnished.

All expenditures must be disaster-related. If not, the recipient may have to pay back the grant, and may lose eligibility for further help. Grants are subject to audit and recipients are strongly encouraged to fully document their disaster-related expenses. They must keep receipts or bills for three years to demonstrate how all the money was used in meeting disaster-related needs.

*FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.*

*The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinates overall state-agency response to major disasters in support of local government. OES is also responsible for maintaining the State Emergency Plan and coordinating California's preparedness, mitigation and recovery efforts.*

*Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, you should call FEMA toll-free at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 1-800-462-7585.*

*SBA is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private non-profit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover uninsured and uncompensated losses and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. For information about SBA programs, applicants may call 800-659-2955.*

*Temporary housing assistance from FEMA does not require that an applicant file for an SBA loan. However, an applicant must complete an SBA loan application to be eligible for additional assistance under the part of the Other Needs Assistance (ONA) program that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses. There are other ONA grants such as public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses that do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan to be eligible. FEMA will process applications for housing assistance regardless of whether the applicant has applied for an SBA loan, and eligibility determinations for applicants requesting FEMA's temporary housing assistance will not be held up because the applicant has or has not filled out an SBA application.*

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