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FEMA

Disaster News

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TASK FORCE TO ASSIST FIRE-AFFECTED TRIBES

PASADENA, Calif.—The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) announce the creation of a task force to help Southern California's tribal jurisdictions recover from wildfire damages.

The grouping of tribal and federal resources at one table will help recovery agencies provide individual assistance, infrastructure assistance and hazard mitigation benefits to the hard hit tribes in San Diego and Riverside counties.

The Tribal Task Force is already at work rounding up generators to replace lost power at key facilities in La Jolla and Mesa Grande. Portions of these communities are expected to be off the power grid for more than a week. Pauma Valley and Santa Ysabel tribes also are affected by the wildfires. Food, water and other supplies may be provided, as well as housing and infrastructure assistance.

FEMA is joined on the task force by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Service and a number of other agencies that have ongoing relationships with the tribes.

"The tribes in California share a history of self-reliance under tough circumstances," said Mike Parker, tribal task force leader with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). "We'll respect that heritage by creating the smallest footprint possible as we offer assistance."

"The state remains committed to protecting the culture and welfare of California's Native Americans," said OES director Henry Renteria. "We will continue to work with FEMA to bring all federal and state resources to the affected territories of our Native American Californians."

Once an applicant has received the maximum amount available through FEMA, cash grants up to \$10,000 may be available to help individuals who have suffered disaster losses. This grant is administered by the California Department of Social Services as a supplemental program to FEMA's Individuals and Households Program.

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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 the California's preparedness, mitigation and recovery efforts.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, economic status or retaliation. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, you should call FEMA toll-free at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or contact your State Office of Equal rights. If suspicious of any abuse of FEMA programs, please contact the fraud hotline at 1-800-323-8603.

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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