



North Carolina Department of Public Safety

Emergency Management

Roy Cooper, Governor
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Nonprofit Houses of Worship in North Carolina Eligible to Apply for FEMA Public Assistance in the wake of Hurricane Florence

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance Program provides supplemental assistance to states, tribes, and local governmental entities, as well as certain private nonprofit (PNP) organizations. These PNP organizations and public entities, also known as applicants, may receive reimbursement funds to supplement the damages they incurred as a direct result of Florence.

- 1) Under a new rule in Public Assistance, Houses of Worship (HOW) may be eligible, provided the HOW has been granted tax exemption under Sections 501(c), (d), or (e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.
- 2) The State of North Carolina has been granted a Federal Declaration for the FEMA Public Assistance program due to the devastation of Hurricane Florence.
- 3) To be considered for the FEMA PA program, HOW must fully demonstrate their history of providing activities to pursue items of mutual interest or concern or social engagement in their community, and be open to the general public, without regard to their secular or religious nature.
- 4) Facilities established or primarily used for political, athletic, recreational, vocational, or academic training, conferences, or similar activities are not eligible.
- 5) The eligible categories of work include debris removal & monitoring operations, emergency protective measures, buildings, content & equipment, roads & bridges, water control facilities, utilities, parks/recreation facilities and other eligible owned and maintained facilities.

A House of Worship that meets the aforementioned requirements may be eligible for reimbursement of their costs under the FEMA Public Assistance program. As with any noncritical PNP, and before seeking funds from the FEMA PA program, Houses of Worship must first apply to the Small Business Administration (SBA) to seek a low-interest loan to financially address their disaster-related needs. If no loan is granted, or not enough of a loan is allowed by the SBA, the HOW may then pursue reimbursement funding under FEMA PA.

Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 5172(a)(3), private nonprofit facilities that do not provide critical services must apply to the Small Business Administration (SBA) for disaster loans and either (1) be determined ineligible for such a loan or (2) have obtained such a loan in the maximum amount for which the SBA determines the facility is eligible.

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