

Dear Neighbors and Stakeholders

Last week, our community and region experienced the devastating impact of Hurricane Ida. Many residents, businesses, houses of worship, schools and municipal buildings were left with significant flooding after the City saw almost nine inches of rain. Many lost treasured personal items, furniture, appliances, vehicles and hope. In the midst of great loss, it has warmed my heart to see neighbors, family, friends and the community come together to support each other in these difficult times.

President Biden approved Governor Hochul's request for a Major Disaster Declaration which will allow FEMA to provide much-needed federal relief funds to individuals, households, businesses, schools, houses of worship, non-profits and localities in our region. I am grateful for the hard work of our local, county, state and federal officials for working through the weekend to make this possible.

Below are several Federal, State and County resources that will assist you in obtaining the proper information to get the help you need.

FEDERAL FEMA RESOURCES

To view the FEMA Individual Assistance application (and required application information) please visit <https://www.disasterassistance.gov/>

If you need further information or assistance, you may also call the **FEMA Helpline at 1-800-621-3362**. This number is also for users of 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS). TTY users can call 1-800-462-7585. Helpline services are available 7 days a week from 7 a.m. to 1 a.m. ET.

GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL NYS RELIEF PROGRAMS

Visit <https://www.governor.ny.gov/programs/governors-relief-and-response-resources> to learn more about NY State programs.

WESTCHESTER COUNTY RESOURCES

Residents who need emergency housing assistance should contact the **County Department of Social Services at 914-995-2099.**

Eligible for assistance are impacted residents with eligible disaster-related losses:

- **Please make sure you are carefully documenting all damage in writing and with photographs, receipts and other documentation.**
- **Damage must have occurred during the incident period of the declaration and be a direct result of the incident.**
- **Eligible losses include non-insured damage/loss to primary residence, damage/loss to eligible personal property.**
- **Contact your insurance company to request a claims adjustor. Inform them that you have experienced water damage.**
- **If your insurance company denies your claim, contact FEMA for assistance.**

FEMA, in partnership with the State of New York and the County of Westchester, have set up a Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) where people can file claims for assistance. The stationary DRC is located at the

Grinton Will Library, 1500 Central Park Avenue Yonkers, NY 10710. Staff will be available from 9am to 5pm, Monday through Friday.

Westchester County is also working with FEMA to schedule mobile DRCs where residents can file online or remotely.

FEMA Individuals and Households Program (IHP): Provides financial assistance and direct services to eligible individuals and households who have uninsured or underinsured necessary expenses.

- **Eligibility:**

- Applicant must be a US Citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified aliens (undocumented residents.)
- FEMA must be able to verify the applicant's identity
- The applicant's insurance, or other forms of disaster assistance received, cannot meet their disaster-caused needs.
- The applicant's necessary expenses are directly caused by a declared disaster (note: Westchester and Bronx Counties are within the declared disaster region)

- **Financial Housing Assistance Provisions:**

- Rental Assistance: For renting alternate housing accommodations while an applicant is displaced from their disaster-damaged primary residence. This resource is not subject to a maximum award limitation.
- Lodging expense reimbursement: Reimbursement for hotels, motels or other short-term lodging while displaced from their disaster-damaged primary residence.
- Home Repair Assistance: To help repair an owner-occupied disaster-damaged primary residence, utilities and residential structure. This includes repairs to driveways and roads on private owner-occupied property. This can include repairs necessary under the American with Disabilities Act.
- Replacement Assistance: To help homeowners replace an owner-occupied primary residence when residence is destroyed by disaster.

- **Direct Housing Assistance:** In cases where there are not available housing resources, FEMA also offers Direct Housing Assistance, which includes:

- Multi-family lease and repair: Allows FEMA to enter lease agreements with owners of multi-family rental properties in disaster areas and make repairs to provide temporary housing.

- Transportable Temporary Housing Units: FEMA can purchase or lease an RV or manufactured home to eligible applicants for use as temporary housing.
- Direct Lease: FEMA can provide existing ready-for-occupancy residential properties.
- Permanent Housing Construction: Home repair and/or construction services in cases where other types of typical FEMA housing assistance isn't available.
- Frequently Asked Questions about IHP:
 - Will this impact other federal benefits I can receive? No. IHP is NOT considered income or a resource when determining eligibility for federal government programs (e.g. Social Security, SNAP). IHP is also exempt from garnishment or seizure.
 - If I have insurance, am I still eligible for IHP? This program is intended for those who are underinsured or uninsured. To be eligible, the applicant's insurance or other forms of disaster assistance received, cannot meet their disaster-caused needs.

Small Business Administration Assistance Small businesses recovering from Ida damage may also qualify for disaster loan assistance from the Small Business Administration. For information please visit <https://disasterloanassistance.sba.gov/ela/s/> or call 1-800-659-2955 (TTY/TDD: 1-800-877-8339)

Other Needs Assistance Provision:

- Small Business Administration provides long-term loans to help eligible applicants with transportation losses, moving and storage expenses, as well as repair/replacement funds for real and personal property damage. Only applicants who do not qualify for a loan from the SBA, or who were approved for a partial loan that does not cover the full need, can be eligible.
 - Personal Property Assistance: to repair/replace essential items (includes furnishings and appliances)
 - Transportation Assistance: to repair/replace eligible vehicle damaged by a disaster and other transportation-related costs

- Moving/Storage Assistance: To relocate and store personal essential household goods
- Other types of ONA offered outside of the Small Business Administration
 - Funeral Assistance: To assist with funeral costs directly or indirectly related to a declared emergency or major disaster.
 - Medical and Dental Assistance: To assist with medical or dental expenses caused by a disaster.
 - Child Care Assistance: One-time payment up to 8 cumulative weeks of childcare expenses for a household's increased financial burden to care for children aged 13 and under and/or children up to age 21 with a disability.

Disaster Unemployment Assistance: Disaster Unemployment Assistance provides financial assistance to individuals whose employment or self-employment has been lost or interrupted as a direct result of a major disaster and who are **not** eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits.

- Eligibility: Generally available to unemployed workers or self-employed individuals who lived, worked or was scheduled to work in the disaster area at the time of the disaster; and due to the disaster:
 - no longer has a job or a place to work; or
 - cannot reach the place of work; or
 - cannot work due to damage to the place of work; or
 - cannot work because of an injury caused by the disaster.
- DUA benefits are available only for weeks of unemployment within the Disaster Assistance Period (DAP). The DAP begins with the first day of the week following the date the major disaster began and continues for up to 26 weeks after the date the disaster was declared by the President.
- The maximum weekly benefit amount payable is determined under the provisions of the state law for unemployment compensation in NYS. However, the minimum weekly benefit amount payable is half (50%) of the average benefit amount in the state.

- **How to apply**

Disaster Legal Services: Provides free legal help to low-income disaster survivors. If you're not able to get adequate legal services for your disaster-related needs, DLS may be able to help.

- Eligibility: Low-income household who was directly impacted by the disaster.
- Disaster legal services can help with:
 - Insurance claims for medical bills, loss of property and loss of life
 - New wills, powers of attorney and other legal papers lost during the disaster
 - Home repair contracts and contractors
 - Issues with landlords related to the disaster
 - Proof of home ownership
 - FEMA appeals

How can constituents access FEMA assistance?

- Apply online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov.
- Constituents may call 1-800-621-3362 (TTY: 800-462-7585 for the hearing and speech impaired) for assistance.
- Si necesita ayuda en español, visita <https://www.fema.gov/es>

Supporting constituents who speak different languages:

- FEMA has brochures about “how to get help after a disaster” in 27 different languages, all located here:
<https://www.fema.gov/assistance/individual/brochure>

Assistance for House of Worships:

- Houses of worship may be eligible under the Public Assistance Program. See attached fact sheet on Public Assistance, Houses of Worship.

Are undocumented individuals eligible for all Individual Assistance programs? If not, where can I find information about which programs undocumented individuals are eligible for?

During the disaster assistance registration process, applicants self-certify their citizenship status and declare, under penalty of perjury, they are a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified alien. Only those three citizenship statuses may be eligible for IHP assistance. If the applicant does not match one of those three citizenship statuses, the household may still apply and be considered for IHP assistance if:

- Another adult household member meets the citizenship criteria, certifies their citizenship status, and is included as the co-applicant on the application; or
- The parent or guardian of a minor child who is a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or a qualified alien applies for assistance on behalf of the child, as long as they live in the same household and parent or guardian is at least 18 years of age. In these instances, the child should be registered as the applicant and their parent or guardian listed as the co-applicant.

Regardless of citizenship status, disaster survivors may be eligible for Mass Care and Emergency Assistance, such as search and rescue, medical care, shelter, food and water, and reducing threats to life, property, and public health or safety.

Once a declaration is approved, homeowners and renters can register online at www.disasterassistance.gov, use the FEMA App, or call 1-800-321-3362. Using online registration will be the quickest way to register.

- If survivors can safely get into their home, they should document damage using photographs or videos.
- If they have flood insurance, they should report losses immediately to their insurance agent or carrier. They should be sure to ask them about advance payments. If they need help finding their insurance agent or carrier, have them call the National Flood Insurance Program at **877-336-2627**.

Policyholders with [three-year Group Flood Insurance policies](#) can call the NFIP Direct at 800-638-6620. Select the preferred language and then choose option "2."

I want to extend a special thank you to DPW, Office of Emergency Management, The Fire Department of Mount Vernon, Mount Vernon Police Department, Building Department, the Department of Recreation, the Office of the Mayor and Empress EMS for working throughout the storm and all of departments and staff who stood "at ready."

I am also grateful for the partnership of the following who have been supportive throughout this crisis

U. S. Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand
U.S. Congressman Jamaal Bowman
NYS Governor Kathy Hochul
NYS Senators Jamaal T. Bailey and Alessandra Biaggi
NYS Assemblyman Gary Pretlow
County Executive George Latimer
County Legislators Tyrae Woodson Samuels and David Tubiolo
Mount Vernon City Council members

Forward Together,

Shawyn Patterson Howard

Mayor Shawyn Patterson Howard, MPA