



FEMA

Disaster News

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THREE MORE TYPES OF DISASTER ASSISTANCE, Disaster Unemployment, Disaster Legal Services, Federal Taxes

LACEY, WASH. - Washington residents who lost their jobs or became unemployed because of the November 2-11 floods may be eligible to receive unemployment benefits.

Eligible workers have until Jan. 13 to apply for disaster unemployment. Applications are available online at www.wa.gov/esd/ui/dua.htm. Unemployed workers also can request an application by phone, toll-free, at 877-416-7274, by e-mail at dua@esd.wa.gov or in person at local WorkSource centers.

Disaster unemployment assistance is funded through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and administered by the Washington State Employment Security Department. People do not need to contact FEMA to be eligible. It is a special unemployment benefit for those who became unemployed as a result of this federally declared disaster.

Disaster Legal Services provides volunteer attorneys who offer free, disaster-related legal assistance to individuals affected by the November 2-11 floods. The Young Lawyers Division of the Washington State Bar Association, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), provides legal counseling and referrals to residents through a toll-free hotline, **1-866-434-8939**. Applicants should call the phone number and leave their name, phone number, county of residence and the best time to be called back. They will be called back the next business day.

These voluntary attorneys can advise callers regarding legal issues related to the disaster such as replacing lost legal documents, home repair contracts, insurance claims and landlord/tenant matters. Many problems can be addressed just by speaking with the attorney. The representation is at no charge to the caller.

The IRS does not tax disaster relief payments received for damages from the November 2-11 floods. According to the IRS, qualified disaster relief payments include payments you receive (regardless of the source). They include such assistance received for reasonable and necessary living expenses,

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home repairs, rental assistance and replacement of household contents as long as the losses were due to a federally declared disaster. For more information go to the IRS Web site (IRS.gov).

FEMA manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident, initiates mitigation activities and manages the National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA works closely with State and local emergency managers, law enforcement personnel, firefighters, and other first responders. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.

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.

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.

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