

President declares major disaster for territory of American Samoa

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

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WASHINGTON - The head of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) today announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for the territory of American Samoa and ordered federal aid to supplement territory and local recovery efforts in the area struck by an earthquake, tsunami, and flooding beginning on September 29, 2009, and continuing.

FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate said the president's action makes federal funding available to affected individuals in the territory of American Samoa.

This assistance will provide immediate resources to address response, including urgent life sustaining and public health and safety measures. Assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of the disaster.

Federal funding is also available to the territory of American Samoa and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for debris removal and emergency protective measures, including direct federal assistance.

Federal funding also is available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures for the territory of American Samoa.

Fugate named Kenneth R. Tingman as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Tingman said that damage surveys have been requested and will be conducted as soon as the situation permits.

FEMA said that residents and business owners who sustained losses in the territory can begin applying for assistance tomorrow by registering online at <http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov> or by calling 1-800-621-FEMA(3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. The toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. (local time) seven days a week until further notice.

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders and ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.