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FEMA News Desk: 802-951-2700
VEM Mark Bosma: 800-347-0488

News Release

FEMA HELPS PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ACCESS DISASTER ASSISTANCE

BURLINGTON, Vt – To help entire communities recover from Tropical Storm Irene’s flooding, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Vermont Emergency Management are working to make sure people with disabilities and those with access and functional needs have equal access to disaster assistance programs.

“We are committed to making the process of recovery available equally to all residents of Vermont,” said Craig Gilbert, Federal Coordinating Officer for FEMA. “Our goal is to ensure everyone, including people with disabilities, have accurate and accessible information about federal and state recovery programs.”

In order to achieve this goal, FEMA coordinates efforts with state and local agencies, as well as volunteer organizations, to identify needs and locate appropriate resources. FEMA has a Disability Integration Specialist on site in Vermont to coordinate the various elements of the programs.

FEMA provides physical access to facilities and reasonable program modifications as needed. For example, brochures are translated into large print or Braille, access ramps provide entry into Disaster Recovery Centers and assistance is offered to complete forms. Also, sign language interpreters, amplified phones and other assistive technology are available by request.

FEMA’s TTY line (800-462-7585) and 711 or Video Relay Service (800-621-3362) can be used to answer questions or register people who are deaf, have a speech disability or hearing loss. Residents can also register with FEMA by applying online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or call 800-621-FEMA (3362). Help is available in most languages. Phone lines are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week until further notice.

Those looking for the nearest disaster recovery center can check online at <https://asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/drcLocator.jsp> or call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-FEMA (3362), TTY 800-462-7585 or for 711/Video Relay Service, 800-621-3362.

FEMA’s mission is to support our citizens and first responders to 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.

(MORE)

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Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585; or call 800-621-3362 if using 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS).

FEMA's temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA loan officers to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

SBA disaster loan information and application forms may be obtained by calling the SBA's Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 (800-877-8339 for people with speech or hearing disabilities) Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET or by sending an e-mail to disastercustomerservice@sba.gov. Applications can also be downloaded from www.sba.gov or completed on-line at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>.

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