

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita FEMA-DR-1603/1607-LA Information Sheet #009

Education - Questions and Answers

1. I understand that FEMA will reimburse applicants for temporary classroom spaces with furniture, computers and other equipment. Does this include books?

- a. Answer: If books were damaged or destroyed along with the school facility, they are eligible for replacement. The replacement books can be used in the temporary facilities that may be required while the damaged facilities are being repaired or replaced. Even if used in temporary facilities the books, furniture, etc. that were damaged are eligible for replacement costs but are subject to insurance adjustments. However, if temporary school facilities are required in host communities to accommodate an influx of displaced students, books for the new students are not eligible.
- b. Affected schools should contact the federal Department of Education to determine if funding is available for books in host schools.

2. Will FEMA reimburse for additional teachers and staff required to support displaced students?

Answer: Incremental costs of teachers and teachers' aides are not eligible costs. However, other incremental costs to host schools caused by the influx of students may be eligible. These include student counselors, security personnel, janitors, and the incremental maintenance and utilities costs of any additional space. Applicants should contact the federal Department of Education to determine if funding is available for additional teachers.

3. Can FEMA advance funds to help with the cash flow crisis many School Boards are facing?

Answer: The FEMA PA program provides reimbursement to schools for emergency protective measures, debris removal and the repair and replacement of damaged facilities, including equipment and contents. Unfortunately, we do not provide reimbursement for operating expenses. FEMA does provide low interest loans to local governments, including school districts, which have experienced loss of revenue, through its Community Disaster Loan Program. The maximum loan amount is 25% of the current year operating budget.

4. What is the Community Disaster Loan Program? Is it available to School Boards? Can the amount be increased?

Answer: The Community Disaster Loan Act of 2005 authorized up to \$1 billion in direct loans to help local governments that have incurred a significant loss in revenue, due to a presidentially

declared disaster, that has or will adversely affect their ability to provide essential municipal services. School boards may be eligible to apply directly for a loan if they are components of the local government that have independent taxing authority. Otherwise, the local government may apply for a loan on their behalf. The maximum amount of a loan is 25% of the current year operating budget or the expected revenue loss for the current year and the next three years, whichever is less. We recommend that any applicant considering the Community Disaster Loan Program contact Colonel Tom Kirkpatrick (225) 389-7278 or Major Chris Cerniausks (225) 329-8269 of the Louisiana Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness 415 North 15th Street, Baton Rouge, La. 70802 for further discussion.

5. Increased student load is being experienced because of the disaster. This includes displaced students as well as children of parents who have relocated to the area, some to promote the recovery operations. Will this student population be eligible for temporary assistance?

Answer: Schools are eligible for reimbursement of certain costs for temporary facilities that are required to accommodate the influx of displaced students. Costs of educating a new population made up of students who were not displaced are not eligible.

6. Some receiving schools will require additional buses for the increased student population. Is this covered?

Answer: Additional transportation is an allowable expense for a limited time. Alternatives should be investigated (leasing, purchase, etc) and the most economical selected. If purchase is selected, upon completion of the temporary service the blue book value will be deducted from the grant amount. Operating costs including additional drivers, fuel, and maintenance are eligible costs for this disaster.

7. Will FEMA reimburse schools that provide interim temporary housing adjacent to public sector schools for teachers and staff members who have lost their homes and are currently living in other cities or states?

Answer: FEMA provides temporary housing assistance to disaster victims through its Individuals and Households Program (IHP). To the extent that the needs of school employees are not met in a timely manner through the IHP, we will consider requests from local applicants that provide essential services to the community for interim temporary housing assistance on a case-by-case basis. If teachers and staff are displaced and cannot find housing in a reasonable commuting distance, emergency housing may be eligible. Time limits apply. The applicant will need to describe the need, consider options, and provide a phase-out plan and schedule. This housing option will be coordinated with FEMA's Individual Assistance (IA) program; the housing units may be provided through that program.

8. Will FEMA reimburse state universities for providing additional housing for students displaced due to being flood evacuees?

Answer: If the host universities offer housing to students (displaced due to being flood evacuees) in existing facilities, they are not eligible for reimbursement. However, if temporary facilities are required to house the displaced students, these costs may be eligible. We will review each request on a case-by-case basis.

9. How much will FEMA pay for destroyed buses and other school vehicles?

Answer: Equipment and Vehicles may be eligible for repair or replacement when damaged as a result of the declared event. When beyond repair, replacement with a similar item of approximately the same age, capacity, and function is eligible. Blue book prices may be used as an initial guide. Replacement with new or newer items may be approved if a used item is not available within a reasonable time and cost. When applicable, salvage value of the damaged items and insurance must be deducted from the replacement cost.

10. How is repair/replacement of damaged/destroyed leased buses handled?

Answer: Reimbursement for leased buses would depend upon the terms of the contract and the amount of insurance. Generally, any disaster-specific costs that are the legal responsibility of the applicant would be eligible for reimbursement upon request by the applicant.

11. How does FEMA treat a facility under construction before the event?

Answer: In general, facilities under construction are the responsibility of the contractor until the owner has accepted the work as complete. In the event of damage to a facility under construction, FEMA must determine if the Applicant is responsible for repairs before granting assistance.

Repairs are eligible in the following situations:

- The contract under which the work is being performed placed responsibility for damage on the Applicant during the construction period.
- Prior to the disaster, the Applicant accepted the work as complete and, therefore, assumed responsibility. If the Applicant accepted responsibility for a portion of the site, repairs to that portion of the site are eligible.

12. Do faith-based and other private nonprofit schools that were damaged in the disaster qualify for FEMA assistance?

Answer: Yes, eligible private nonprofit (PNP) schools, including faith-based schools, qualify for FEMA assistance; pursuant to FEMA Policy #9521.3 on PNPs. Eligibility does not include houses of worship and religious curricula.

13. Do faith-based and other private nonprofit schools that are host schools to evacuees qualify for FEMA assistance?

Answer: Their costs may be eligible but they must apply for them through an eligible governmental sponsor.

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Because this document is not exhaustive, either in topics or in detail, information should be verified with FEMA Public Assistance Program officials before becoming the basis for decision-making.