



FEMA

LA  BEOC
LOUISIANA BUSINESS EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

Private Sector Advisory

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Flood Survivors Urged to Avoid Fraud and Other Scams

Being cautious is essential to preventing rip-offs. Don't offer personal financial information over the phone. Know who you are dealing with. Never be shy about asking for identification. Government workers will never ask for a fee or payment. They always wear an official government photo ID.

Homeowners and registered FEMA applicants should watch out for housing inspectors claiming to represent FEMA or the U.S. Small Business Administration. Inspectors already have each applicant's nine-digit registration number and a FEMA inspector will not ask for this number. FEMA inspectors never require banking or other personal information. The job of FEMA housing inspectors is to verify damage. Inspectors do not hire or endorse specific contractors to fix homes or recommend repairs. They do not determine eligibility for assistance.

Watch out for middlemen who promise you will receive disaster grants or money, especially if they ask for an upfront payment. Keep these consumer safety tips in mind when working with contractors:

- Verify the license or registration number with the Louisiana State Licensing Board for Contractors at www.lacontractor.org or call 800-256-1392.
- Get three written estimates for repair work. Then check credentials and contact your local Better Business Bureau or Chamber of Commerce to learn about any complaints against the contractor or business.
- Before work begins, make sure you get a written contract detailing all the work to be performed, the costs, a projected completion date, and how to negotiate changes and settle disputes.
- Louisiana, Attorney General Jeff Landry, encourages you to use the following tips:
 - Take a picture of your contractor, his/her vehicle, and its license plate.
 - Take a picture of the contractor's business card and his/her driver's license.
 - Photograph or scan his/her contracting license and insurance.
 - Photograph or scan the contract made with him/her.
 - Photograph or scan all checks and money orders made as payments to the contractor.
 - Preserve all these photographs by emailing them to yourself and a trusted companion and/or by saving them in a cloud-based application.
- If you suspect anyone – an inspector, disaster survivor, or someone posing as one of these – of fraudulent activities, call the FEMA toll-free Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721 or your local law enforcement officials.
- To report a scam or sign up for consumer alerts, call Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry's Consumer Protection Hotline at 800-351-4889 or visit www.AGJeffLandry.com.

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Disaster Recovery Centers Opened in East Baton Rouge, Livingston, Evangeline, and Acadia Parishes for Louisiana Survivors

Disaster recovery centers are now open in Acadia, Livingston, East Baton Rouge and Evangeline parishes to assist Louisiana flood survivors. The centers are open **8 a.m. to 6 p.m.**, seven days a week, until further notice.

These disaster recovery centers are located at the following addresses:

Celtic Studios

10000 Celtic Drive
Baton Rouge, LA 70809

Old Wells Fargo Building

10 N. Parkerson Avenue
Crowley, LA 70526

Recreation Center at Sidney Hutchinson Park

(Mobile DRC)
13470 Ball Park Road
Walker, LA 70785

North Side Civic Center

(Mobile DRC)
704 N. Soileau Street
Ville Platte, LA 70586

Survivors may locate other centers near them by visiting [fema.gov/disaster-recovery-centers](https://www.fema.gov/disaster-recovery-centers), calling the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362, or downloading the FEMA mobile app.

Disaster recovery centers are staffed by representatives from the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Small Business Administration, National Flood Insurance Program specialists, volunteer groups and other agencies. These representatives are available to provide information about disaster assistance, flood insurance, personal and property risk reduction and low-interest disaster loans for homeowners, renters and businesses. They can also help survivors apply for federal disaster assistance.

Free Legal Services Available To Disaster Survivors

Free disaster-related legal advice is available to low-income Louisiana flood survivors through a partnership among the Louisiana State Bar Association, the Louisiana Civil Justice Center, the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Low-income survivors facing legal issues may call the Legal Services hotline, 800-310-7029, between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Voice mail is available 24/7 and messages are generally returned the next business day. Examples of legal assistance available include:

- Assistance with securing FEMA and other benefits available to disaster survivors;
- Assistance with life, medical and property insurance claims;
- Help with home repair contracts and contractors;
- Replacement of wills and other important legal documents that were destroyed;
- Assisting in consumer protection matters, remedies and procedures;
- Counseling on mortgage-foreclosure problems; and
- Counseling on landlord/tenant problems.

Survivors should be aware that there are some limitations. For example, assistance is not available for cases where fees could be paid as part of a court settlement. Those cases will be referred to a lawyer-referral service.

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Louisiana Flood Survivors Can Get FEMA Rebuilding Advice at Home Improvement Stores

As Louisianans repair or rebuild their homes damaged by August floods, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and local hardware and home improvement stores have teamed up to provide free information, tips and literature on making homes stronger and safer.

FEMA mitigation specialists will be on hand to provide information at area stores from **Aug. 30 to Sept. 10**. They will be available to answer questions and offer home improvement tips and proven methods to prevent and lessen damage from future disasters. Most of the information is aimed at both do-it-yourselfers and general contractors. FEMA advisors will be on hand at information centers in the locations below:

Lowe's
Acadia Parish
142 Julia John Drive
Crowley, LA 70526
Mon-Sun 7 a.m to 7 p.m.

The Home Depot
Ascension Parish
2740 S. Cajun Avenue
Gonzales, LA 70737
Mon-Sun 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Sunday 8 a.m to 7 p.m.

Lowe's
St. Landry Parish
1130 E. Landry St.
Opelousas, LA 70570
Mon-Sun 7 a.m to 7 p.m

Free reference booklets, in English and Spanish, with information on protecting your home from flood damage, will be available at all locations. More information about strengthening property can be found at <http://www.fema.gov/what-mitigation>.

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We urge everyone to continue to use caution in areas where floodwaters remain. Monitor DOTD's www.511la.org website for updated road closure information. Look for advisories from your local authorities and emergency managers. You can find the latest information on the state's response at www.emergency.la.gov GOHSEP also provides information on Facebook and Twitter. You can receive emergency alerts on most smartphones and tablets by downloading the new Alert FM App. It is free for basic service. You can also download the Louisiana Emergency Preparedness Guide and find other information at www.getagameplan.org.

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.

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. Follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/femaregion6> and the FEMA Blog at <http://blog.fema.gov>.

The U.S. Small Business Administration is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps businesses of all sizes, private non-profit organizations, homeowners and renters fund repairs or rebuilding efforts and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover losses not fully compensated by insurance or other recoveries and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. For more information, applicants may contact SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center by calling (800) 659-2955, emailing disastercustomerservice@sba.gov or visiting SBA's website at SBA.gov/disaster. Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals may call (800) 877-8339.