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Disaster News

WASHINGTON COUNTIES RECEIVE INFRASTRUCTURE ASSISTANCE

OLYMPIA— The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Washington Emergency Management Division (WEMD) have announced that 22 Washington counties are now eligible to receive Public Assistance to help state and local governments recover from damages after the severe winter storm, landslides, mudslides, and flooding from Jan. 6 to Jan. 16.

Fourteen of the counties have already been designated to receive individual assistance: Cowlitz, Clallam, Grays Harbor, King, Kittitas, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, Thurston, Wahkiakum and Whatcom. In addition, the following counties have been added for public assistance only: Chelan, Columbia, Garfield, Jefferson, Klickitat, Lincoln, Skamania and Yakima. Benton County has been designated to receive individual assistance only.

"These storms caused heavy damage to essential community infrastructure," said State Coordinating Officer Kurt Hardin. "I am pleased that these communities will get the assistance needed to help repair their property and restore their lives."

Public Assistance reimburses state and local governments, as well as certain private non-profit organizations, for 75 percent of eligible disaster-related costs, such as repair or replacement of property, debris removal and emergency protective measures.

"We will work closely with these eligible government units to reimburse them for these unexpected expenses," said Federal Coordinating Officer Willie Nunn. "A series of Applicant Briefings for local officials will be held to explain the program, including the types of eligible costs and how to document them."

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FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

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

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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.

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The Small Business Administration (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 nonprofit 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. Homeowners, renters and business owners with questions for the SBA should call the Customer Service Center at 1-800-659-2955 (TTY 1-800-877-8339).