



FEMA

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Disaster News

DISASTER RECOVERY CENTERS SHIFTING TO LOAN ASSISTANCE CENTERS – ASSISTANCE STILL AVAILABLE

CLEVELAND – The joint Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) will close at the end of business at 6 p.m. on Thursday, August 17, and transition into U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Loan Assistance Centers, which will open on Friday, August 18, to continue to provide assistance to disaster victims.

“The Disaster Loan Assistance Centers will continue to ensure that every qualified family and business receives the help they need to recover from this disaster,” said Nancy Dragani, State Coordinating Officer and Executive Director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency.

The Disaster Loan Assistance Centers will be open Monday through Friday until further notice. The hours of operation, will be from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at all centers except the Eastlake City Hall Building, which will close at 4:30 p.m. The centers are located at:

Northwest Ambulance District 1480 S. Broadway (State Route 534) Geneva, OH 44041	Lakeland Community College East 201 Water Tower Drive Madison, OH 44057
First Congregational United Church of Christ 22 Liberty Street Painesville, OH 44077	
Mentor Senior Center (West Entrance) 6313 Center Street Mentor, OH 44060	Eastlake City Hall Building 35150 Lake Shore Boulevard Eastlake, OH 44077 (Hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Mon. thru Fri.)

SBA customer service representatives will be available to answer questions and help applicants to complete their low-interest disaster loan applications. A Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recovery specialist will also be on site to answer FEMA-related questions.

“Help is also just a toll-free phone call away,” said FEMA’s Federal Coordinating Officer Jesse Munoz, “Operators are available at the FEMA Helpline 1-800-621-3362 or TTY 1-800-462-7585 for the speech and hearing impaired, seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. to answer any specific questions about your application.”

People may also register for assistance online at their convenience at www.fema.gov. **The deadline to apply is September 30.**

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We urge applicants to send in their SBA loan application, even if they do not want a loan. Those who do not return their SBA applications may be missing out on a referral to FEMA for additional help for individuals in the form of grants.

More than 1,100 Ohio residents have visited one of the centers, which opened on Aug. 5. These temporary centers were established to provide detailed program information to those who have already applied for assistance. In addition to FEMA Human Services personnel and SBA customer services representatives, disaster recovery specialists staffed the centers to answer questions and provide information on recovery, restoration and rebuilding. The Ohio Department of Insurance and the Ohio EMA staff have also supported the DRCs.

Anyone with questions concerning SBA disaster loan applications can call the SBA Disaster Customer Service Center at 1-800-659-2955 (TTY 1-800-877-8339 for the hearing-impaired), Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. until 9 p.m. EDT. Applications may be obtained, completed and returned to any Disaster Loan Assistance Center or mailed to: U.S. Small Business Administration, National Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, Texas 76155. Business loan applications can also be downloaded from the SBA Web site at www.sba.gov/disaster.

The deadline for physical damage applications is Oct. 2, 2006; the deadline for economic injury applications is May 2, 2007.

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FEMA manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, works with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA became a part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.

The Ohio EMA coordinates state assistance and resources during an emergency and prepares the state for all hazards through planning, training, exercises and funding activities at the state and local levels. This includes providing eligible assistance to individuals and governmental entities recovering from disaster-related damage and costs.

County EMA directors must plan, train, and exercise for any possible emergency/disaster, natural or man-made, that may impact the county, with the express intent of saving lives and protecting property. Working with county commissioners, the county EMA directors initiate the issuance of a disaster declaration and, when needed, coordinate response and recovery efforts with the Ohio EMA and FEMA. After the disaster is over, the county EMA director works closely with local, state, and federal officials to identify and implement mitigation efforts, which may limit the occurrence of future disasters.

Temporary housing assistance from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) does not require that an applicant file for an SBA loan. However, an applicant must complete an SBA loan application to be eligible for additional assistance under the part of the Other Needs Assistance (ONA) program that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses. There are other ONA grants such as public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses that do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan to be eligible. FEMA will process applications for housing assistance regardless of whether the applicant has applied for an SBA loan and eligibility determinations for applicants requesting FEMA's temporary housing assistance will not be held up because the applicant has or has not filled out an SBA application.