

Cal EMA

*California Emergency
Management Agency*



FEMA

January 2, 2009
DR-1810-CA NR-XX
FEMA/State News Desk:
(626) 431-3910
SBA: Roger Busch
(916) 717-5807

Disaster News

FEDERAL, STATE WILDFIRE ASSISTANCE TOPS \$13.6 MILLION

PASADENA, Calif. – Federal and state assistance topped \$13.6 million in 2008 for residents who suffered in the November wildfires in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and Santa Barbara counties.

Assistance is available from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) because of the presidential major disaster declaration. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and the California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA) and the California Department of Social Services also are providing help.

“The assistance total will be climbing daily with the new year as more people register with FEMA and more applications are processed,” said Mark Neveau, federal coordinating officer. “By design, most of the money to help people recover is in the form of SBA low-interest disaster assistance loans to homeowners, renters and businesses.”

As of the end of 2008, SBA had approved 84 loans for a total of \$11,366,800.

FEMA grants are much more limited in scope, but do not have to be repaid like SBA loans. Also, they are not taxed as income nor do they affect Social Security benefits. So far, FEMA has approved \$2,285,103 for 352 households.

For people who still have unmet needs after receiving the maximum FEMA grant (\$30,300) but are unable to qualify for an SBA loan, Cal EMA is able to refer them to the California Department of Social Services for the State Supplemental Grant Program (SSGP) where up to an additional \$10,000 grant may be available.

“California’s supplemental grant program has provided \$130,000 to 13 households as of the year end,” said Tom Maruyama, deputy state coordinating officer.

So far, 2,251 persons have registered with FEMA for assistance, which automatically registers them with Cal EMA. Many are insured and not immediately eligible for FEMA assistance until after they have completed settlement with their insurer. If at that point they have uninsured losses, they can ask FEMA to reconsider their application.

To be considered for FEMA assistance, including uninsured losses, persons must be registered with FEMA before the registration deadline for this disaster, January 20. They can register at FEMA’s toll-free line, **1-800-621-3362 (FEMA)**, TTY 1-800-621-7585. Online registration and application status also is available at the new federal disaster registration website, www.disasterassistance.gov. That comprehensive multi-agency site also can be reached through its link at www.fema.gov.

###

FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.

The California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA) coordinates overall state agency response to major disasters in support of local government. Cal EMA maintains the State Emergency Plan, which outlines the organizational structure for state management of the response to natural and manmade disasters. Cal EMA assists local governments and their state agencies in developing their own emergency preparedness and response plans in accordance with the Standardized Emergency Management System and the State Emergency Plan.

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 non-profit 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. For information about SBA programs, applicants may call 1-800-659-2955 (TTY 1-800-977-8339.)