



Disaster News

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RESOURCES FOR FLOOD NEEDS AVAILABLE

Free legal counsel, flood-related unemployment, food and home assistance are available.

LA CROSSE, Wis. – Families face hardships when confronted with flood damage. Property repairs may stretch money thin for other needs like food. Vital home elements like furnaces and septic systems malfunction or breakdown. Jobs disappear due to property damage at a workplace. Water damage from flooding can ruin important documents. Services are available to help with these and other situations.

FOOD

Residents in Crawford, La Crosse, Richland, Sauk and Vernon counties can apply for food assistance at their local human services office until Sept. 18. The state's FoodShare Program provides this assistance. Money awarded depends on family size and eligibility, which is based on damage to a family's home, belongings or place of employment. Disaster-related expenses are included in the consideration process.

The application process starts by filling out a two-page form, accompanied, if possible, by proof of identity and residency. An application, and information on all local agencies, including addresses and hours, is available at dhfs.wisconsin.gov.

HOME NEEDS

Homeowners living in declared counties may be eligible for grant funding to pump septic tanks, perform required repairs or replace the system as needed. Damaged, private wells that are the sole source of water for the home also may be repaired or decontaminated with a home-repair grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Furnaces damaged by flooding may be replaced by the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program. An assessment must be completed to certify that the home is certifiably habitable, and insurance payments and FEMA funds have been applied to other home repairs. For more information, there is a Home Energy Plus Hotline – 1-866-432-8947.

At least a dozen volunteer agencies have been working to help residents with clean-up, serving meals in the affected regions and providing other assistance. To request help from volunteer agencies or to volunteer, call 211 from a land line, or 1-877-947-2211 from a cell phone.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) is available to those who lost work because of the disaster who are not generally eligible for traditional unemployment benefits such as self-employed and agricultural workers.

DUA applications for residents in Crawford, La Crosse, Richland, Sauk and Vernon counties are due by close of business September 26. Residents in Columbia, Dane, Grant, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Kenosha, Racine and Rock counties have until Oct. 8 to apply. Further information is available at the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development at www.dwd.state.wi.us.

Claims can be made during business hours by calling the Unemployment Insurance Division in Madison at 608-232-0678 or 608-266-1871, in Milwaukee at 414-438-7700 or toll free at 1-800-822-5246. A number for the hearing or speech impaired (TTY) is also available at 1-888-393-8914.

LEGAL

Disaster-related assistance is available to residents in need of legal counsel. The number to call is 1-866-408-8017 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Licensed, volunteer attorneys will respond to calls within 48 hours. Attorneys can help with replacing documents lost during flooding, insurance claims, landlord-tenant issues, consumer protection matters, drafting of powers of attorney, etc.

Wisconsin citizens affected by the severe storms and flooding that occurred August 18 – 31 in Columbia, Crawford, Dane, Grant, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Kenosha, La Crosse, Racine, Richland, Rock, Sauk and Vernon counties can apply for assistance. Residents can apply online at www.fema.gov anytime or by calling toll-free **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)**, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., daily until further notice. Those with speech or hearing impairment may call **TTY 1-800-462-7585**.

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.

For more information on Wisconsin disaster recovery, visit www.fema.gov, www.floodsmart.gov, www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance or <http://emergencymanagement.wi.gov>.

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