

DISASTER LEGAL ASSISTANCE INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

1. Ask about and document all of the client's disaster-related losses and needs.
2. Advise the client to call **1-888-LA-HELP-U (624-3578)** to apply for disaster assistance programs and/or get more information.
3. **1-888-LA-HELP-U** transfers clients to the **FEMA** application line **1-800-621- FEMA (621-3362)** to apply for FEMA disaster assistance. Even if the client has already applied for disaster food stamps, or disaster Medicaid, make sure they have also applied for FEMA help. They should have a FEMA application number if they have applied, and you should note their FEMA application number on your intake (or note that you have advised them to apply).
4. The FEMA application line is very busy, and they are encouraging those affected by the disaster to file their application for help on-line at www.fema.gov. You can help our client file if you have internet access, and your interview checklist can help you assist your client in identifying **all** their disaster-related losses and needs.
5. Reassure your client that although disaster recovery is a long process, there are a number of programs and people that can help.
6. Help your client to keep track of all the calls, claims and information they are making and receiving related to their disaster losses and needs. Give them a notebook and folder to keep important phone numbers, contact names, application numbers, copies of materials and any questions they have.
7. Let your client know it is very important to keep you, FEMA and any other state, local or federal agency they applied to or are getting help from updated with their current contact information, including an address and phone number if they have one, so

they can get the help and information they need. They can also call FEMA to check on the status of their application.

8. As your client's circumstances change or as they identify new disaster-related needs (e.g. they find they need mental health counseling several weeks from now, or discover that they have lost more property than they originally thought), they should let you know, and call FEMA to update their disaster application.

INTERVIEW CHECKLIST DISASTER RELATED NEEDS AND LOSSES AND PROGRAMS THAT MAY HELP

Housing Needs/Programs

1. Where were you living at the time of the disaster?

Rent? Own? Landlord/Mortgage Company (name, address, phone number)

Who lived with you there? (names, ages, relationships). Are all of these people still living with you? (if have been separated, may need to apply for FEMA assistance as separate households.

What damage did you sustain to your home? (don't know yet, complete loss, major damage- describe) Are you able to go back there now?

Did you/your household have any home insurance? (Company name, coverage type, amount) HUD or other mortgage insurance? Medical insurance?

If you own your home and were given up to \$5,000 for emergency repairs, could you repair your home so you could safely return there? (FEMA IHP program- emergency home repairs) What if you could get up to about \$26,000 for repairs? (FEMA IHP program).

(Note: IHP program funds can also be used for car repair or replacement, public transportation, replacement of personal property (e.g. furniture, appliances) and items like clothing, and tools for employment. There is a **\$26,200 total cap** on the FEMA IHP funds available to any household).

Where are you living now? (address, contact #) Do you need help paying rent to stay here or somewhere else? (FEMA IHP program-housing assistance, up to 18 months)

If you were given up to \$10,000 to help buy a new home, would you have enough income to be able to buy a new home with a loan (up to 200,000?) (FEMA IHP home replacement program, with SBA loan)?

If temporary housing were available, at a military base, on a cruise ship, or in public housing, would that meet your temporary housing needs?

Personal needs/Programs

Were any of your loved ones injured or killed as a result of the disaster?

If someone has passed away, may qualify for Social Security Survivors benefits, TANF if have children or relative's children, Social Security death benefit (about \$225), FEMA IHP program funds for funeral expenses, including burial or cremation.

If someone was injured, disabled, or was affected by the disaster and needs medical insurance, medications, durable medical equipment (e.g. wheelchair) they may be able to get help through Medicaid or the FEMA IHP program.

Did you lose food or food stamps as a result of the disaster? (Expedited Disaster Food stamps are available; call 888-LA-HELP-U for more information).

Did you or anyone in your household lose personal property as a result of the disaster? (describe/list). Did you have insurance? (info)

(FEMA IHP program, up to \$26,200 cap, can pay for repair or replacement of the client's automobile, public transportation, clothing, school supplies including computer, household furnishings and appliances, tools for employment, durable medical equipment replacement or repairs, moving and storage expenses, unmet medical and dental expenses, and funeral expenses).

Employment and Business Losses/Programs

Did you or anyone in your family lose their job or become unable to work because of the disaster?

Unemployment or expanded Disaster Unemployment Insurance is available, even if your client was self-employed, or was about to start a job but now can't because of the disaster, or can't get to their job, or have become the head of the household because of a disaster-related death.

Your client may need to apply for state and federal disability benefits programs (e.g. state disability, Social Security), TANF/welfare assistance, food stamps, Medicaid, or other public benefits programs.

Was your business damaged or destroyed as a result of the disaster? (describe) Any insurance? (SBA has several loan programs for businesses that were damaged or destroyed as a result of the disaster- up to \$1.5 million)

Other needs/programs

Does anyone in the family need mental health counseling or support? (FEMA crisis counseling services, other programs)

Federal Income tax relief may be available.

Were you or anyone in your family the victim of a violent crime?

Victims of violent crimes that may have happened during the disaster may be eligible for compensation through the Crime Victims Reparation Program (up to \$10,000 for damages sustained, up to \$25,000 if total/permanent disability).

Have you applied for FEMA assistance? (If so, application # and date. If not, advise to apply if suffered disaster related losses and do not have insurance that covers)

(If applicable), Have you applied for other programs? (e.g. Social Security, Disaster Food Stamps, Medicaid, TANF (FITAP or Kinship))

Have you made any insurance claims? (if so, any problems?)

Are you worried about bills or have questions about bankruptcy?

Do you have any legal problems as a result of the disaster that we have not talked about? (describe)