Role and Scope of FEMA Individual Assistance

* 1. FEMA’s Individual Assistance (IA) program can be activated under a Presidentially declared disaster declaration. It provides funding to households for basic home repairs, rental assistance and in limited cases funding for personal property losses. FEMA IA is supplemental, with insurance proceeds and or SBA low-interest loans being the primary sources of recovery funding.

Key Messages

* At its core, the Individual Assistance (IA) program is designed to provide much-needed relief to people following a disaster to help them jumpstart their recovery as quick as possible. It is one part of the recovery process, but it is not intended to make an individual whole again.
* FEMA IA encompasses two primary programs, housing assistance and other needs assistance.
* **Housing assistance** may provide funding for basic repairs to make the home habitable, or rental assistance to find another place to live while larger repairs are completed on the disaster damaged home.
* **Other needs assistance** may provide funding for personal property such as clothing, medical needs, and other critical items.
* FEMA reviews each request for assistance individually, and everyone’s situation will vary slightly, and assistance funds will vary on a case-by-case basis.
* FEMA cannot duplicate other forms of assistance, including insurance. Individuals will need to receive an insurance settlement prior to receiving FEMA assistance. FEMA can provide assistance if insurance proceeds do not cover all disaster losses.

Additional Information from FEMA.gov:

## **Individual Assistance (FEMA)**

## Note: Excerpt from FEMA Disaster Declaration Process & Federal Disaster Assistance, dated March 2024

### **INDIVIDUALS AND HOUSEHOLDS PROGRAM**

The FEMA Individuals and Households Program (IHP) provides up to $42,500 (FY 2024) for financial assistance for Housing Assistance and $42,500 (FY 2024) for Other Needs Assistance financial help to those who have necessary expenses and serious needs if they are unable to meet the needs through other means. In addition, FEMA may provide Direct Assistance to individuals or households who, because of a lack of available resources, are unable to make use of financial temporary housing assistance. When a disaster occurs, IHP provides grant money and services to people in the declared area whose property has been damaged or destroyed and whose losses are underinsured or not covered by insurance.

#### What Types of Assistance Are Provided?

The IHP has two provisions: Housing Assistance and Other Needs Assistance. The IHP - Housing Assistance (HA) (including Temporary Housing, Home Repair/Replacement, and Semi-Permanent or Permanent Housing Construction) assures that people whose homes are damaged by a disaster have a safe place to live. The IHP - Other Needs Assistance (ONA) (including personal property and other items) provides financial assistance to individuals and households who have other disaster-related necessary expenses or serious needs. These provisions are designed to provide funds for expenses that are underinsured or not covered by insurance. They are available only to homeowners and renters who are United States citizens, non-citizen nationals, or qualified non-citizens affected by the disaster. The following is a list of the types of assistance available through this program and what each provides.

#### Housing Assistance (HA)

May include:

Temporary Housing

* Repair/Replacement
* Direct Temporary Housing Assistance
* Permanent Housing Construction (PHC)

#### Other Needs Assistance (ONA)

This assistance may be provided to eligible homeowners and renters.

* Serious Needs Assistance
* Displacement Assistance
* Personal Property Assistance
* Transportation Assistance
* Child Care Assistance
* Moving and Storage Expenses
* Assistance for Miscellaneous Items

## **Small Business Administration: Disaster Loans (SBA)**

### The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) provides low-interest loans to help businesses, nonprofit organizations, homeowners, or renters located in a disaster declared area repair or replace homes, personal property, or business losses not covered by insurance or funding from FEMA. SBA disaster assistance is provided in the form of loans, not grants, and therefore must be repaid to the federal government. For many individuals the SBA disaster loan program is the primary form of disaster assistance.

#### PHYSICAL DAMAGE LOANS

* SBA provides home and personal property disaster loans to homeowners, renters, and personal property owners to repair or replace property damaged or destroyed in a disaster. Homeowners may apply for up to $200,000 to replace or repair their primary residence. Renters, homeowners, and personal property owners may borrow up to

$40,000 to replace or repair personal property, such as clothing, furniture, cars, or appliances.

* Businesses of any size and most private nonprofit organizations may apply to SBA for a business physical disaster loan of up to $2 million to cover disaster losses not fully covered by insurance or other sources. Loan proceeds may be used for repair or replacement of real property, inventory, equipment, machinery, fixtures, and leasehold improvements.