

The Virgin Islands Consortium

How To Appeal A FEMA Decision, According To FEMA

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If you are a survivor who received an ineligibility letter from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on disaster assistance, don't give up. It may not be the last word. An ineligibility letter may mean that FEMA does not have all the information needed to approve an application for assistance or it may be due to another easily corrected issue, FEMA said in a recent release.

"Every applicant has the right to appeal any decision," said Federal Coordinating Officer William Vogel. "When you appeal FEMA's decision, you are asking us to review your case again, and we will do that. We want to help."

All appeals must be made in the form of a signed letter within 60 days of the date on the determination letter. In the appeal, applicants should clearly explain why they disagree with the decision. The appeal should include any requested information and supporting documentation. If the person writing the appeal letter is not the applicant or a member of the applicant's household, a statement must be included granting authorization to the writer to act on the applicant's behalf.

The applicant should also submit photocopies of receipts for materials and labor as well as up to three written bids for repair work if those costs exceed the award amount.

All appeals letters must include the following:

- Applicant's full name, date of birth and current address
- Applicant's signature and the date
- Applicant's registration number (on every page)
- FEMA disaster declaration number on each page – DR-4335 (Irma) or DR-4340 (Maria)

Letters and supporting documentation may be uploaded quickly to an applicant's account on DisasterAssistance.gov, faxed to 800-827-8112 with the cover sheet provided with the FEMA determination letter; or submitted at a Disaster Recovery Center where assistance is also available to assist applicants with ensuring all necessary documents are included. Letters may also be sent by mail to:

FEMA

National Processing Service Center

P.O. Box 10055

Hyattsville, MD 20782-7055

At any time, survivors may call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362 or TTY 800-462-7585 to update their application information or get questions answered. Those who use 711-Relay or Video Relay Services may call 800-621-3362. The toll-free telephone numbers operate from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. (local time) seven days a week until further notice. Operators are standing by to assist survivors in English, Spanish and many other languages.