

MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

NEWS



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SUBJECT: "Safe Room" Grant Funds Available In Storm-Damaged Area

TUPELO---Individuals and governments who suffered property damage in the 35 Mississippi counties included in the tornado disaster area may be eligible for grant funds to construct safe buildings for greater protection from future storms.

Leon Shaifer, state coordinating officer for the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), said hazard mitigation specialists and local emergency management officials will be in the following areas next week to explain the program:

Monday, March 12:

10 a.m. at the Sunflower Food Store parking lot, 734 E. 15th St., Yazoo City.

2 p.m. at the Leflore/Greenwood Civic Center, Hwy 7 front parking lot, Greenwood.

Tuesday, March 13:

9 a.m. Pontotoc Agri-Center, Hwy. 15, Pontotoc.

3 p.m. at new Wal-Mart Super Center, parking lot on Hwy. 12, Starkville.

Any eligible homeowner, government entity, or private non-profit organization located in the declared area with documented damage is eligible to apply for a grant. Also, applicants in these groups without damages may apply. The grants are funded with 75 percent federal dollars and a local participating share of 25 percent that may be in cash or in-kind contributions.

The program will be administered by MEMA. Local governments and emergency management directors will make the determination on specific shelter needs and submit their requests to the state. Shaifer explained the selection procedure was adopted "because local governments in the stricken area are more knowledgeable of the needs in their communities."

Plans for the safe room, either underground or in-ground, must comply with federal shelter specifications. Because of limited availability in the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program fund, safe room grants will be 75 percent of eligible costs. They may not exceed \$3,500 for construction and installation of a residential safe room or in-ground shelter, and \$5,000 for construction and installation of a government critical facility safe room.

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