

MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
MISSISSIPPI OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

(Columbus) - Individuals and governments who suffered property damage in the 6 Mississippi counties of Lowndes, Oktibbeha, Monroe, Clay, Noxubee, and Lafayette may be eligible for \$1.5 million in grant funds to construct safe rooms or storm shelters for greater protection from future storms.

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. Robert Latham, Executive Director of MEMA, 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 or underground or in-ground storm shelters, 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, 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 community shelter.

The strategy has been developed to help save lives and Mississippi Emergency Management Agency in partnership with the Federal Emergency Management agency and the local county emergency management agencies will administer the program. MEMA will act as the grantee and the county emergency management agency will act as the sub grantees. The state of Mississippi safe room initiative will be available to any eligible applicant who lives in one of the 6 declared counties. However, due to limited funding the following prioritization is given to:

- 1. Any homeowner, government organization, or private non-profit organization located within a declared county that had documented damage.**
- 2. Any homeowner, government organization, or private non-profit organization located with a declared county that was not damaged.**

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