



FEMA

April 1, 2019  
FEMA DR-4413-AK NR 024  
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# News Release

## State, Federal and Community Partners Join to Help Alaska Recover

**ANCHORAGE, Alaska** – After Alaska was jolted by a magnitude 7.1 earthquake on Nov. 30, the state, FEMA, volunteer and community partners rallied to respond to immediate safety and sheltering needs, repairing critical infrastructure, providing meals and shelter, and supplying new winter coats for students.

These efforts have continued at a steady pace, with the state of Alaska spending more than \$5 million in its response.

The earthquake damaged more than 75 roads and bridges. Five days after the quake, the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities completed emergency repairs at 16 sites with help from contractors. Within two months, emergency repairs were completed at five other locations. Much of the work included major excavation, asphalt resurfacing and reconstruction of roads and highways, replacement of drainage components, and debris removal.

Alaska activated the state Individual Assistance program in early December and received more than 14,000 applications.

By Jan. 3, more than 6,200 calls were received at the state's toll-free hotline, with requests for immediate shelter, food, clothing, drinking water, firewood, propane and gasoline. Altogether the state sheltered 79 households totaling 258 individuals who were temporarily displaced by the earthquake.

The Alaska Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster provided 13,966 meals, distributed 69 cases of drinking water, provided housing assistance, 457 mental health consultations and replaced school supplies for 663 individuals.

United Way of Mat-Su in partnership with some regional and national superstore chains purchased more than 300 winter coats for students forced to vacate the condemned Houston Middle School in Mat-Su.

The president's major disaster declaration on Jan. 31 allows eligible residents and public facilities in the Municipality of Anchorage, Matanuska-Susitna Borough and Kenai Peninsula Borough to apply for federal assistance. The declaration also approved hazard mitigation measures for the entire state.

As of March 31, more than **\$45 million** in federal funding was provided to assist residents. This includes FEMA grants to individuals and households and low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration. FEMA awarded grants to **3,722** households with uninsured and underinsured disaster-related losses.

The disaster caused widespread damage, and the continuing aftershocks have left many residents feeling anxious, uncertain and suffering mental fatigue.

Alaska Careline, which provides counseling to individuals in crisis, continues to offer access to its free statewide confidential hotline, open 24 hours, seven days a week. To reach a trained crisis-intervention specialist, call 877-266-4357 (HELP), text 839863 or visit [www.CarelineAlaska.com](http://www.CarelineAlaska.com).

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' [Disaster Distress Helpline](#) provides immediate, year-round crisis counseling and support to those suffering emotional distress caused by a natural or man-made disaster. Call 800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor. The consultations are also confidential.

### **Recovery Highlights as of March 31:**

- Homeowners and renters received **nearly \$8 million** in disaster assistance under FEMA's Individuals and Households Program. This includes **nearly \$7.7 million** in Housing Assistance and **\$165,914** in Other Needs Assistance. FEMA's Other Needs program provides funding for serious disaster-related essentials including medical and dental, transportation, child care, moving and storage expenses.
- The U.S. Small Business Administration approved **more than \$37 million** in low-interest disaster loans including **36** business loans and **771** loans for homeowners and renters.
- The state verified more than **3,075** reports by homeowners of major damage or destruction.
- Five state/federal disaster recovery centers that opened in Anchorage, Mat-Su and Kenai Peninsula have had **2,860** visits; one center closed March 9. FEMA's disaster survivor assistance teams continue to offer residents help in applying for FEMA grants and appealing FEMA decisions, updates on their applications and referrals to address any remaining needs.
- FEMA is providing communication access, including American Sign Language interpreters, to all disaster services. Disaster recovery centers are equipped with amplified and captioned phones, teletypewriters or TTYs, and Video Remote Interpreting—communication equipment accessible to the entire community. Information can be provided in Braille, large print and electronic format upon request.
- FEMA's toll-free helpline, **800-621-3362 (FEMA)**, is supported by specialists fluent in English, Spanish, Somali, Samoan, Cambodian, Korean, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Lao and Hmong, the most prevalent languages identified in the disaster area.
- Alaska residents still requiring help receive referrals to faith-based and non-governmental organizations, and state and federal agencies including 211 statewide referral services, aging services, veterans services, Catholic Charities, American Red Cross and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- FEMA and state voluntary agency liaisons are identifying resources to provide education and training to support the creation of long-term recovery groups. These groups are not run by the state of Alaska or FEMA but represent Alaskans helping Alaskans.

Federal disaster assistance is intended to help jump-start the recovery from the earthquake; it may not cover all damage or property loss. SBA's low-interest disaster loans are for businesses of all

sizes, private nonprofit organizations, homeowners and renters. Completing an SBA loan application may make additional assistance available to replace essential household items, replace or repair a damaged vehicle or pay for storage costs. SBA may also offer a loan while an insurance claim is pending.

Residents are encouraged to call the federal assistance helpline at **800-621-3362 (FEMA)** if they have received a determination from FEMA and notice additional damage as the snow melts.

Alaskans who registered for state Individual Assistance and have disaster-related needs after exhausting federal assistance are encouraged to apply to the state for reconsideration. For more information, visit <http://ready.alaska.gov/earthquake>.

Homeowners and renters in Anchorage, Mat-Su and Kenai Peninsula can also apply for assistance online at [www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov) or call FEMA's helpline at **800-621-3362 (FEMA)**; TTY users may call **800-462-7585**. Lines are open daily from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. The federal disaster assistance deadline is **May 31**.

For more information on Alaska's disaster recovery, visit [FEMA.gov/disaster/4413](http://FEMA.gov/disaster/4413), <https://twitter.com/FEMARegion10> and [Facebook.com/FEMA](https://Facebook.com/FEMA).

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*FEMA's mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters.*

*Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has faced discrimination, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-3362 (FEMA), voice/VP/711. Multilingual operators are available. TTY users may call 800-462-7585.*

*The U.S. Small Business Administration is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps businesses of all sizes, private nonprofit organizations, homeowners and renters fund repairs or rebuilding efforts and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. For more information, applicants may contact SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955. TTY users may also call 800-877-8339. Applicants may also email [DisasterCustomerService@sba.gov](mailto:DisasterCustomerService@sba.gov) or visit SBA at [www.SBA.gov/disaster](http://www.SBA.gov/disaster).*