FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Denied by FEMA? Appeal, be persistent!

September 29, 2017 – Flagler County officials are urging residents whose requests for Hurricane Irma damage relief were initially denied by FEMA to appeal the decision.

“Sometimes an application is initially denied because it is missing an essential component and not because what is being requested is ineligible,” County Administrator Craig Coffey said. “When it is denied by FEMA, it puts the ball back in your court. It is in your best interest to be your own advocate and follow up through the appeal process.”

If the reason for the denial is not clear, the applicant should contact a FEMA specialist. The nearest FEMA Disaster Recovery Center, also known as a DRC, is operating from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week at the UF Wind Mitigation “Hurricane House,” 3111 Agricultural Center Dr., St. Augustine.

Representatives will also be at the Flagler County Assistance Center on Friday until 4 p.m. and Saturday, September 30, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. It is being operated out of the Wickline Center, 800 S. Daytona Avenue, Flagler Beach.

The FEMA helpline number is 800-621-3362, and TTY users can call 800-462-7585.

Appeals must be made in writing and sent by mail to FEMA within 60 days of receiving a denial letter.

Appeals and related documents should be sent to:

Appeals Officer
FEMA – Individuals & Households Program
National Processing Service Center
PO Box 10055
Hyattsville, MD 20782-8055

According to FEMA, effective appeal letters should follow these procedures:
- In the first paragraph, list the applicant's full legal name used on the aid application, along with Social Security number and the FEMA case number. Include a personal phone number as well as a back-up phone number where the applicant also can be reached, in addition to a correct mailing address.

- Write an explanation of events that provides evidence to support the appeal. Summarize changes in circumstances or needs, additional damage to property discovered after the registration was filed or higher-than-anticipated costs for repairs.

- Include 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. Submitting repair estimates, receipts, statements or invoices is recommended.

- Keep a copy of the appeal letter and supporting documentation as a record.

Remember that filing an application with the Small Business Administration is a required step of the process unless FEMA specifically says an SBA application is not necessary.

Those who have not yet done so may also register online with FEMA at https://www.disasterassistance.gov and for a Small Business Administration (SBA) loan at https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/. Even residential properties are required to apply for an SBA loan to receive assistance.

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