On March 3, 2019 there was a tornado outbreak in the Southeastern United States. Over six hours, 39 tornadoes touched down across Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina. The strongest of the tornadoes led to 23 deaths, and 97 injuries. In 2018, the United States had only 10 tornado related deaths. On March 5, President Trump approved a disaster declaration for Alabama, making federal funding available to affected individuals in Lee County.

The following guide provides information for individuals and families dealing with direct housing loss and damage from the tornados. For more information, please see HAC’s report: *Picking up the Pieces: Restoring Rural Housing and Communities After a Disaster*.

If your home has experienced damage, remember to the check the outside of your home before you enter. Look for loose power lines, broken or damaged gas lines, foundations cracks, missing support beams, or other damage. It may be safest to ask a building inspector of contractor to check the structure before you enter. Do not force jammed doors open, as they may be providing needed support to the rest of the home. Sniff for gas to ensure there are no natural or propane gas leaks. If you do have a propane tank system, make sure to turn off all valves and contact a propane supplier to check the system before you use it again. Check floors and ceilings to ensure they are not sagging from water damage, this can be especially hazardous. Take photographs of any damage as you may need them for insurance claims or FEMA claims later.¹

**Disaster Assistance Improvement Program (DAIP)**

Individuals and business owners who sustained losses in the designated area can begin applying for assistance by registering online at [www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov) or by calling 1-800-621-3362 or 1-800-462-7585 TTY. The toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. seven days a week until further notice.

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Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):

To apply to disaster assistance funding, you must complete a multi-purpose application over the phone on FEMA’s toll-free national tele registration or online.

Toll-free helpline:
1-800-621-FEMA (3362)
For hearing impaired callers only:
1-800-462-7585 (TTY)
1-800-621-3362 (Video Relay Service)

For more information on federal aid programs for the state of Alabama visit FEMA’s website. Aid may include rental payments, home repair, unemployment payments, loans, and other assistance.

American Red Cross Disaster Service:

For referrals and updates on Red Cross shelter services in your area, locate a local Red Cross office through: www.redcross.org/find-help or by calling the Public Inquiry Center at 1-800-214-0441

If an emergency has forced you to evacuate your home, the Red Cross has a list of Open Shelters on its website.

Local Offices of Housing and Urban Development
Find your local HUD office here: www.hud.gov/local/

Alabama Governor’s Office of Volunteer Services:

The Alabama Governor’s Office is collecting donations to support relief efforts for the tornadoes and storms that hit Lee County. Their website offers a list of member agencies and donation options.

State and Local Housing Agencies

Each state has at least one agency that administers state and federal programs to promote decent affordable housing for low-income individuals. Typically, these agencies and authorities administer some aspects of state or federal programs.

Below is a list of relevant organizations in states impacted by the Tornadoes, more state organizations can be found on HAC’s report: Picking up the Pieces: Restoring Rural Housing and Communities After a Disaster.

State Housing Agencies

ALABAMA
Alabama Housing Finance Authority
7460 Halcyon Pointe Drive, Suite 200
Montgomery, AL 36117
334-244-9200 phone
http://www.ahfa.com/

GEORGIA
Department of Community Affairs Housing and Finance Division
60 Executive Park South, N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30329
404-679-4940 phone
www.dca.ga.gov

Department of Housing and Urban Development State Field Offices

ALABAMA
Medical Forum Building
950 22nd Street North
Suite 900
Birmingham, AL 35203
205 731 2617
www.hud.gov/states/alabama

GEORGIA
Five Points Plaza Building
40 Marietta Street
Atlanta, GA 30303-2806
404-331-5136
404-730-2654 (TTD)
www.hud.gov/states/georgia/

Federal Emergency Management Agency Regional Offices

REGION IV
(serves Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee)
Federal Emergency Management Agency
3003 Chamblee Tucker Road
Atlanta, GA 30341
Main Number: 770-220-5200
Fax Number: 770-220-5230
www.fema.gov/region-iv-al-fl-ga-ky-ms-nc-sc-tn

Rural Development State Offices

ALABAMA
Chris Beeker, III State Director
Sterling Centre, Suite 601
4121 Carmichael Road
Montgomery, AL 36106-3683
Voice: (334) 279-3400
Fax: (855) 304-8456
www.rd.usda.gov/al

GEORGIA
Stephens Federal Building
335 East Hancock Avenue
Athens, GA 30601-2768
706-546-2162 phone
706-546-2152
www.rd.usda.gov/ga

State Emergency Management Agencies

ALABAMA
Alabama Emergency Management Agency
5898 County Road 41
P.O. Drawer 2160
Clanton, Alabama 35046-2160
(205) 280-2476
(205) 280-2442 FAX
ema.alabama.gov

GEORGIA
Emergency Management Agency
P.O. Box 18055
Atlanta, GA 30316-0055
404-635-7000 phone
1-800-TRY-GEMA (in state)
404-635-7205 fax
PAO@gema.state.ga.us
www.gema.state.ga.us