Special Supplement to *Picking Up the Pieces: Restoring Rural Housing and Communities After a Disaster*

Housing Assistance Council
September 18, 2015

**CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES DISASTER**

Major wildfires are currently affecting a number of California communities. Three fires alone, Valley (Lake County), Butte (Amador and Calaveras Counties) and Rough (Fresno County) have consumed more than 285,000 acres and destroyed more than 1,000 structures as of September 17th, 2015.¹

The **Valley Fire** began on Saturday and has grown to more than 73,000 acres. At least one person has died, and thousands of people in several Lake County communities were forced to flee. The fire has destroyed nearly 600 homes and is 35 percent contained. On Sunday, Gov. Jerry Brown declared a state of emergency in Lake and Napa Counties.

The **Butte Fire** has destroyed more than 450 structures and threatens thousands more. It began on Wednesday, has burned more than 70,000 acres and is 49 percent contained. Governor Brown declared a state of emergency in Amador and Calaveras Counties on Friday.

The **Rough Fire**, which has burned more than 140,000 acres, is the state’s largest fire and threatens some of the world’s biggest and oldest trees. It began six weeks ago and is 67 percent contained.

Recent Fire Management Assistance Declarations have been made by FEMA for the California Valley Fire (FM-5112), California Butte Fire (FM-5111). There are several other active wildfires.

This supplement provides general information for those affected by the fires about current fire containment and immediate relief efforts. For post crisis assistance in rebuilding housing and communities affected by the fires, see the Housing Assistance Council’s report *Picking Up the Pieces: Restoring Rural Housing and Communities After a Disaster*.

**Fire Containment Updates**

*Southern Californian Pubic Radio* (KPCC 89.3) [http://firetracker.scpr.org/](http://firetracker.scpr.org/)

[http://calfire.ca.gov/communications/ActiveFiresList.php](http://calfire.ca.gov/communications/ActiveFiresList.php)

[http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/state/5/](http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/state/5/)

Relief Efforts

CalFire and Red Cross Evacuation tips on when to leave, where to go, what to take with you, what about pets, and what to wear: [http://firetracker.scpr.org/resources/evacuations/](http://firetracker.scpr.org/resources/evacuations/)

Disaster Assistance Available from FEMA:

**Housing Needs**
- **Temporary Housing** (a place to live for a limited period of time): Financial assistance may be available to homeowners or renters to rent a different place to live, or assistance can be a government provided housing unit when rental properties are not available. Search for information about housing rental resources.
- **Lodging Expenses Reimbursement**: Reimbursement of hotel expenses for homeowners or renters may be available for short periods of time due to inaccessibility or utility outage if not covered by insurance or any other program.
- **Repair**: Financial assistance may be available to homeowners to repair damage from the disaster to their primary residence that is not covered by insurance. The goal is to make the damaged home safe, sanitary, and functional.
- **Replacement**: Financial assistance may be available to homeowners to replace their home destroyed in the disaster that is not covered by insurance. The goal is to help the homeowner with the cost of replacing their destroyed home.
- **Permanent or Semi-Permanent Housing Construction**: Direct assistance or money for the construction of a home. This type of help occurs only in insular areas or other locations specified by FEMA, where no other type of housing assistance is possible.

What specific items are covered by "Housing Needs" assistance?

Do I qualify for "Housing Needs" Assistance?

**Other Needs**
Financial Assistance may be available for necessary expenses and serious needs caused by the disaster. This includes:

- Disaster-related child care expenses.
- Disaster-related medical and dental expenses.
- Disaster-related funeral and burial expenses.
- Disaster-related damages to essential household items (room furnishings, appliances); clothing; tools (specialized or protective clothing and equipment) required for your job; necessary educational materials (computers, school books, supplies).
- Fuels for primary heat source (heating oil, gas).
- Clean-up items (wet/dry vacuum, dehumidifier).
- Disaster-related damage to an essential vehicle.
- Moving and storage expenses related to the disaster (moving and storing property to avoid additional disaster damage while disaster-related repairs are being made to the home).
- Other necessary expenses or serious needs as determined by FEMA.
- Other expenses that are authorized by law.

Do I qualify for "Other than Housing Needs" Assistance?

**Additional FEMA Services**

- Crisis Counseling
- Disaster Unemployment Assistance
- Legal Services
- Special Tax Considerations
FEMA has Disaster Recovery Centers across the country, which are readily accessible facilities or mobile offices where applicants may go for information about FEMA or other disaster assistance programs, or for questions related to your case. Search online for a Disaster Recovery Center [http://asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/home.htm](http://asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/home.htm) or by smart phone or tablet at [http://asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/mobile.htm](http://asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/mobile.htm)

**Apply for FEMA Assistance** online at [www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov) or by smart phone or tablet at [m.fema.gov](http://m.fema.gov) or Apply/Check your status by phone 1-800-621-3362.

**Red Cross Relief Efforts:** The American Red Cross has launched an interactive online map that consolidates multiple sources of disaster data into a real-time, interactive tool to get information and updates about the Western Wildfires.

The map provides the following information:
- Location and size of wildfires
- Evacuation zones
- Road Closures
- Location, address and population of shelters
- Where to take evacuated pets and animals (large and small)
- Standard map elements such as counties, cities, roads, rivers and mountain ranges
- Demographic information.

The link to the resource is: [http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/wildfire](http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/wildfire)

**For more information contact:**

**California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire)**

To locate the fire station nearest you see: [http://calfire.ca.gov/contacts/index.php](http://calfire.ca.gov/contacts/index.php)

**Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**

Toll-free helpline: 1-800-3362

For hearing impaired callers only: 1-800-462-7585 (TTY), 1-800-621-3362 (Video Relay Service)

Operators are multilingual and calls are answered seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. CDT.

**American Red Cross Disaster Service**

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

US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development, California State Office
430 G Street, # 4169
Davis, CA  95616-4169
Voice: (530) 792-5800
Fax: (530) 792-5837
www.rd.usda.gov/ca

US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), California Regional Offices

San Francisco Regional Office
1 Sansome Street, Suite 1200
San Francisco, CA 94104
(415) 489-6400
Fax
(415) 489-6419
Email

Los Angeles Field Office
611 West Sixth Street
Suite 801
Los Angeles, CA 90017
(213) 894-8000
Fax
(213) 894-8110
Email

Santa Ana Field Office
Santa Ana Federal Building
34 Civic Center Plaza
Room 7015
Santa Ana, CA 92701-4003
(714) 796-5577
Fax
(202) 485-5705
Email