

FEMA ALLOWING RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS TO APPLY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE
Monday – February 4, 2018 deadline to submit RPA

By Corrie P. Bowen
County Extension Agent – Wharton County

Governor Greg Abbott and Attorney General Ken Paxton announced that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved their request to allow churches and religious organizations to receive the same public assistance available to other nonprofits aiding in Hurricane Harvey relief efforts. As your local representative for the Commission to Rebuild Texas, I'm reaching out with this news release to spread the word that FEMA is allowing religious organizations to apply for public assistance following Hurricane Harvey. My message is time sensitive, because any religious organization seeking public assistance must submit their Request for Public Assistance Document by February 4, 2018.

This policy change is now effective for any major disaster declared on or after Aug. 23, 2017, including Hurricane Harvey.

Governor Abbott joined Attorney General Paxton in a letter to President Donald Trump in September urging him to authorize this assistance: "When Harvey moved across the Texas Gulf Coast, churches across the state opened their doors to those in need. Churches and other houses of worship continue to play a vital role in the ongoing recovery effort, and their ability to receive the same assistance available to other nonprofits should never have been in doubt. I thank FEMA and the Administration for their commitment to helping Texans and the churches that have helped their communities throughout the recovery and rebuilding process."

FEMA is allowing a 30-day application period beginning Jan. 5, 2018, with applications accepted until Feb. 4, 2018 at 11:59 PM CST. Houses of worship that would like to apply for Public Assistance must first submit a Request for Public Assistance (RPA) form.

An RPA form can be downloaded here: <http://www.rebuildtexas.today/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2018/01/Request-for-Public-Assistance-RPA-043013.pdf>

The RPA form is a simple, short form with self-contained instructions. "The Request" (FEMA form 90-49) asks for general information which identifies the applicant, starts the grant process and opens the Case Management File, which contains general claim information as well as records of meetings, conversations, phone messages and any special issues or concerns that may affect funding. For an original copy of this article from the Commission to Rebuild Texas, go to <https://www.rebuildtexas.today/?s=worship>

-30-



Corrie Bowen, MS
County Extension Agent - Agriculture
Wharton County
315 E. Milam, Suite 112
Wharton, Texas 77488
(979) 532-3310