August 31, 2016
DR-4277-LA
NR-026
NEWS DESK: 225-382-1607
SBA: 916-764-9918

News Release

Free Legal Services Available To Disaster Survivors

BATON ROUGE, La. – Free disaster-related legal advice is available to low-income Louisiana flood survivors through a partnership among the Louisiana State Bar Association, the Louisiana Civil Justice Center, the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Low-income survivors facing legal issues may call the Legal Services hotline, 800-310-7029, between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Voice mail is available 24/7 and messages are generally returned the next business day. Examples of legal assistance available include:

- Assistance with securing FEMA and other benefits available to disaster survivors;
- Assistance with life, medical and property insurance claims;
- Help with home repair contracts and contractors;
- Replacement of wills and other important legal documents that were destroyed;
- Assisting in consumer protection matters, remedies and procedures;
- Counseling on mortgage-foreclosure problems; and
- Counseling on landlord/tenant problems.

Survivors should be aware that there are some limitations. For example, assistance is not available for cases where fees could be paid as part of a court settlement. Those cases will be referred to a lawyer-referral service.

To register with FEMA, go online to DisasterAssistance.gov, call the FEMA helpline, 800-621-3362 or download the FEMA mobile app. Help is available in most languages and phone lines are open 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week until further notice.

Disaster survivors who are deaf, hard-of-hearing or have a speech disability and use a TTY may call 800-462-7585 to register. Those who use 711 or Video Relay Service or require accommodations while visiting a Disaster Recovery Center may call 800-621-3362. All Disaster Recovery Centers are accessible and equipped with tools to accommodate disaster survivors who need disability-related communication aids. Each Disaster Recovery Center

(more)

has assistive technologies for people with disabilities. To arrange to have an American Sign Language interpreter at the Disaster Recovery Center when you visit, call 225-382-1739.

For information call the FEMA helpline at 800-621-3362 or go online to www.DisasterAssistance.gov or www.fema.gov/disaster/4277.

Download the FEMA mobile app for disaster resources, weather alerts, and safety tips. The app provides a customizable checklist of emergency supplies, maps of open shelters and weather alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations across the Nation. The latest feature of the app allows you to send notifications to your device to remind you to take important steps to prepare your home and family for disasters. Go to Ready.gov for more details.

###

We urge everyone to continue to use caution in areas where floodwaters remain. Monitor DOTD's www.511la.org website for updated road closure information. Look for advisories from your local authorities and emergency managers. You can find the latest information on the state's response at www.emergency.la.gov. GOHSEP also provides information on Facebook and Twitter. You can receive emergency alerts on most smartphones and tablets by downloading the new Alert FM App. It is free for basic service. You can also download the Louisiana Emergency Preparedness Guide and find other information at www.getagameplan.org.

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 been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585.

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards. Follow us on Twitter at https://twitter.com/femaregion6 and the FEMA Blog at http://blog.fema.gov.

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) 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 non-profit organizations, homeowners and renters fund repairs or rebuilding efforts and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover losses not fully compensated by insurance or other recoveries and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. For more information, applicants may contact SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center by calling (800) 659-2955, emailing disastercustomerservice@sba.gov, or visiting SBA's website at SBA.gov/disaster Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals may call (800) 877-8339.