

# **Louisa Earthquake Recovery Fund Guidelines**

December 8, 2011

## Purpose:

The purpose of the Louisa Earthquake Recovery Fund (LERF) is to help satisfy a disaster household's unmet needs that are serious, essential and necessary. Those unmet needs must have arisen because of the August 2011 earthquake and subsequent aftershocks.

## LERF Organizational Structure:

The LERF will be overseen by a management committee. The LERF management committee will be comprised of the following voting members: two representatives the Fluvanna/Louisa Housing Foundation, two citizen appointed by the Louisa County Board of Supervisors and one member of the Social Services Advisory Board. The LERF management committee will also have representatives from the Louisa County Department of Human Services, the Louisa County Department of Community Development, and the Louisa County Finance Department to serve in an advisory role. The Fluvanna/Louisa Housing Foundation, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization, will act as the fiscal agent.

## Responsibilities of the LERF management committee:

- To properly safeguard, manage, and distribute any funds made available to it.
- To be fair and equitable in making decisions in consideration of the extensive damage caused by the August 2011 earthquake.
- Before formally acting on a submitted application or because of a management committee evaluation, a representative of the committee may request clarification of submitted information or ask for new information. The applicant household must provide the requested information within fifteen (15) days or their application will be denied; however, the applicant household may reapply with all necessary information.

## Eligible Applicants:

Louisa County homeowners to repair or rebuild uninsured/underinsured owner occupied dwellings.

## Eligible Categories of Assistance:

Awards will only be made for unmet needs that are serious, necessary and essential. Money is available to homeowners to repair or rebuild uninsured/underinsured owner occupied dwellings damaged from the earthquake that is not covered by insurance. The goal is to make the damaged home safe, sanitary, and functional. All cases will be evaluated on an individual basis and exceptions to the reference points can be made.

No one household can receive more than \$15,000.

LERF only covers repairs of homes that were damaged as a direct result of the earthquake and subsequent aftershocks that are not covered by insurance. Repairs

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or rebuilding may not improve the home above its pre-disaster condition unless such improvements are required by current building codes.

Money to repair the home is limited to making the home safe, sanitary and functional. LERF money provided for housing needs to repair:

- Structural parts of your home (foundation, outside walls, and roof).
- Windows, doors, floors, walls, ceilings, and cabinetry.
- Septic or sewage system.
- Well or other water system.
- Chimneys, heating, ventilating, and air conditioning system.
- Utilities (electrical, plumbing, and gas systems).
- Blocking, leveling, and anchoring of a mobile home and reconnecting or resetting its sewer, water, electrical and fuel lines, and tanks.

## Limitations:

LERF will not cover all losses from damage to the property (home, personal property, household goods) that resulted from the earthquake. LERF is not intended to restore the damaged property to its condition before the disaster. LERF does not cover business related losses that resulted from the disaster. LERF cannot provide money for losses that are covered by insurance.

## Requirements for submitting an application:

Applicant households should keep in mind that the LERF monies are limited; therefore priority will be given to applicant households that have taken the following steps prior to application to the LERF:

- Applicant households must have registered to receive grants funding from FEMA and exhausted any appeal process with that agency.
- If not initially denied a low-interest disaster loan from the Small Business Administration, households must have applied for a low-interest disaster loan from the Small Business Administration. (It is the applicant household's responsibility to verify their status with the Small Business Administration.)

Applicant households need to demonstrate a financial hardship. If a request for LERF funds is made as one element of a solution involving several elements for a particular household, the applicant household should include a concise summary of the plan that has been developed to meet all the unmet needs of that particular disaster household.

Applicant households must document to have applied for all insurance that would cover incurred losses or provide proof that the homeowner's insurance policy did not cover damage caused by an earthquake. If applicant households have not already contacted their insurance company to file a claim, please do this as soon as possible. Failure to file a claim with your insurance company may affect your eligibility for assistance from LERF.

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The following documents must be submitted:

- “Application to Louisa Earthquake Recovery Fund.” Applications require the signature of a representative from the head of household from the affected disaster household.
- “Letter of Written Consent.” The letter has to be signed by the individual who registered for a FEMA grant. This letter authorizes the sharing of disaster recovery records with the LERF Management Committee.

Assisting a household where the primary residence has been completely destroyed is the most difficult situation facing those who want to help hurt families recover. When an applicant household requests funds for a home replacement or complete rebuild, the applicant household must be able to demonstrate in the narrative section on the application form that approval of the funds will realize the goal of a new, habitable structure. Any financial assistance the LERF management committee awards must have subsequent, clear documentation that the grant award was used for the purpose requested.

## Award and Disbursement of LERF funds:

- Award letters (including denial) will be sent to the applicant household. Close attention should be paid to any stipulations for use of the funds or documentation that funds were used properly.
- Awards amounts will be paid directly to the contractor to repair the applicant household. It is the applicant household’s responsibility to verify the contractor’s license. The contractor must file a W-9 with the Fluvanna/Louisa Housing Foundation.
- Before any repairs begin, the applicant household/contractor must contact the Louisa County Department of Community Developments to find out what local permits or inspections are required.

## Post-award Responsibilities of Applicant Disaster Households Receiving Grant Awards

- Applicant Households must keep receipts or bills for three (3) years to demonstrate how all of the money was used in meeting the disaster related need.