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FEMA

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FEMA DISASTER RECOVERY GRANTS TO INDIVIDUALS FOR GEORGIA FLOODS WON'T AFFECT SOCIAL SECURITY OR TAXES

ATLANTA — More than half a million people living in Georgia's disaster-designated counties are receiving Social Security benefits, but they need not worry about the effects of disaster recovery grants.

“Disaster recovery grants provided to individuals and families have no impact on your Social Security or Supplemental Security Income benefits,” said Kenneth R. Chaney, Georgia area director for the U.S. Social Security Administration.

Generally, federal disaster recovery grants directly provided to individuals also will not affect federal income tax liability. The IRS instructs taxpayers not to include Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) disaster relief grants as income on their tax returns. See IRS Publication 547 for more details.

Eligibility for other income-based benefit programs also is unaffected by FEMA disaster recovery grants, including:

- Medicare;
- Welfare assistance;
- Food stamps;
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF); and,
- Other programs funded by the U.S. Government.

Survivors of the Georgia floods have until Nov. 23 to apply for federal grants and low-interest loans. People can register by visiting www.disasterassistance.gov, or by calling **800-621-FEMA (3362)**, or **TTY 800-462-7585**. Phone lines are open every day from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET. Help is available in all languages.

“Now's the time to act,” said Gracia Szczech, head of FEMA flood recovery in Georgia. “We want to make sure everyone who's eligible gets all available help.”

So far, FEMA has provided more than \$50 million in grants to flood survivors for minimal home repairs, temporary housing, personal property losses and other serious disaster-related needs. More than 26,000 people have registered for assistance.

(MORE)

FEMA GRANTS WON'T AFFECT SOCIAL SECURITY OR TAXES – Page 2

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.

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 temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA loan officers to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

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For more information on Georgia's disaster recovery, visit www.fema.gov or www.gema.ga.gov or www.ready.ga.gov/ or <http://twitter.com/GeorgiaEMA>