

FEMA Ends Religious Discrimination Against Hurricane-Affected Houses of Worship

Trump administration announces houses of worship now eligible for FEMA relief following request from First Liberty clients

WASHINGTON, DC—Today, after First Liberty Institute sent a [letter](#) asking President Trump to end a discriminatory FEMA directive, the White House announced that it will end the religious ban and allow religious entities like churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples in hurricane-affected areas to apply for FEMA relief, consistent with federal law.

“Today’s announcement by the White House allows our clients to continue to be the bedrocks of their hurricane-ravaged communities,” said Chelsey Youman, Counsel for First Liberty. “Thanks to the Trump administration, thousands of houses of worship are again eligible for FEMA relief just like everyone else and can start the process of rebuilding.”

Despite an explicit nondiscrimination clause in the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (“Stafford Act,”)—Congressional legislation governing federal disaster relief—the FEMA maintained a “policy guide” declaring religious entities ineligible for FEMA assistance.

“I am speechless at the moment. This goes to show you that the faith community is an important component of society and being able to get help enables us to keep serving our community,” Pastor Jorge Cardenas, Church on the Rock Katy. “Thank God and also our President. We have to continue prayer for him because he has been very in touch with the faith community.”

“It’s a great victory for equal protection and treatment of churches as valuable institutions as well as providers of critical services to the community in times of need,” said Dave Welch, Executive Director of the Houston Area Pastor Council.

To learn more, visit FirstLiberty.org/FEMA.

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About First Liberty Institute

[First Liberty Institute](#) is a non-profit public interest law firm and the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious freedom for all Americans.

To arrange an interview, contact Lacey McNeil at media@firstliberty.org or by calling 972-941-4453.