

QUICK DISCUSSION ABOUT FEMA

Let's talk a second about FEMA because we are already getting questions about FEMA eligibility and why Austin County is not on the list...

FIRST, we issued a Disaster Declaration for Austin County. This has already been accepted by the State.

SECOND, in order for Austin County to be eligible for FEMA assistance, both for individuals and governmental entities, the County must hit a threshold of individual damages sustained in the county.

We will have to submit damage reports to substantiate our damages, we still have areas that are underwater right now as well. Once FEMA verifies we have met the threshold, Austin County will be added to the list.

WHY IS AUSTIN COUNTY NOT ON THE LIST??

Some counties, like Harris County and others, are already on the FEMA list for assistance. The reason is that some of these counties already have FEMA folks on the ground that have already verified that those counties have surpassed their thresholds. In some counties, you just have to look at newscast to see that they will exceed thresholds... But in Austin County, we do not have FEMA folks on the ground with us, so we have to submit reports...

CAN I APPLY NOW?

Yes, you can apply for aid and fill out an application online. It may tell you that you are not eligible at this time. But once Austin County is approved, your application will be processed.

REMEMBER - FEMA IS A PROCESS

Even after you fill out an application, you will still have to meet with a FEMA rep (like an adjustor) who will have to approve your claim before it is paid. And FEMA will have to setup claim offices and they will tour the county with county officials to verify damages as part of the process. And given the scope and breadth of this disaster, all of this will take time. So patience will be a good thing to have.

If you have water/damage in your home, remove and clean as soon as possible but don't start repairs until you meet with a FEMA rep. FEMA may not pay if you have started repairs.

The BEST thing to do right now is DOCUMENT your damages. Take a lot of pictures, especially pictures that show the water level in your home. Take pictures that show water marks on the wall, or use a yardstick to show water while it is still standing. This will be a huge help later in your claim process.

Please share this to anyone who needs to know.