

FEMA CLARIFIES WHICH FOREIGN NATIONALS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FEMA DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE

13 September 2005

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, many foreign nationals have wondered whether they may be eligible for disaster relief and assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In response to the large number of inquiries concerning eligibility requirements, FEMA issued a Press Release and Q&A to clarify which foreign nationals are eligible to apply for disaster assistance under FEMA programs:

- U.S. Lawful Permanent Residents
- Foreign Nationals Granted Asylum
- Foreign Nationals Granted Refugee Status
- Foreign Nationals Paroled into the United States
- Foreign Nationals granted Suspension of Removal/Deportation
- Foreign National Victims of Domestic Violence

Notably, the following classifications of foreign nationals are not eligible to apply for disaster assistance with FEMA:

- Tourists & Business Visitors
- Students
- Foreign Nationals in Temporary Worker Status

Although most foreign nationals who are temporarily in the United States will not qualify for FEMA assistance, FEMA advises that individuals who do not qualify in their own right, but who have children who qualify, can apply for assistance without providing information regarding their own immigration status. This means that foreign nationals temporarily in the United States who have a U.S. citizen child will qualify to apply for assistance through proof of the child's eligibility.

Persons seeking to apply for disaster assistance with FEMA may call FEMA toll-free at (800) 621-3362, or (TTY) (800)-462-7585. Should you require additional information regarding a foreign national's qualification under the FEMA guidelines, please contact your Tindall & Foster immigration attorney for additional information.