



THE LEGISLATURE  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

September 8, 2021

Deanne Criswell  
Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Administration  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
P.O. Box 10055  
Hyattsville, MD 20782-8055

**Re: Request for FEMA Assistance for Hurricane Ida Victims in New York State Who Are Without a Social Security Number**

Dear Administrator Criswell:

We write to you regarding an urgent matter that without resolution will only worsen the devastation and loss of property inflicted by the torrential rainstorm that flooded many communities in the Northeastern region of our nation.

As we work to help families recover from this disaster, we were informed that FEMA resources can not be accessed by those who do not have a Social Security Number. New York City is home to over 800,000 undocumented workers and families, many of whom were severely impacted by the natural disaster caused by the remnants of Hurricane Ida.

There are relatively few resources that disaster victims can access outside of FEMA assistance. Leaving tens of thousands of impacted residents without access to FEMA support equates to a second disaster impacting these families. New York City is in the midst of recovering from being the epicenter of the Covid-19 Pandemic in the United States. The combination of this pandemic and a natural disaster is devastating and highly detrimental to the well being of our region, its families and children which have been staggeringly impacted.

It is also not clear that in its outreach efforts FEMA staff are providing sufficient and accurate information about FEMA assistance that is available to those categories of individuals eligible for assistance as "qualified aliens" or who have a minor child who is a citizen, or about those FEMA services that are available to disaster survivors regardless of citizenship and immigration status.

FEMA should ensure that this information is fully provided to members of affected communities, particularly those where there is a large immigrant presence.

We ask that you use all the authority given by Congress to FEMA to ensure that no one impacted by this current natural disaster is turned away when seeking help due to their inability to provide a Social Security Number.

Your diligent work on this front will ensure that we restore these communities and the lives impacted as soon as possible. We look forward to working with you in any way possible to achieve a change to this FEMA policy.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We will eagerly await your response.

Sincerely,



Catalina Cruz, Esq.  
Chair,  
Task Force on New American  
Member of Assembly  
39th A.D.



Michaele Solages  
Chair,  
Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian  
Legislative Caucus  
Member of Assembly  
22nd A.D.

*CC: President Joe Biden  
Governor Kathy Hochul  
New York State Congressional Delegation  
New York State Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force  
New York State Caucus of Black, Puerto Rican/Hispanic and Asian Legislators*