

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**LeeCares Hurricane Ian Housing Recovery Program application portal opens today to help residents impacted by Hurricane Ian**

***Outreach efforts ramp up to assist people with application process***

Fort Myers, FL, Feb. 1, 2024 – The application portal for the LeeCares Hurricane Ian Housing Recovery Program opens at noon today, Feb. 1. Lee County and its partners are ramping up outreach to increase awareness and assist residents impacted by the storm.

LeeCares outreach includes community events and presentations, door-to-door contact, and in-person case managers at various locations. Funding for the LeeCares housing program comes from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery allocation to Lee County to address the disaster recovery needs of residents affected by the hurricane.

There are three programs for which individuals now can apply:

- The Housing Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Elevation program may assist income-eligible property owners to repair, replace and/or elevate property that suffered hurricane damage.
- The Home Purchase Assistance may assist income-eligible home buyers to purchase a qualifying primary residence outside of the flood zone in Lee County.
- The Voluntary Residential Acquisition program may assist income-eligible homeowners of a repetitive loss property relocate outside of flood-prone areas in Lee County.

To view a full list of eligibility requirements and documents needed to apply, visit [www.leeflcares.com](http://www.leeflcares.com). Questions can be emailed to [leecares@leegov.com](mailto:leecares@leegov.com). Individuals also can call 239-382-5453.

Once an application is submitted, individuals will be assigned a designated LeeCares case manager to provide updates. If an application is approved, the funding is a grant – not a loan – and does not need to be repaid if applicants comply with the terms of the grant.

In partnership with Harry Chapin Food Bank and Lee County Libraries, LeeCares intake staff will be available at upcoming food-distribution events to help individuals with the application process:

- Feb. 5 and 12: 9 a.m. to noon, 2980 Edison Ave., Fort Myers, 33916.
- Feb. 8, 15, 22 and 29: 9 a.m. to noon, 7101 Bayshore Road, North Fort Myers, 33917.
- Feb. 19 and 26: 9 a.m. to noon, 10346 Pennsylvania Ave., Bonita Springs, 34135.

Residents can also apply in person, starting this month, at the following locations:

- Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
LeeCares Outreach Center  
9400 Gladiolus Drive, Suite 270,  
Fort Myers, 33908
- Mondays (Feb. 5, 12, 19 and 26), 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
City of Fort Myers  
1825 Hendry Street,  
Fort Myers, 33901
- Tuesdays (Feb. 6, 13, 20 and 27), 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
F.I.S.H. of Sanibel-Captiva  
2430 Periwinkle Way,  
Sanibel, 33957
- Wednesdays (Feb. 7, 14, 21 and 28), 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Pine Island Library  
10701 Russell Road,  
Bokeelia, 33922
- Thursdays (Feb. 8, 15, 22 and 29), 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
City of Bonita Springs  
9101 Bonita Beach Road,  
Bonita Springs, 34135
- Fridays (Feb. 9, 16 and 23), 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Town of Fort Myers Beach  
2731 Oak St.,  
Fort Myers Beach, 33931
- Saturdays (Feb. 10, 17 and 24), 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Northwest Regional Library  
519 Chiquita Blvd N  
Cape Coral, 33993

LeeCares is distributing information via the U.S. Postal Service. Mailers are being sent this week to residents who may be eligible in Bokeelia, Matlacha, St. James City, Sanibel, Cape Coral, Fort Myers Beach and Bonita Springs.

With coordination through Lee County's Floodplain Management division, separate mailers also were sent to individuals that may be specifically eligible for the Voluntary Residential Acquisition program.

On Jan. 16, Lee County announced the launch of its door-to-door outreach program in advance of the application period opening.

Since then, the LeeCares outreach team has provided information to more than 8,000 households. Additional information regarding outreach efforts can be found on the LeeCares website: <https://www.leeflcares.com/pages/outreach>.

Door-to-door outreach will continue in February and will include Fort Myers Shores, Harlem Heights, Heritage Farms, Matlacha and Pine Island, Suncoast Estates, South Fort Myers, Iona, Bonita Springs and Cape Coral. Outreach staff are easily identifiable with the LeeCares logo on the front of shirts and “How Can I Help” on the back of shirts.

Comprehensive and detailed information about Lee County’s Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Action Plan, program allocations, activities and expenditures are provided on the county’s website at <https://cdbgdr.leegov.com>.

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