

# Disaster Survivor Assistance

*"FEMA will achieve a timely presence on the ground in the impact area following a disaster, maximize the effect of our first touch with survivors, and bring our programs and services directly to those who need them—in their communities, in their homes, in shelters, and wherever survivors need us to be present."*

W. Craig Fugate, FEMA Administrator

## Who is Disaster Survivor Assistance?

Based on the desire to provide expanded services to disaster survivors, FEMA leadership transferred the Community Relations program to the Recovery Directorate, effective April 8, 2013.

In an effort to reflect our commitment to the disaster survivors and the expanded role of the cadre, FEMA changed the name from Community Relations to Disaster Survivor Assistance.

**DSA's mission** is to build and sustain an expeditionary cadre that can address disaster survivor's immediate needs by:

- \* Establishing a timely presence;
- \* Providing in-person, tailored information and services;
- \* Providing referrals to Whole Community partners as needed;
- \* Collecting targeted information to support decision-making; and
- \* Identifying public information needs so critical messages can be prepared and distributed.



## Five Essential Functions of DSA

- **Assess, Inform, Report (AIR)**
  - DSA Teams assess what's really happening in the community, inform disaster officials of those conditions, and report back to the Operations Section.
- **On-site Registration Intake**
  - Using mobile technology, DSA Teams offer survivors the opportunity to register for FEMA disaster assistance on-the-spot.
- **Case Status Inquiries and Updates**
  - Mobile tools allow DSA Teams to check and verify information already provided by survivors, update their record, or discuss next steps in the assistance process.
- **Pre- or Post-Registration Survivor Needs Assessment**
  - DSA Teams are trained to identify survivor needs and provide available assistance whenever and wherever they interact with survivors.
- **Referral to Whole Community Partners**
  - DSA Teams inform survivors about the range of help available in the community and maintain close contacts with State, Tribal, and Local governments, and with other partners.



**DSA Teams are a professional "force multiplier" that support Federal, State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial requirements in the field. DSA Teams can quickly deploy in advance of (or immediately following) a disaster declaration.**

## Helping Survivors through Mobile Technology

DSA Teams use tablets and other technological tools to enhance their mobile capabilities. These tools allow DSA Teams to bring services directly to the survivors who need the most help.

- Hand-held tablets let DSA Teams register survivors at home or work.
- The Survivor Mobile Application Reporting Tool (SMART) uses mobile geo-tagging and photo-capable devices in the field.
  - Gives FEMA leaders an instant picture of critical and emerging needs.
  - Automates information flow, reduces errors and need for paper maps.

