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**THE BRIEFING ROOM**

**THE WHITE HOUSE**  
Office of the Press Secretary

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE September 29, 2009

**President Obama Declares a Major Disaster Exists in American Samoa**

The President tonight declared a major disaster exists in the Territory of American Samoa and ordered Federal aid to supplement Territory and local recovery efforts in the area struck by an earthquake, tsunami, and flooding beginning on September 29, 2009, and continuing.

The President's action makes Federal funding available to affected individuals in the Territory of American Samoa.

This assistance will provide immediate resources to address response, including urgent life sustaining and public health and safety measures. Assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of the disaster.

Federal funding is also available to the Territory of American Samoa and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for debris removal and emergency protective measures, including direct Federal assistance.

Federal funding also is available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures for the Territory of American Samoa.

W. Craig Fugate, Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Department of Homeland Security, named Kenneth R. Tingman as the Federal Coordinating Officer for Federal recovery operations in the affected area.

FEMA said that damage surveys have been requested and will be conducted as soon as the situation permits.

FEMA said that residents and business owners who sustained losses in the Territory can begin applying for assistance tomorrow by registering online at <http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov> <<http://www.disasterassistance.gov/>> or by calling 1-800-621-FEMA(3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. The toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. (local time) seven days a week until further notice.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: FEMA (202) 646-4600.

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