



# MIKE DEWINE

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## GOVERNOR OF OHIO



March 29, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Through: Thomas Sivak, Regional Administrator  
FEMA Region V  
Chicago, Illinois 60605

Dear President Biden:

Under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR §206.36, I request that you declare a major disaster for the State of Ohio as a result of tornado damage that occurred on March 14, 2024. The attached OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13 and this letter, demonstrate that the events of March 14, 2024 have resulted in a disaster of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capability of the State of Ohio and affected local governments, and that federal assistance under the Stafford Act is necessary to supplement the efforts and available resources of the state, local governments, disaster relief organizations, and compensation by insurance for disaster-related losses.

On the evening of March 14, 2024, a severe weather system swept through Ohio, including instances of tornadic activity, leaving behind significant damage and impacting local communities and structures across various counties. The State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) transitioned to Partial Activation to coordinate the response efforts and as of this date, is still activated due to ongoing missions around debris operations and the multi-agency resource centers for disaster survivors remain open.

The National Weather Service reports that on March 14, 2024, twelve tornadoes impacted numerous counties throughout Ohio. An EF3 tornado impacted Logan and Auglaize counties, resulting in three fatalities and thirty-eight injuries in Logan County, some of them severe. In addition to the tornado that impacted Logan and Auglaize counties, there was an EF-1 in Mercer, Auglaize, Delaware, and Licking counties; and an EF-2 in Union, Darke, and Miami counties.

On March 17, 2024, I issued an emergency proclamation for Auglaize, Crawford, Darke, Delaware, Hancock, Licking, Logan, Mercer, Miami, Richland and Union counties. This Proclamation directed all state agencies to utilize their resources and personnel as necessary to assist with response and recovery efforts. Further, I requested that the Department of Administrative Services suspend purchasing and contracting requirements contained in Chapters 125 and 153 of the Ohio Revised Code for departments and agencies of the state assisting with

Administration Office  
77 South High Street, 30<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
governor.ohio.gov | 614.644.4357

response and recovery efforts. This emergency proclamation remains in effect as state agencies are actively engaged in debris operations. Finally, on March 17, 2024, the Ohio National Guard was activated to assist with the clean-up and to assess needed support.

Logan County officials have identified key areas of focus to prevent further economic damage from the tornado and these cannot be accomplished without federal resources. The Small Business Administration will be very helpful in addressing these challenges, but the low-income families impacted by the tornadoes will not be eligible for the loans and therefore, grant assistance will be needed. According to those in the community, housing needs existed prior to the disaster and have grown exponentially since. FEMA's Direct Housing Program or funding through the FEMA Public Assistance Program (non-congregate sheltering) is needed to support their recovery.

The impacted state and local governments are continuing to gather costs for their response and recovery efforts, but the focus now is to get much needed assistance to the disaster survivors and businesses. Below are the areas of focus provided by the impacted communities:

- Establish new local housing options so the 300+ displaced households can remain in the Indian Lake area;
- Keep employees employed at local manufacturing businesses and small businesses;
- Keep students in their current school setting to allow for familiarity and support;
- Immediate resources to support area businesses to keep employees employed, including solopreneurs and gig workers;
- Assistance to support uninsured businesses or underinsured businesses to rebuild and reopen.

A Presidential Disaster Declaration will not only provide much needed grant assistance and housing resources, but it will also bring technical assistance such as FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaisons (VAL) and Community Planning assets. It would also allow for funding from the Federal Economic Development Administration and HUD CDBG-DR funds. These highly needed programs are only available following a Presidential Disaster Declaration for Individual Assistance. Additionally, availability of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program would help to address the complications that will come with rebuilding. Some of the hardest hit areas are in the 100-year special flood hazard area and rebuilding will have to meet compliance with the NFIP.

On March 21, 2024, the Executive Director of the Ohio EMA requested a Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (Joint PDA) for Individual Assistance. From March 26-27, 2024, FEMA, the Small Business Administration and Ohio EMA conducted the Joint PDAs in Auglaize, Crawford, Darke, Delaware, Hancock, Licking, Logan, Mercer, Miami, Richland, and Union counties. The results of the Joint PDA are included as Enclosure A, but the teams identified the following numbers and degrees of damage for structures surveyed: 349 destroyed/major and 536 minor and 253 affected. In addition, the SBA identified 9 businesses with major damage and 28 with minor damage.

The following information is furnished on the nature and amount of State and local resources that have been or will be used to alleviate the conditions of this disaster:

Since the State Emergency Operations Center was activated on March 14, 2024, state agencies have addressed and continue to address twenty-one (21) mission requests from the impacted counties. In addition, non-governmental organizations and volunteers continue to respond to the needs of disaster survivors and work with local officials to address long-term recovery needs. Below is information regarding the state and local response to the incident.

### **Safety and Security**

By daybreak on March 15, 2024, the Ohio Fire Chief's Association had deployed an Urban Search and Rescue Team to Logan County to search for additional casualties. Along with eleven officers from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), 889 structures were searched and fortunately no additional casualties were found.

In Delaware County, the tornado toppled and destroyed at least six AEP electrical transmission lines located between a sub-division and middle school. Also in Delaware County, on March 15, the State Emergency Operations Center assigned a mission to ODNR to patrol the area near a boat ramp at Alum Creek State Park because there was a live power line submerged in the water.

Of note is the following safety success story. As the first tornado sirens were triggered in Delaware County, the doors of a tornado shelter at Delaware State Park were automatically unlocked. Thirty individuals were able to take cover in the shelter and it worked exactly as it was intended. The shelter, built in 2017 using funds from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, DR-4098, was built for campers and can endure 250 mph winds and a direct hit of a 15-pound piece of lumber at 100 mph.

### **Communications**

On March 16, 2024, the Verizon Emergency Response Team began working closely with the Logan County Fire Chief and Sheriff's Department. A Satellite Picocell on Trailer (SPOT), a Starlink and two network routers were deployed to the Lakeview and Russell Point areas. Additionally, a Tactical Humanitarian Operations Response (THOR) vehicle along with another SPOT and Starlink arrived on site and was locally deployed. Verizon also flew two drone missions in support of the Logan County Sheriff's office search and rescue efforts. Finally, some MARCS Radio towers had to run on generator power until power could be restored to the area.

### **Food, Water and Shelter**

The impacted area in Logan County is surrounding Indian Lake, a popular tourist location and home to thousands of permanent residents. The Indian Lake School District is the sole primary education facility for approximately 1,500 students. Impacted jurisdictions are the villages of Lakeview and Russells Point and the townships of Stokes and Washington, which includes Orchard Island. Over the years, mobile home parks have been established and fishing cabins have been turned into small cottages and passed down through family lines. While some of the impacted homes are insured and some are secondary homes, the majority of the homes with major damage or that are destroyed are

uninsured, and the residents do not have the financial means to afford temporary housing and have no place to live outside of family and friends or at their damaged property, which has no power or water.

On March 25, 2024, Logan County officials held their first housing planning meeting because they immediately identified that housing would be an issue. Pre-disaster, the affordable housing market in the area was non-existent. There are also no hotels in the area that would allow the nearly 100 students impacted by the tornado to attend their schools without significant transportation issues. The School District does not have the capacity to bus the students into the district because, like many other school districts across the state, they are already short on bus drivers. While County officials continue to look at options for temporary housing, there are several areas around Indian Lake that either have the infrastructure for or infrastructure can quickly be established to create group sites for temporary housing until homes can be replaced or repaired. There are also several businesses in the area that lease and sell RVs that would be used for temporary housing.

The State of Ohio Housing Team met on March 26, 2024, to begin looking at options to support the local efforts. Two of these options are dependent on a Presidential declaration for both Individual Assistance and Public Assistance, FEMA Direct Housing (IA) and Public Assistance Category B – Non-Congregate Sheltering. The local PA damage assessments are on-going. I am not requesting the PA program at this time, but I am requesting technical assistance from FEMA on how both of these Programs could function for impacted counties to allow the county to recover as quickly and efficiently as possible.

As a result of the tornado outbreak, the American Red Cross established four shelters/reunification centers in both Logan and Delaware counties. One of these shelters remains open at the Galilee Lutheran Church with a current population of eight (8). Also, stationary and mobile feeding units were staffed and operated by the American Red Cross, the Southern Baptists and other NGOs throughout the response period.

### **Transportation**

The Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSP) and Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) immediately responded to the impacted areas to assist with detours, road closures and other safety measures. State transportation routes were closed for several days which slowed the initial debris removal operations. All state and local routes are now open. County ODOT crews also repaired damaged regulatory signage on US33, SR366, and SR117.

### **Health and Medical**

On March 15, 2024, the Ohio Department of Health dispatched a mobile cooling unit and generator to the Mary Rutan Hospital to support mass fatality efforts. Partners with the Ohio Voluntary Agencies Active in Disasters coordinated missions to Logan County to provide laundry and shower trailer services.

### **Energy (Power and Fuel)**

The Village of Lakeview's water treatment plant was not damaged in the tornado, but it was under manual operation and remained on generator power until March 16, 2024. A water boil advisory was issued and remained in effect until March 25, 2024. In regard to power, all customers' power was restored by March 18<sup>th</sup> with the exception of homes that no longer have functional meters to restore service. This restoration will have a lengthy delay due to the severity of the damages in some of the impacted areas.

### **Debris Operations**

On March 18, the State of Ohio activated their Debris Working Group. This group consists of ODOT, ODNR, the Ohio National Guard (ONG), Ohio EMA and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA). To date, ten missions have been sent to the State EOC, some of which are being handled by this Group. The main focus has been to support the Logan County area with technical assistance (Ohio EPA) and physical resources (ODOT, ONG, ODNR and the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections (ODRC)). Two construction and demolition temporary storage areas were used allowing residents to bring debris to these sites. There is also a woody debris temporary storage area. The two construction and demolition sites have been closed. There is also curbside pickup and dumpsters located throughout the impacted communities for continued removal of debris. State and local resources are accomplishing these crucial missions, and 3,561.27 tons of debris has been taken to the landfill in Logan County as of March 27, 2024. A Crisis Cleanup hotline and website has been established to register disaster survivors with cleanup assistance as well as other items that could be supported by Ohio VOAD partners.

Additionally, there is significant work being performed by ODNR to retrieve debris that was deposited into Indian Lake. This includes removal of boats, homes and other debris and is a significant operation with barges on the Lake to gather the debris. Recovered boats are being staged at a designated area so that owners can accept them. The ODRC is assisting with cleanup of property at Indian Lake State Park. ODNR has also worked to remove a log jam in Greenville Creek in Darke County because this is the water source for the Greenville Water Plant.

### **Additional Response Actions**

State and non-governmental organizations supported the impacted communities with volunteer and donation management. Initially, the Indian Lake High School was the hub for donations but that has since been turned over to the United Methodist Church. Initially, the Logan County Health Department coordinated the volunteer efforts but that has since transitioned to the United Way of Logan County. The Ohio Area of Aging deployed nurses to the area to assess the impacts to elderly residents in the Indian Lake area.

On March 17, 2024, a Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) was opened in Russells Point to assist disaster survivors with replacing items such as driver's licenses, birth certificates and other crucial identification items. The MARC also has individuals from other county agencies and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. A second MARC was opened in Lakeview because the interest in the MARC in Russells Point exceeded capacity. A MARC was also opened in Delaware County to assist those disaster survivors.

**The following outlines actions taken by voluntary organizations in response to this incident.**

Immediately following the exit of the storm system from the state, NGOs from across the country activated. Actions they have taken or continue to take are as follows:

- United Methodist Church - donations management operations in Lakeview;
- Team Rubicon - members using chainsaw crews to support debris management;
- The Salvation Army - going door-to-door providing \$100 Wal-Mart gift cards, snacks, drinks, pizza and/or sandwiches, and spiritual and/or emotional care in two (2) roving mobile units;
- Ohio Crisis Response Team - 4-5 members per day at MARCs supporting survivors;
- Crisis Cleanup - reports the platform has a number of cases in their system, with more to come;
- Southern Baptists - feeding units in Russells Point and Lakeview for walkup and mobile deliveries;
- Disaster Aid USA - assisting 60-70 houses in Delaware County that they will be entered into Crisis Cleanup and supported chainsaw teams and debris management;
- Samaritan's Purse - supporting tarping and belongings recovery efforts.

**The following provides a disaster history over the past 24 month for the State of Ohio:**

February 2-5 2022	Ice Event	6 southern Ohio counties with 29 applicants	\$4,986,852.00
February 17-18 2022	Flooding	3 southern Ohio counties with 13 applicants	\$1,040,829.00
May 2022	Flooding	2 southern Ohio counties with 6 applicants	\$637,933.00
June 2022	Derecho, flooding	17 Ohio counties with total 23 applicants	\$10,642,069.00
July 2022	Tornado	Clermont - total 6 applicants	\$1,397,413.00
January 2023	Flooding	Monroe - total of 2 applicants	\$1,234,363.00
March/April 2023	Tornado	Auglaize - total of 5 applicants	\$1,591,534.00

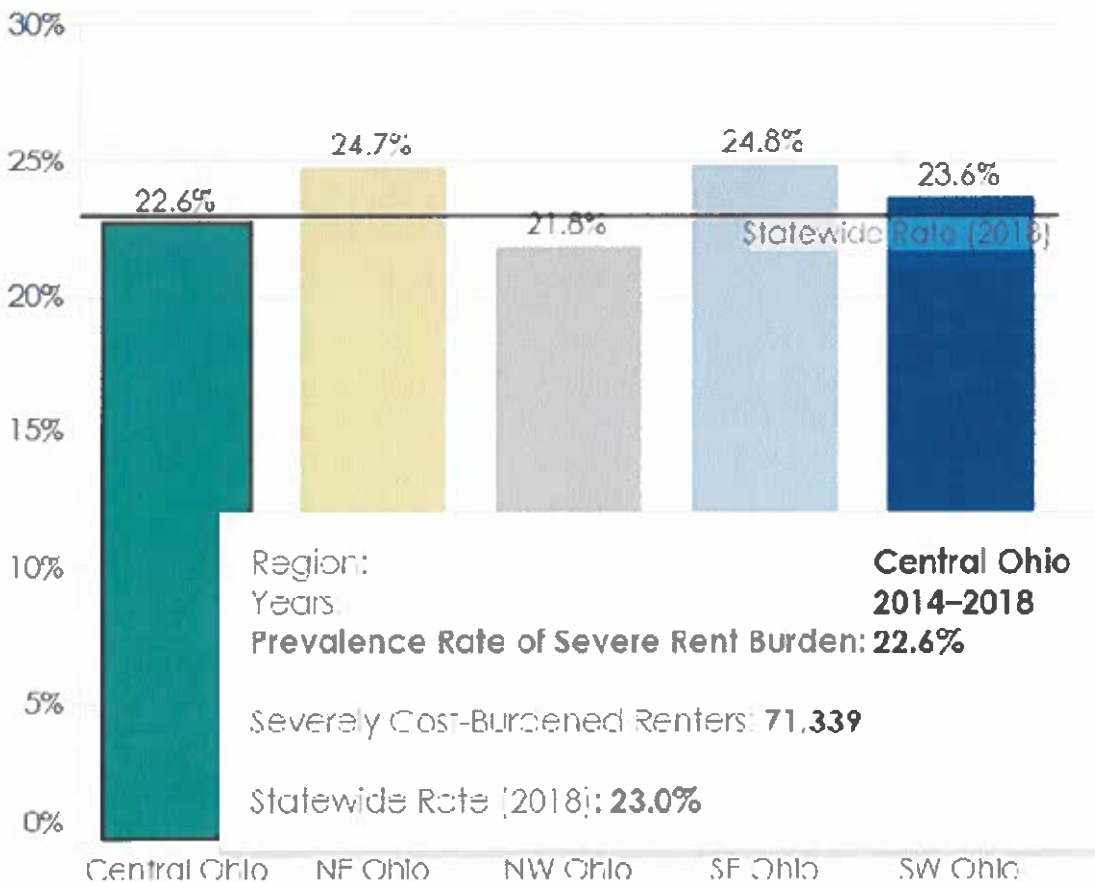
The Ohio EMA has a state funded infrastructure program called the State Disaster Relief Program. This program was first implemented in 1985 and has provided \$78.6 million in grants to local governments for 93 incidents (average 2.2 incidents per year). This program is utilized when federal assistance is not available and is cost shared 75%/25% between the state and local governments. During the past 24 months, this program was authorized for the following incidents at an estimated cost of 21.5 million:

Per the new Individual Assistance declaration criteria, Ohio's Total Taxable Resources for 2019 are \$857 billion.

The following is from a FY 2021 Housing Needs Assessment performed by the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA). It demonstrates that prior to the disaster, the housing issues were already significant in the impacted area. The source is OHFA's website

- Adjusted for inflation, median gross rent in Ohio increased by 9% from \$733 per month in 2012 to \$797 per month in 2018.
- The increase in income for the 80th percentile of Ohioans since 2006 has outpaced the increase in rent over that period, while the income level at the 20th percentile has lagged since 2008.
- For every 100 extremely low-income renters in Ohio, there were only 44 rental units affordable and available to them in 2018.
- Ohio's affordable housing gap has been gradually shrinking, but at the current net annual rate of around 5,000 units built or made available for the lowest-income renters, it will take almost 50 years to close that gap.
- One-in-three Black renters in Ohio (33%) were severely rent burdened in 2018, compared to one-in-five white renters (22%).

#### Severe Rent Burden by Region – Highlighting Central Ohio



The following addresses the impacts to the business sector and describes what is currently known about disaster survivors who have lost work or become unemployed due to this incident. Data Source is Logan County.

As a result of the EF3 Tornado that has devastated several parts of Indian Lake, there are significant short, near and long-term economic impacts on the area. Below are a few key points to gain a full understanding of where and how further damage could be prevented and also help restore local and regional economic impacts.

- Logan County is classified as rural with a population of 46,035 in 2021. The Indian Lake community is surrounded by three villages (Huntsville, Russells Point and Lakeview) and is home to several townships including McArthur, Stokes, Washington, and Richland. There are approximately 12,000 people directly in the impact zone from the tornado. The F3 tornado caused extensive damage to Lakeview, Russells Point, Stokes, and Washington Townships. This area serves as an important economic base supplying workers to Honda and other manufacturers that support the supply of parts and assembly of automobiles. The Indian Lake area is a major tourist destination in Ohio. It is home to the second largest inland lake, Indian Lake. The community is a popular tourist destination for boating, fishing and recreational experiences in and around the water. It supports dozens of small businesses, restaurants, coffee shops, retail stores, marinas, RV parks, RV and golf car sales, grocery stores and all of the support contractors and businesses who construct docks or clean and maintain properties. These businesses make most of their money for the year between April and September.
- Since the tornado, there has been a significant drop in traffic and visitors. Guests are cancelling bookings at area rentals and this year's tourist season is in jeopardy, causing alarm and panic to a number of area small businesses. There are approximately 130 Airbnb's and over 15 campgrounds in the Lake Region that rely on tourism traffic.
- The tornado itself has also caused extensive damage to key businesses that are essential to the tourism economy. At least 40 individual business locations incurred direct damage from the storm. This includes major damage to Spend-A-Day Marina, Bud's Marina, Community Markets (Grocery), La Playa Azul Mexican Restaurant, Indian Head Restaurant, The Depot (Retail), Padrones Pizza, Lakeview Hardware, Steve Austin's at the Lake (Car Dealership), Community Storage Lakeview, and many others. Damaged businesses plus normal guests choosing to stay away from the area will have a devastating and long-term impact on the region. This follows on the heels of two difficult seasons at the Lake due to invasive vegetation in the water preventing many normal boating and recreational activities.
- Events are also a big driver that supports area organizations, like the Indian Lake Chamber, and the community as a whole. Many of our large community events are in jeopardy which could be devastating to area non-profits and organizations.



### Disaster Impacted Population Profile Data Source: FEMA Joint PDA

County Statistics

Select Region: (All) | Select State: Ohio | Select County: (Multiple values)

SVI Score: 0.00 to 1.00 | SVI Percentile: 2% to 66%

County Statistics: SVI and Other Key Indicators for RVAR

	SVI	SVI Rank in State	SVI Percentile in State	SVI Rank in Nation	SVI Percentile in Nation	Decennial Pop.	Only PA Cost Est. Thresh. (\$4.44)	Age under 18	Age above 65	Below 100% poverty level	Disability	Houses Owned	Houses with SNAP	Houses with SSI	Houses Insured	Language other than English	Speak English less than very well	Not Employed	Per Capita Personal Income
OH Richland County	0.60	8	92%	1.107	60%	124.9K	\$555K	21.90%	19.40%	13.60%	16.30%	67.23%	14.70%	6.77%	51.33%	4.30%	1.40%	5.30%	\$46K
Crawford County	0.32	46	45%	2.184	32%	42.0K	\$187K	22.00%	20.50%	14.10%	16.60%	69.14%	14.00%	5.95%	52.36%	2.70%	1.10%	5.70%	\$46K
Licking County	0.21	59	33%	2.539	21%	178.5K	\$793K	23.30%	16.40%	9.50%	15.50%	73.37%	11.40%	7.55%	56.32%	4.50%	1.40%	3.60%	\$55K
Hancock County	0.17	65	26%	2.689	17%	74.9K	\$333K	22.30%	17.20%	11.10%	12.10%	69.61%	9.30%	4.46%	52.63%	5.20%	1.80%	3.70%	\$59K
Logan County	0.13	72	18%	2.797	13%	46.2K	\$205K	23.10%	18.20%	9.50%	12.70%	75.80%	11.00%	2.41%	54.96%	2.70%	1.00%	4.40%	\$50K
Miami County	0.09	78	11%	2.929	9%	106.8K	\$483K	23.30%	18.60%	7.70%	12.10%	72.96%	7.50%	5.44%	56.22%	3.90%	1.30%	3.70%	\$55K
Darke County	0.08	80	9%	2.960	8%	51.9K	\$230K	24.00%	19.30%	10.40%	13.10%	71.94%	8.20%	4.36%	57.36%	1.50%	0.30%	2.40%	\$52K
Auglaize County	0.03	83	6%	3.112	6%	46.4K	\$206K	24.30%	16.10%	7.30%	11.70%	76.22%	6.90%	5.32%	58.13%	2.00%	0.40%	3.30%	\$55K
Union County	0.02	84	5%	3.149	5%	62.8K	\$279K	24.80%	12.20%	4.70%	10.10%	81.19%	2.90%	2.62%	55.66%	7.10%	1.60%	3.00%	\$65K
Mercer County	0.02	85	5%	3.154	5%	42.5K	\$189K	26.00%	17.80%	5.30%	10.50%	79.55%	5.00%	3.25%	60.65%	2.10%	0.70%	2.40%	\$59K
Delaware County	0.02	86	5%	3.155	5%	214.1K	\$951K	26.10%	13.80%	4.60%	8.00%	79.14%	3.70%	2.79%	60.32%	9.50%	2.10%	2.80%	\$84K

The events of March 14, 2024 have resulted in a disaster of such severity and magnitude that effective response and recovery is beyond the capability of the State of Ohio, affected local governments, and voluntary organizations. The widespread destruction of homes, apartments and businesses, particularly in the Logan County area, is tragic and will require a recovery process that could stretch over a number of years. In addition, there is a substantial shortage of housing resources in the impacted areas which requires the assets of federal agencies to help address. Finally, the local and voluntary agency work that has been done is astounding but cannot be sustained into the months and years ahead.

Therefore, I am requesting Auglaize, Crawford, Darke, Delaware, Hancock, Licking, Logan, Mercer, Miami, Richland, and Union counties in Ohio be included in a Major Disaster Declaration for the Individual Assistance Grant Program, to include the Crisis Counseling Program, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Disaster Case Management, Disaster Legal Services, the Small Business Administration and requesting the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program statewide. Further, I am also requesting technical assistance from FEMA on how both the Public Assistance and Individual Assistance program may work together to allow the counties to recover as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Very respectfully yours,



Mike DeWine  
Ohio Governor

Enclosures  
OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13  
A: Individual Assistance  
C: Requirements for Other Federal Agency Programs