**DISASTER DECLARATION PROCESS**

**LOCAL RESPONSE:**

All disasters begin with a local response. Local resources are used to respond to the disaster. The chief local elected official in a city or county may declare a local disaster in order to activate that jurisdiction’s emergency operations plan. Citizens should report damages to their City/County Emergency Management Agency or City/County officials.

**Local Government Requests Assistance:**

If a city’s or a county’s response capabilities are overwhelmed or depleted, local officials may request assistance from CAL-OES

**STATE DISASTER DECLARATION:**

The Governor may proclaim a state disaster, which allows state agency resources to assist local governments.

**PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENTS:**

Damage information (private property, business losses, and public infrastructure damages) must be first collected by local officials. Based upon the information collected by local officials, CAL-OES may request a Federal/State Preliminary Damage

Assessment (PDA). During the visit, the PDA team tours, collects and analyzes the damage information. The damage assessment team members include CAL-OES, FEMA, SBA, and local officials.

**REQUESTING A PRESIDENTIAL DISASTER DECLARATION:**

If the Governor asks the President for a Major Disaster declaration, the request is submitted through FEMA Region IX FEMA reviews the Governor’s request and makes a recommendation to the President. The President then makes the decision on the Governor’s request.

**If the Request is Denied:**

The Governor may appeal the denial. The appeal must be submitted within 30 days and provide additional NEW information to the original request for re-consideration.

**PRESIDENT APPROVES DISASTER REQUEST:**

Depending on the State’s request, the Federal disaster declaration may make assistance available to families, businesses, local governments, and/or certain private non-profit organizations located in declared counties that suffered eligible disaster related damages. The primary federal assistance programs are Individual Assistance, Public Assistance, Hazard Mitigation Assistance, and Small Business Administration disaster loans.

**INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE:**

Helps individuals and households in declared counties begin the recovery process after a disaster. Individuals, families, and businesses have 60 days after the declaration is issued to register for assistance either by telephone or the internet.

**PUBLIC ASSISTANCE:**

Helps reimburse local, county, and state governments, and certain private, non-profit organizations in declared counties for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and repair/replacement of damaged public infrastructure. Emergency Work includes debris removal and emergency protective measures. Permanent Work categories include roads and bridges, water control facilities, buildings and equipment, utilities, and parks/recreational facilities. Damages and costs incurred from a disaster are measured by a statewide and county per capita dollar threshold. These factors are considered by FEMA when determining the need for a Public Assistance major disaster declaration.

**PUBLIC ASSISTANCE DISASTER BRIEFINGSFOR LOCAL OFFICIALS:**

CAL-OES conducts applicant briefings to explain to local officials the Public Assistance Program policies and procedures, how project worksheets are prepared and the reimbursement processes and procedures. Local officials have 30 days from the date of the Disaster Declaration to submit a request for Public Assistance to CAL-OES.

**Hazard Mitigation Grant Program:**

After a Presidential Declaration the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) provides federal assistance to states, local units of government and certain private non-profit organizations for long-term mitigation measures and all-hazards mitigation planning. Applicant organizations must have a FEMA approved mitigation plan in place prior to the submission of project applications to FEMA, with the proposed project identified in the plan. Local government applicants must belong to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).