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# News Release

## **FEMA LOCAL HIRES, SPENDING BOOST VERMONT RECOVERY EFFORT**

**BURLINGTON, Vt.** – Some Vermonters saw their homes and cars swamped by this spring’s heavy rains and floods, while others saw their jobs or businesses swept away.

The [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#) is helping put the state’s economy back on track, not only by providing financial assistance to families and businesses, but also by hiring residents in Vermont to help with the recovery efforts and spending money in the local economy.

The agency has hired 10 Vermonters in various positions around the state, according to FEMA’s Federal Coordinating Officer Craig Gilbert, who noted that the roughly 150 workers at the agency’s Joint Field Office in Burlington are the equivalent of a large business locating there.

“The positions are short-term temporary jobs working in numerous areas of the recovery operation, but they are critical to our efforts and to helping the state get back on its feet,” Gilbert said. “We take our responsibility to hire local people very seriously, and we’re delighted with the quality of workers we’ve found.”

Vermonters have been hired to perform tasks ranging from inspecting damaged homes to performing administrative duties to reaching out to and signing up residents for assistance.

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“We really want to put local people to work, not only to help Vermont’s economy but to take advantage of their knowledge of the communities in which we are operating,” said Vermont Emergency Management Director Mike O’Neil.

Bristol’s Kate Ash, hired as a Voluntary Agency Liaison Specialist, has been employing her local knowledge to assist community organizations, faith-based groups and voluntary agencies in communities affected by the flooding.

Ash, a 22-year-old graduate of the University of Vermont in 2010, was an intern in U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy’s office before coming to FEMA. In the senator’s office, she worked with the Vermont Council on Rural Development among other groups.

Now she is working with other nonprofit and voluntary groups, including the Vermont Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, AmeriCorps, American Red Cross, Vermont 211, United Methodists, and Southern Baptists to help with the recovery efforts statewide.

“Our primary goal is to help establish community-led groups who will be able to assist survivors with any disaster-related unmet needs long after federal teams have left the state,” she said. “I’m very grateful for the opportunity to use my local contacts and for the experience to promote the work of both local and national recovery groups throughout Vermont.”

The Burlington Joint Field Office is expected to pump roughly \$3.7 million into the local economy, which according to many standard economic models that use an \$8 multiplier for every dollar spent, will result in nearly \$30 million of local economic impact.

“We not only purchase supplies and services, but our staff rent cars; stay in hotels; shop in stores and eat in local restaurants. They have their families come to visit them,” said Gilbert. “That adds up to a tremendous economic impact.”

FEMA personnel have been in Vermont since late June, and are expected to remain in the state until late September or through October, though the number of people will be declining as work is completed.

*FEMA’s mission is to support our citizens and first responders and to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.*

*Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). Those with a speech disability or hearing loss who use a TTY may call 1-800-462-7585 directly; or call 1-800-621-3362 if using 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS).*

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*FEMA's temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA loan officers to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.*

*SBA disaster loan information and application forms may be obtained by calling the SBA's Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 (800-877-8339 for people with speech or hearing disabilities) Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET or by sending an e-mail to [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov). Applications can also be downloaded from [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov) or completed on-line at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>.*

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