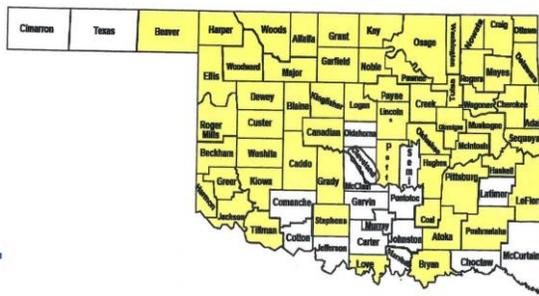




FEMA



## Cornell Wesley, former representative for the U.S. Department of Commerce-EDA and Jimmy E. Seago, Deputy CEO of Oklahoma Rural Water Association, Advocates Availability of FEMA funds for Rural Community Development.

### **\*\*FEMA FUNDS APPROVED IN OKLAHOMA\*\***

At the most recent Beckham County Rural Water #1 board meeting, Cornell Wesley, former representative for the U.S. Department of Commerce-EDA and Jimmy E. Seago, Deputy CEO of Oklahoma Rural Water Association, announced immediate availability of FEMA funds for Rural Community Development enabling communities in Oklahoma to restore their infrastructure through direct federal assistance.

Wesley explained, “The president’s June 1, 2019 major disaster declaration was amended to add four counties to 41 counties already designated for Public Assistance. Public Assistance reimbursements are made on a cost-sharing basis of 80% to counties, municipalities, state, tribes, and certain private nonprofit organizations for emergency work, restoration of infrastructure and direct federal assistance.”

The 41 counties previously approved for FEMA Public Assistance are Adair, Alfalfa, Beaver, Beckham, Blaine, Canadian, Cherokee, Craig, Creek, Custer, Delaware, Dewey, Ellis, Garfield, Grady, Grant, Greer, Harper, Jackson, Kingfisher, Le Flore, Logan, Lincoln, Mayes, Muskogee, Nowata, Osage, Okfuskee, Pawnee, Payne, Pottawatomie, Pittsburg, Pushmataha, Rogers, Roger Mills, Sequoyah, Tulsa, Wagoner, Washington, Washita and Woods.

Earlier this year, the Governor Stitt administration ratified a Strategic Alliance Agreement for the sole purpose of improving water and wastewater systems throughout the state. James Gammill, Oklahoma Rural Water Association CEO, remarked during the signing ceremony that this commitment among the organizations is a positive step toward elevating the rural water and wastewater systems to a best in class business model by starting the process of updating aging infrastructure and by equipping local stakeholders with the tools and skills they need to keep Oklahoma’s water systems sustainable into the future.

#### **Positive Community Impact**

Several counties have already agreed to take full opportunity of the FEMA funding. “Between this program and the historic alliance agreement, we will be able to provide the ingenuity and resources that are crucial to the livelihood and sustainability of Oklahoma and it’s rural communities,” said Jimmy E. Seago with Oklahoma Rural Water Association.

#### **Funds for Communities**

FEMA funds for Rural Community Development assistance would cover eligible disaster-related debris removal, emergency protective measures, and the repair or rebuilding of public facilities, such as roads, bridges, water control facilities, buildings, equipment, public utilities, parks and recreational facilities. Cornell Wesley and the Oklahoma Rural Water Association are partnering to deliver immediate education and assistance to communities, navigating federal communications and accessing these important federal dollars for rural infrastructure. For more information on this unique FEMA funding opportunity, please contact ORWA office at 405-672-8925 or [office@orwa.org](mailto:office@orwa.org).