

January 24, 2018

Ohio EMA Now Accepting Safe Room Applications

COLUMBUS — The Ohio Safe Room Rebate Program is once again accepting applications. The program provides a rebate for the purchase and construction/installation of tornado safe rooms for Ohio homeowners selected for the program.

“The entire state of Ohio is at risk of an EF5 tornado, which produces 250 mile per hour winds capable of destroying most structures,” said Steve Ferryman, Ohio EMA mitigation branch chief. “A safe room is built to withstand these winds and resulting airborne debris and provides near absolute protection for occupants.”

A safe room is an extreme-wind shelter or space that provides protection to people during a tornado. It can be constructed/installed in one of several places in the home: in the basement, beneath a concrete slab-on-grade foundation or garage floor, or in an interior room on the first floor. A safe room may also be buried in the yard or be a stand-alone structure near your home.

Residents selected for the program are eligible for a rebate up to 75 percent of the cost to install or construct a safe room – up to a maximum of \$4,875. To apply for the Ohio Safe Room Rebate Program, homeowners have until 5 p.m. March 19, to register on the Ohio EMA website:

<https://sharpp.dps.ohio.gov/SafeRoom2016/AnnualSafeRoomPages/AnnualHomePage.aspx>.

The Ohio Safe Room Rebate Program will use a computerized random selection process to select applicants. A priority list of applicants will be created from the selected applicants. Chosen homeowners will be notified by e-mail of their position on the priority list on or after March 22. Ohio EMA anticipates grant funding will become available this year and having a list of participants who meet program requirements will expedite the rebate process.

Funding for the rebate program is through a partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant programs. Ohio homeowners would be responsible for 25 percent of the construction costs and any additional costs over the 75 percent maximum rebate of \$4,875.

Safe rooms must meet FEMA requirements in FEMA publications 320 and 361, and cannot be constructed/installed prior to the rebate drawing and notification from Ohio EMA to proceed with construction. Ohio EMA plans to offer this rebate program on an annual basis. When and if HMA funding becomes available, the amount of funding will determine the number of rebates.

If, after visiting the Ohio EMA website, interested people have questions, they should call Dan Clevidence at 614.799.3533.