La. begins flood aid application with survey

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Homes in the Watson and Denham Springs area of Livingston Parish are flooded during severe weather in August.

Homeowners affected by the historic floods can begin the initial application process next week for the state's upcoming housing recovery programs. An online survey will be launched on the Restore Louisiana Task Force website, restore.la.gov, at 7 a.m. Monday, along with a coordinating call center for homeowners who don't have internet access and need to fill out the online forms on their behalf.

The survey process will not be judged on a first-come, first-served basis. It will be available for a period of time and does not have to be completed on the opening date. The survey is expected to take about 15 minutes and will not require documentation. Potentially eligible homeowners will be invited later to further apply for assistance, based on their survey answers, at which time further documentation will be needed.

According to the state task force, the survey portion is intended to speed up the process by minimizing the number of homeowners affected by federal rules on government assistance timelines.

All flood-impacted families are strongly urged to complete the survey even if they don’t think they’ll qualify for the initial round of assistance.

The state is in line to receive $1.6 billion in recovery assistance from the federal government, with much of the money going toward homeowner repair or rebuilding programs. Three options will be available: homeowner directed private contractor; state-based rebuilding; and homeowner reimbursement for repairs already completed.