

South Plains Association of Governments (SPAG)

Residential Safe Room Rebate Program



Funding for this program is provided by the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The South Plains Association of Governments (SPAG) administers the Residential Safe Room Rebate Program to assist eligible property owners with the installation of FEMA-compliant safe rooms or storm shelters. The program is designed to reduce the risk of injury or loss of life during severe weather events.

Participation in the program is voluntary and subject to funding availability. Your signature on the Signed Statement of Voluntary Participation designates that an applicant is choosing to participate in the rebate program of their own will.

SERVICE AREA

This program is available only to residences located within the SPAG region, including the following counties:

Bailey, Cochran, Crosby, Dickens, Floyd, Garza, Hale, Hockley, King, Lamb, Lubbock, Lynn, Motley, Terry, and Yoakum.

REBATE DETAILS

- The program provides reimbursement for **50% of eligible expenses**, up to a maximum rebate of **\$3,000** per approved project.
- Applicants are responsible for 100% of costs prior to reimbursement.
- Submission of an application does not guarantee funding.
- Rebates are not transferable. Rebate awards are only applicable to the recipient(s) named in the original application received by SPAG.
- Rebate funds cannot be applied retroactively.

Homeowners must first apply for a rebate and receive a written confirmation of rebate award from SPAG before being assured of receiving this assistance. The application will be used to determine eligibility. The applicant must pay 100% for the safe room upfront.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for participation, applicants must meet the following conditions:

- The applicant must legally own the residence at the time of rebate approval
- The residence must be a single-family dwelling or eligible duplex
- The residence must not be located within a FEMA-designated Special Flood Hazard Area

- **The safe room or storm shelter must meet FEMA P-320, FEMA P-361, and ICC 500 standards** and may be above or below ground

- Homes more than 45 years old must receive approval from the Texas Historical Commission (THC) prior to installation. If your home is over 45 years old, please visit: <https://xapps.thc.state.tx.us/106Review/>

Renters, commercial properties, and multi-family units are not eligible.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Approved participants must agree to:

- Install a shelter meeting FEMA design standards
- Provide all required documentation for reimbursement
- Allow SPAG staff to conduct a site visit/inspection and take photos required for FEMA reimbursement
- Permit collection of GPS coordinates for emergency management purposes

APPLICATION PROCESS (BEFORE INSTALLATION)

Step 1: Confirm Floodplain Status

Applicants must verify that the residence is not located within a FEMA-designated floodplain. There are two ways to determine this:

- Contact local city code enforcement officer or county floodplain administrator to determine if the property is in a Special Flood Hazard Area; or
- Go to the FEMA Floodplain map link <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search> and enter your address in the search box. Click on the “View Map” option to view your FIRM. Then click on “Make a FIRMette” on the left.

Step 2: Proof of Ownership

On the application form, you’ll certify that you are the owner occupant, builder, or developer of the residence in which the unit is to be installed. We will need documentation to confirm this information.

Step 3: THC Review (If Applicable)

Homes over 45 years old will need to be evaluated by Texas Historical Commission (THC) prior to installation of a storm shelter. Shelters installed prior to THC approval are not eligible for

rebate. Additional information will be requested should your home need to be evaluated by THC. Visit <https://xapps.thc.state.tx.us/106Review/> if your home is over 45 years old.

Step 4: Submit Application

Complete and submit the Residential Safe Room Rebate Application along with ownership documentation and proof that the property is not in a floodplain to SPAG. This can be done physically (mailing/drop off) or on our website.

Step 5: Receive Approval

Eligible applicants will receive written authorization from SPAG to proceed. Please keep in mind, this program is **not retroactive, and shelters installed prior to notification from SPAG are not eligible for rebate.**

Step 6: Find Contractor and Install Shelter

The shelter must meet FEMA compliance standards. It can be below or above ground but must comply with the following publications:

- FEMA P-320, Fourth Edition (Taking Shelter from the Storm)
- FEMA P-361, Third Edition (Safe Rooms for Tornadoes and Hurricanes)
- ICC 500-2014

Residents are encouraged to contact several different contractors to determine which unit will best suit their needs. **Paperwork providing proof of compliance with FEMA design standards will be required.**

Step 7: Complete Installation and Submit Documentation

Complete the installation of the unit and submit your documentation according to the instructions provided in the SPAG letter of notification you will receive, if awarded, authorizing you to proceed with the unit installation.

- A signed statement from you that your participation in this program has been strictly voluntary
- Copy of the signed and notarized Texas Division of Emergency Management Certificate of Installation and Inspection
- Copy of contractor invoice(s)
- Proof of payment for all costs (front and back of canceled check, copy of bank statement showing debit/credit card payment)
- Other paperwork as necessary

Step 8: Final Inspection

FEMA/TDEM requires the GPS coordinate positioning of each home receiving a unit under this program be recorded. Therefore, as a step in the rebate payment process, SPAG staff will make a visit to each unit site, verify the existence of the unit and record the longitude/latitude coordinates of the residence in which the unit has been installed.

The street address of the residence will be provided to the local 9-1-1 dispatch to speed potential search and rescue operations following a storm(s). As a provision of rebate payment, the owner occupant, builder, or developer will have to agree to this data gathering step by SPAG. This is done on the Statement of Voluntary Participation form you will receive with your approval papers.

Step 9: Rebate Request Processing

Approved rebates will be processed following verification and will have to go through TDEM and FEMA approval. This process typically takes 4-6 weeks.

SPAG will use a first come, first serve basis to award rebates. Please note there is a high probability that SPAG will receive more applications than can be funded. **Rebates are not guaranteed.** Applicants must meet all of the eligibility and installation requirements to receive a rebate.