



**State of Kansas**

**SUNFLOWER-SAFE  
Residential Safe Room  
PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

**SUNFLOWER-SAFE RESIDENTIAL SAFE ROOM REBATE PROGRAM**

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**STATE OF KANSAS**

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# STATE OF KANSAS

## Residential Safe Room PROGRAM

### I. INTRODUCTION:

The State of Kansas experiences many windstorm events that are classified as tornadoes with sustained wind speeds of 125 miles per hour and greater. While these windstorm events can create devastating damage to private and public property, the most important issue is the larger threat of death and bodily injury to citizens.

While the weather can never be tamed, the citizens of Kansas can be protected from impending severe weather, including tornadoes. Many communities provide community safe rooms, however, it is not always practical, or safe, for residents to seek shelter in them. The best lead-time for a tornado is about 30 minutes. Tornadoes have been known to change paths very rapidly, thus limiting the time in which to take shelter. Tornadoes may not be visible on the ground due to evening hours, blowing dust or driving rain and hail. Therefore, there is very little, or no, warning of when a specific tornado may be on the ground, let alone time to walk or drive to a community shelter.

Community leaders understand the necessity of keeping their constituency informed, educated, and protected. Community safe rooms serve a valuable service, especially to those living within a half-mile distance from the shelter. Residential safe rooms can fill the void for those that live in excess of a half mile of a shelter yet find themselves in need of protection.

The cost of a human life cannot be truly determined, especially when you consider children, parents, grandparents and the human elements that make us individuals. The residential safe room program is a way to help the residents of Kansas find safety and security in knowing that should a wind event, or tornado, necessitate taking shelter, they are covered.

### II. REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The Residential Safe Room Program is available through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) administered by the Kansas Division of Emergency Management, contingent upon funding.

The HMGP is funded when an event generates a Presidential Disaster Declaration and is limited to a fixed amount based upon 15% of total Federal disaster expenditures. It is a statewide competitive grant program.

This grant is a reimbursement grant with a 75%/25% (Federal share/local match) cost share. The local matching funds must derive from non-Federal funds.

The Residential Safe Room Program was created to offer Kansas citizens an incentive-type rebate on the acquisition and installation of a tornado safe room in order to provide protection from impending dangerous weather conditions.

This program is operated at the state level in accordance with the requirements described in the State of Kansas Hazard Mitigation Plan – Annex A (entitled the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Administrative Plan), the 44 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations), and this document.

### III. ELIGIBILITY:

#### 1. Eligibility Criteria:

1.1.1. All residents of the State of Kansas are eligible for the Residential Safe Room Program, providing the safe room is installed in individual homeowner's primary residence and are installed on property owned by the applicant. Kansas requires that the safe room be purchased by an approved manufacturer with a required seal and certification from the National Storm Shelter Association (NSSA) or the American Tornado Shelter Association (ATSA), which ensures its members produce safe rooms in accordance with FEMA 320 and 361 standards, as well as the ICC-500. Seals for the safe room must be adhered to the door of the safe room. In addition, the program is limited to single-family homes. For your convenience the NSSA website is: <http://nssa.cc/>, and the ATSA website is: <https://www.americantornadoshelterassociation.org>.

#### 2. Recipient/Sub-recipient – The State of Kansas:

1.2.1. With a current FEMA approved State Mitigation Plan, the State of Kansas is eligible to participate in the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) established by the Stafford Act. The State must operate these grants in accordance with the rules and regulations as set forth in the 44 CFR, the State of Kansas Hazard Mitigation Plan, and this document. The CFDA number for this grant is 97-039. IAW 44 CFR §13.26, the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 (31 U.S.C. 7501-7507), and revised OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations.

#### 1.2.2. Program Applicants - Residents of the State of Kansas With:

1.2.2.1. A Regional Plan approved through FEMA of which their community participated and have residential safe rooms as an approved action item. Because this is a state program, the State Hazard Mitigation Plan will sponsor the applicant/resident for purposes of a residential safe room as far as the action item. The jurisdiction must adopt the regional plan in which the resident resides.

1.2.2.2. A State and FEMA approved Mitigation Plan, and

1.2.3. Property:

1.2.3.1. Resident of Kansas primary residence owned.

3. Responsibilities: The State of Kansas is the Recipient/Sub-recipient, the Resident is the Applicant

1.3.1. Recipient/Sub-recipient – The State of Kansas Will:

- Provide HMGP overall program management. These duties include but are not limited to;
  - Notification of grant program availability statewide.
  - Verification of the Sub-recipient eligibility.
  - Updating program guidance as needed.
  - Furnishing guidance and direction to the Applicant as needed.
  - Monitoring program integrity in accordance with all rules and regulations as set forth in the 44 CFR, the State of Kansas Hazard Mitigation Plan, and this document.
  - The state will fund safe room rebates under this program only when:
    - The State of Kansas receives approval from FEMA’s Environmental and Historic Preservation Officer and the grant award from FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Assistance Branch.
  - Ensuring that a residential safe room location, if located in a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), meets all requirements.

- Collecting and maintaining the appropriate records for this program and submit the required reports to FEMA.
- Making payments by check to eligible and approved Applicants.
- Conducting financial audits at closeout.
- Spot-checking local projects to maintain program integrity. GPS photographs of the project in various stages of completion provided by the Applicant or by authorized Recipient/Sub-recipient representative is acceptable.

1.3.2. Applicants will:

- Provide required information to local program management. These duties include but are not limited to;
- Kansas requires that the safe room be purchased by an approved manufacturer with a required seal and certification from the National Storm Shelter Association (NSSA) or the American Tornado Shelter Association (ATSA), which ensures its member produce safe rooms in accordance with FEMA 320 and 361 standards, as well as the ICC-500. Seals for the safe room must be adhered to the door of the safe room. In addition, the program is limited to single-family homes. For your convenience the NSSA website is: <http://nssa.cc/>, and the ATSA website is: <https://www.americantornadoshelterassociation.org>.
- The Applicant is responsible for notifying the Recipient/Sub-recipient the following information:
  - Each residential safe room location to include latitude and longitude coordinates.
  - Photos:
    - The front of the house,
    - Inside of the safe room,
    - Outside of the safe room,
    - The FEMA project number,
    - A photograph of the NSSA or ATSA seal (which must be visible on the door of the safe room),

- Certificate of installation signed by a registered NSA producer member, will be required upon completion of the installation,
- Subrecipient name and address and latitude/longitude coordinates and for the State of Kansas to request FEMA review and approval prior to initiation of construction.
- The Applicant is responsible for providing the Recipient/Sub-recipient Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) map panel identification for the primary residential safe room location. FIRM map panel data will include CID, date of map and flood zone.
- The Applicant is responsible for certifying to Recipient/Sub-recipient that the residential safe room has been professionally constructed, purchased through a NSSA or ATSA contractor which meets FEMA Publications 320 (Taking Shelter From the Storm), FEMA 361(Safe Rooms For Tornadoes and Hurricanes: Guidance For Community and Residential Safe Rooms) and ICC 500 (Standard For the Design and Construction of Storm Shelters), for appropriately documenting the required Lat/Long information for the safe room location, and for collection of the paid receipts for the residential safe room installation, including those receipts for any associated support or foundation systems.
- The Applicant is responsible for submitting all required reports and documentation to the State (in accordance with the program requirements) to apply for the rebate, including completion of the Applicant Reimbursement Form.
- The Applicant is responsible for documenting they have entered the residential safe room program voluntarily ( Voluntary Agreement).
- Provide paid receipts for the installation of residential safe room within the program dates specified by the Recipient/Sub-recipient. **Rebate will be paid per safe room address or Lat/Long location and be based upon 75% of the approved costs paid by the Sub-recipient up to a maximum of \$3,500, whichever is less.**

- For direct deposit transactions, the resident must send an original signed “Direct Deposit Authorization” form to the Kansas Division of Emergency Management. This process takes 14 days to become effective.
- Provide Recipient/Sub-recipient access for residential safe room inspection, if requested.
- Develop and maintain a regular routine maintenance schedule for the residential safe room (Operation and Maintenance Plan).
- Provide local Fire Department/Police Department/Emergency Manager of coordinates of safe room.
- Maintain an emergency kit in the safe room.
- Program Income:
  - Program Income is not expected for this program.

**NOTE: This is a rebate program. All expenses incurred during the residential safe room construction will be borne by the (Resident) Applicant. The (Resident) Applicant must provide appropriate construction and installation inspection verification for safe room in order to be eligible for the rebate.**

#### **IV. PROGRAM STEPS:**

1. The Sunflower-safe Residential Safe Room Program is announced using all forms of notification available.
2. Eligible applicant applies to the State of Kansas Hazard Mitigation Program, which will be entered into a lottery with names to be randomly selected. Website for the program is: <https://kansastag.gov/KDEM.asp?PageID=4651>
3. Selected applicant(s) have 30 days from the day of notification of selection to inform the State of their notice to proceed or opt-out of the program.
4. THE STATE OF KANSAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT reviews eligible applicants and a spreadsheet of information is provided to FEMA for approval. *See Figure 2 for an example of the information included on the spreadsheet.*

5. Only after eligible Applicants' applications are reviewed and approved by the State of Kansas and FEMA will the Applicant begin construction, inspection and documentation of residential safe room, collect paid receipts, and collate documentation to request the rebate of 75% or \$3,500.00, whichever is less.
6. Applicant submits quarterly reports and all documentation required for 75% or \$3,500.00 of the cost of the safe room, whichever is less.
7. Applicant may close out their safe room grant and receive reimbursement only when the following documents are received:
  - Submission of a letter requesting the \$3,500 or 75%, whichever is less,
  - The Latitude and Longitude information on the structure location,
  - Copies of paid invoice(s), showing the total cost of safe room purchase and installation,
  - Copy of cleared check, money order or credit card receipt,
  - Explanation of any problems encountered, or assistance required,
  - A completed Certificate of Installation at attest that the safe room's design, construction and installation complies with the most recent versions of FEMA Publications 320 (Taking Shelter From the Storm), FEMA 361 (Safe Rooms for Tornadoes and Hurricanes: Guidance for Community and Residential Safe Rooms), as well as ICC 500 (Standards for the Design and Construction of Storm Shelters). The safe room installer must sign the certificate.
  - Additional programmatic documentation requirements, such as:
    - Photos clearly labeled with the FEMA project number,
    - Subrecipient name and address,
    - Latitude/longitude coordinates ,
    - A photo of the NSSA or ATSA seal (which must be visible on the door of the shelter,
    - Photos of the front of you house and inside and outside of your installed safe room,
    - Operation and Maintenance Plan,
    - Certification of providing the safety kit and location of the safe room to public safety officials,
    - Voluntary statement.

All of this information must be submitted **45** days after construction or installation.

## **V. CLOSING ACTIVITIES:**

The Recipient/Sub-recipient requests project close out when:

- Approved grant funding is exhausted, or the grant-funding period has expired.
- All requested paperwork have been submitted to the State.
- Sub-recipient passes program and financial audits.

## **VI. RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING:**

The State (Recipient/Sub-recipient) will maintain an active file of all program documents for a minimum of three (3) years following the closing of the project and grantee submits final expenditure report and a permanent archive copy (CD) of all program documents. The Applicant will maintain the same record keeping requirements.

## **VII. FINAL THOUGHTS:**

The first thought is always the protection of citizens, in this case to actively participate in the Sunflower-safe Residential Safe Room Rebate Program. The community with citizens at risk should actively promote the desirability of having a fully functional residential safe room which was funded in part through the Rebate Program offered through the State of Kansas, contingent upon funding from the FEMA HMGP.

## Safe Room Rules and Regulations

### I. About

The Safe Room Rebate Program was developed in 2020 by the Kansas Division of Emergency Management. THE STATE OF KANSAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT to provide a rebate for the purchase and installation of safe rooms for Kansas homeowners.

Contingent on funding, THE STATE OF KANSAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT is providing this safe room rebate through the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), and must comply with all federal grant regulations for each rebate recipient, to include, but not limited to, eligibility of properties and required documentation.

**All applications are reviewed for completeness and eligibility, so ensure all documentation is provided!**

### II. About Safe Rooms

For the purposes of this program, the term safe room will include any above or below ground residential shelter which meets or exceeds guidelines stated in the most recent versions of FEMA Publications 320 (Taking Shelter from the Storm), FEMA 361 (Safe Rooms for Tornadoes and Hurricanes: Guidance for Community and Residential Safe Rooms), as well as ICC 500 (Standard for the Design and Construction of Storm Shelters). These publications are available for download or viewing at: [Safe Rooms | FEMA.gov](https://www.fema.gov/safe-rooms)

Safe rooms save lives, providing a shield of protection for you and your family! They have been proven tremendously safe and studies have shown that they can withstand winds as high as 250 miles per hour (*Source: FEMA Publication 320*)

### III. How the Program Works

Registration for the residential safe room rebate program can be accessed at: <https://kansastag.gov/KDEM.asp?PageID=4651> Registering ensures you will be considered for the program, **but does not guarantee that you will receive a rebate!** Names are selected randomly so that everyone who registers has an equal chance of being selected. Therefore, the order of registration does not improve the odds of being selected.

A maximum rebate of \$3,500 is available per home, not to exceed 75 percent of the actual cost of the safe room.

Only one person may register per physical home address.

Any address changes will require additional verification.

Randomly selected recipients will be notified after each selection period. You will be notified if you are selected for the rebate via the email address you provide and/or

phone number when you register. **Drawings will not occur at any specific date or month so please be sure to put an email address and phone number that you check regularly!**

If you are selected, you will need to complete the following three steps:

1. Confirm your participation via email to: [Sunflowersafe.kdem@gmail.com](mailto:Sunflowersafe.kdem@gmail.com)
2. Once FEMA has reviewed the application and given their approval, the state will notify you that you may proceed and at that point you may have a safe room installed on your property following the guidelines in the rules and regulations.
3. Submit the required documentation (listed below) to THE STATE OF KANSAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT by the deadline associated with your selection period. You may call 785-646-2307 if you are unsure of your deadline.

These steps are listed in more detail below.

#### IV. If You Are Selected to Receive a Rebate

You will have 30 days to confirm your participation via: [Sunflowersafe.kdem@gmail.com](mailto:Sunflowersafe.kdem@gmail.com) At that time, you may also choose not to participate, but still be eligible for future selection, or you may choose to have your application removed from the program. You **MUST** complete this step within 30 days, or your application will be withdrawn, however, it will not be removed from future drawings.

Once you have confirmed your participation, and the THE STATE OF KANSAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT notifies you, you may then hire a contractor to install the safe room on your property and submit all of the required documentation (listed below) to THE STATE OF KANSAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT by the deadline associated with your selection period. **If you install a safe room prior to receiving notification of selection for the Residential Safe room Program, you will no longer be eligible for a rebate, due to grant requirements.**

**NOTE: The Kansas Division of Emergency Management will not recommend any vendors from NSSA or ATSA. Finding a reputable safe room vendor will fall on the selectee.**

In order to receive the rebate, the recipient must pay for the total purchase and installation up front. Once the project is complete you must submit the paid invoice showing the total cost of the safe room purchase and installation, along with a completed Certificate of Installation to attest that the safe room's design, construction, and installation complies with the most recent versions of FEMA Publication 320 (Taking

Shelter from the Storm). If using prescriptive designs, and FEMA 361 (Safe Rooms for Tornadoes and Hurricanes: Guidance for Community and Residential Safe Rooms), as well as ICC 500 (Standard for the Design and Construction of Storm Shelters). The certificate must be signed by the safe room installer and submitted to THE STATE OF KANSAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT by the deadline associated with your rebate selection period. THE STATE OF KANSAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT may request a copy of your check or credit card receipt after documents have been reviewed.

**Please send all documentation to:**

Residential Safe Room Program  
C/o Kansas Division of Emergency Management  
2800 SW Topeka Blvd.  
Topeka, KS 66611

Or email to:

[Sunflowersafe.kdem@gmail.com](mailto:Sunflowersafe.kdem@gmail.com)

Or fax to:

785-646-2001

The submitted documents will be reviewed by THE STATE OF KANSAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT will review the submitted documents before the rebate check will be remitted to the homeowner. The rebate check typically takes 1 – 2 months to arrive after all documentation is submitted and reviewed.

You cannot receive your rebate before your safe room is installed. You also cannot receive the rebate if your safe room was purchased with a lease agreement, as the safe room must be paid in full. The rebate is only available as a partial reimbursement after construction is completed and you have submitted the required documentation verifying that your safe room meets or exceeds all federal regulations associated with this program.

If you have moved to a new address since completing your application and did not update the address, you will not be eligible for this drawing, however, if you update your address at: [Sunflowersafe.kdem@gmail.com](mailto:Sunflowersafe.kdem@gmail.com) and your property meets all eligibility requirements, you may be eligible for future rebate opportunities.

## V. Eligibility Rules

Any type of safe room is eligible for the rebate as long as it meets or exceeds the specifications set forth in the most recent versions of FEMA Publication 320 (Taking Shelter from the Storm). If using prescriptive designs, and FEMA 361 (Safe Rooms for Tornadoes and Hurricanes: Guidance for Community and Residential Safe Rooms), as well as ICC 500 (Standard for the Design and Construction of Storm Shelters) and is

procured through a NSSA or ATSA, member. Many local building codes require a permit and inspection by local building inspectors.

Additionally, you may have a safe room installed in a new or existing home, either in an interior room on the first floor, underground on the first floor, as a detached aboveground or underground safe room and within 150 feet of the home. Wherever you install it, the safe room should be readily accessible to all occupants.

Additional eligibility rules are as follows:

- To be eligible, the safe room must be installed at primary residences and must be installed on property owned by the applicant.
- Apartment complexes, duplexes, and other multi-family residences are not eligible for this rebate, as they are considered businesses. This safe room rebate program is for single-family homes only.
- If you own two or more homes, you may only register for a safe room rebate for your primary residence.
- Community or neighborhood safe rooms are not eligible for this rebate.
- If you live in a mobile home, you must own both the mobile home itself and the land it is located on to be eligible for the rebate.
- If you live in a rented house, you are not eligible for this rebate. Only single-family residential homeowners are eligible to receive the rebate for their primary residence.
- If you have already installed a safe room, are having it installed now, or are planning to have it installed at any time prior to receiving notification that you have been selected as a rebate recipient, that safe room is not eligible for this rebate. Previously installed safe rooms are not eligible.
- Retrofitting or repairing an existing storm shelter to meet FEMA specifications does not qualify. However, you may be eligible for a new safe room.
- You may not build or install the safe room yourself.
- If the safe room you choose to have installed is not a prefabricated or manufactured design, you or your contractor may be required to submit additional documentation to verify the safe room meets all federal regulations associated with this program.

- If your home is in a floodplain and you have flood insurance, you may be eligible for the rebate. You would not be eligible for a below ground safe room, but you may be eligible for an above ground safe room. However, other agencies will have to approve your specific situation. You may be required to provide more information.
- If you live on historic property, or in a historic district you may be eligible for the rebate. However, other agencies will have to approve your specific situation. You may be required to provide more information.
- If your home was destroyed in a tornado and you plan to rebuild your home in a different location than your previous home you are eligible for this rebate, as long as you are building in Kansas and it is your primary residence. However, you must contact the program team to verify the correct address has been submitted for review.
- If your home was destroyed in Kansas and you are rebuilding your home out of state, you are not eligible for this rebate. The safe room must be built in Kansas.
- You must pay the total invoice for the safe room and installation in order to receive the rebate, as well as provide copies of the cleared check or credit card statement.
- Safe room lease agreements are not eligible.
- These Rules and Regulations apply to the Kansas Residential Safe room Program only. Local city or county safe room rebate programs will have their own individual guidelines and you must contact them for further information.

## **VI. Additional Information**

The cost of a safe room varies depending on several factors, including size and type of safe room. Construction industry experts estimate the cost to range from \$2,500 to \$8,000 or more.

If you receive this rebate, you will not have to claim it as income on your taxes. The safe room rebate is exempt from tax liability as a federally funded assistance program. Be advised that to date Kansas legislation has not been passed to exempt residential safe rooms from Kansas taxation. Personal Property tax may increase.

There are no State or Federal tax incentives associated with this safe room rebate program at this time.



