



Preliminary Damage Assessment Process

The preliminary damage assessment is the first step in determining if Governor Tim Walz will be able to make a request for a presidential declaration of disaster:

1. Local officials conduct an initial impact assessment.

- This occurs shortly after the incident when local officials inform HSEM which facilities in their community are affected (includes damage and impacts to the communities and their demographics).

2. HSEM requests FEMA to conduct a preliminary damage assessment.

- Teams from the affected county, HSEM and FEMA view the damage and collect the cost estimates from county officials.
- Each county must meet its individual threshold which is defined as population times \$3.78. The state must also meet a threshold of \$7.9 million statewide. If the statewide threshold is reached the process continues.

3. HSEM prepares the governor's request for a disaster declaration.

- A letter details the event and cites National Weather Service data. It must document factors that determine severity, magnitude and impact. It also documents what local officials did to respond to the emergency.
- Local input regarding impact to the community is gathered and incorporated in the letter. This includes the amount and type of damage, impact on infrastructure, impact on essential services, concentration of damage, level of insurance coverage, assistance available from other sources, and if there is an imminent threat to public health and safety.

4. Governor submits the letter to the president through FEMA.

- FEMA reviews and sends the letter, with its recommendation to the president.
- The president is the only one with authority to grant a Presidential Disaster Declaration.
- If disaster assistance programs are approved, HSEM officials work in partnership with FEMA to assist with the application for funds.

Additionally, Minnesota has a State Disaster Contingency Account which assists local communities after a natural disaster, even when the damages do not qualify for federal aid. The funds are also used to cover the full FEMA match in federally-declared disasters.

Minnesota's State Disaster Assistance Process

- 1. County declares a local emergency.**
- 2. County conducts an initial damage assessment to determine:**
 - Approximate amount of damage to public infrastructure and its impact.
 - Approximate cost of debris removal
 - Approximate cost of emergency protective measures
- 3. County submits a request for HSEM to conduct an official preliminary damage assessment. This determines if the costs are eligible under the state program.**
- 4. If the eligible damages exceed the required threshold, the county must submit a resolution requesting state disaster assistance.**
- 5. HSEM reviews the request and submits it to Gov. Walz.**