

# Disaster Assistance for Public Infrastructure

## Public Assistance

Public Assistance is a program from FEMA that provides federal aid to state or local governments to assist in rebuilding a community's damaged public infrastructure. If the President declares a major disaster, then FEMA will fund 75 percent of approved repair costs. The state of Minnesota will fund the remaining 25 percent.

## Disaster Declaration Process

**1. Local and state officials conduct an initial impact assessment.**

This occurs shortly after the storm when local officials inform HSEM of damages, and impacts to their communities.

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

Teams from the affected county, HSEM and FEMA conduct the assessment. They view the damage and collect the cost estimates from county officials. Each county must meet its individual threshold which is defined as population times \$3.50. The state must also meet a threshold of \$7.3 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 assistance programs are approved, HSEM officials work in partnership with FEMA to assist disaster victims in their application for funds.

**Examples of assistance provided under the FEMA Public Assistance program include:**

- Debris Removal
- Emergency Protective Services
- Repair or replacement of storm-damaged:
  - Roads and Bridges
  - Water control facilities
  - Buildings and equipment
- Loans Needed By Communities For Essential Government Functions
- Grants For Public Schools.
- Municipal utilities
- Parks and recreational facilities

## Hazard Mitigation

In addition, when federal assistance is granted, funds also become available through the federal Hazard Mitigation grant program to assist communities in rebuilding stronger and more resilient to future disasters by helping to reduce or eliminate vulnerabilities.

