

Collecting Information for an IA Assessment

FEMA has several factors it uses to evaluate requests for IA. These factors generally fit into three basic categories: (1) estimated cost of assistance for uninsured homes and personal property loss; (2) fiscal capacity and/or resources of the requesting state, tribe, or territory; and (3) the impact of the incident. The cost of assistance estimate is established by assessing and categorizing the degree of damage of disaster-impacted residences. This calculation is mostly data driven, is calculated with FEMA support, and encompasses a significant portion of a Presidential disaster declaration request. In addition to the cost of assistance calculation, states, tribes, or territories are also responsible for writing a compelling impact statement for the Presidential disaster declaration request package which includes an assessment of SLTT government capacity and resources and an assessment of the impacts of the disaster on the community. This section will first review how to calculate the cost of assistance estimate and then will provide information on what to evaluate in the impact statement.

Assessing Cost of Assistance

Time and access constraints may limit the thoroughness of assessments to homes. When possible, every effort should be made to capture the following information: mapped location information, generally (e.g., jurisdictions impacted) and specifically (e.g., physical addresses or Global Positioning System [GPS] coordinates of damaged dwellings); degree of damage; whether the damage being assessed is flood-related or not; the home type (e.g., manufactured or conventionally built, single-family residence, multi-family residence, etc.); whether homes are owned or rented by disaster survivors (tallied as a total percentage); and whether homes are primary or secondary residences (tallied as a total percentage).

For the purposes of efficiency, FEMA has established four categories of damage that an impacted home may fall within: destroyed, major, minor, or affected. In many cases, the size and needs of the unfolding disaster will not allow PDA teams to conduct a detailed review of each home. On a very basic level, joint PDA teams should use the following standards for categorizing degrees of damage:

Essential Living Spaces

Per the IAPPG, federal assistance is generally limited to essential living spaces. An essential living space is a room within a home that serves the function of a bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, and/or living room that is regularly occupied or used by one or more members of the household and requires repair to bring its functionality back to the home (e.g., kitchens are considered essential as long as there is not another undamaged kitchen in the home).

- Minor: Repairable, non-structural damage to a home or damage from flood waters when the waterline is 18 inches or below in a conventionally built home or when the waterline is in the floor system of a manufactured home.
- Major: Structural damage or other significant damage that requires extensive repairs or damage from flood waters when the waterline is 18 inches or above in a conventionally built home or when the waterline enters the living space of a manufactured home.
- Destroyed: Significant enough damage that the home is deemed a total loss.

If there are fewer constraints on time and access to homes or if the incident is smaller (Level 3), joint PDA teams should validate as much damage as possible to ensure that estimates are accurate, and that federal assistance is required. When the joint PDA team has the opportunity, it can make more nuanced degree of damage determinations by observing or validating other variables, for example:

- The number of essential living spaces flooded,
- The water level (height) in essential living spaces,
- If the waterline has reached electrical outlets,
- Duration of the flood, and
- Contaminants in the water (e.g., oil, chemicals, etc.) which would require special decontamination protocols above standard flood water cleaning procedures.

These variables can affect degrees of damage when validated by FEMA.

Inaccessible Homes

For manufactured and conventionally built homes, inaccessible residences are those in which damage to the home cannot be visually verified because of disaster-related loss of access.

In the case of flooding incidents, flood waters are blocking access to residences by covering, washing out, or destroying roads, bridges, or access routes so that the degree of damage cannot be visually verified. In the case of non-flood incidents, debris from landslides, mudslides, severe soil erosion, or blowdown is blocking access to residences by disrupting or destroying roads, bridges, or access routes so that the degree of damage cannot be visually verified.

If homes can be reached by another route, they should not be considered inaccessible. If the damage is viewable at the time of assessment, the appropriate damage category should be assigned.

If the number of inaccessible homes represents a significant portion of homes assessed, then the PDA team should consider extending their PDA time to allow for a more comprehensive assessment.

This section provides detailed information on the specific types of damage that pertain to each degree of damage category. Not all details need to be validated in order to categorize a

home's degree of damage. For further information on degrees of damage categories, refer to Appendix H: Individual Assistance Damage Matrices.

Manufactured Homes

Affected manufactured homes include residences with cosmetic damage only or residences that do not require repairs to make habitable. Cosmetic damage includes damage to skirting, paint, or a small number of shingles. Damage to a porch, carport, garage, and/or an outbuilding is not eligible for IA and therefore would be considered affected damage. For flooding incidents, the water level from flooding is below the floor system and does not impact habitability (e.g., there is no visible water line, and only skirting is missing or bent).

Minor manufactured homes have sustained damage and require minimal repairs to make habitable. Residences in this category have no structural damage and have not been displaced from their foundations.

For flooding incidents:

- The waterline has reached the floor system but has not entered the living space of the unit. There may be damage to bottom board, insulation, ductwork in the floor system, or heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC).

For non-flood incidents:

- Some of the nonstructural components have sustained damage (e.g., damaged windows, doors, wall coverings, roof, bottom board insulation, ductwork, utility hookups [e.g., water, electricity, gas, telephone/internet, and septic], and HVAC).

Major manufactured homes have sustained significant damage and require extensive repairs to make habitable. Residences in this category have been displaced from their foundations, blocks, or piers and may also have damaged structural components.

For flooding incidents:

- Water has covered the floor system and entered the living space of the unit but is still below the roofline.

For non-flood incidents:

Habitability

FEMA defines "habitable" as safe, sanitary, and functional. "Safe" refers to being secure from disaster-caused hazards or threats to occupants, "sanitary" refers to being free of disaster-caused health hazards, and "functional" refers to an item or home capable of being used for its intended purpose.

- A significant portion of nonstructural components (e.g., roof, wall, and utilities) has sustained significant damage.

Destroyed manufactured homes are total losses. One of the following factors may constitute a status of destroyed, regardless of the cause of damage/disaster type:

- The waterline is at the roofline or higher.
- The residence's frame is bent, twisted, or otherwise compromised.
- Most of the structural framing of the roof or walls has been compromised, exposing the interior.

Conventionally Built Homes

Affected conventionally built homes have minimal cosmetic damage to their exteriors and/or interiors.

For flooding incidents:

- Essential living spaces or mechanical components are not damaged or submerged.
- There is damage to a porch, carport, garage, and/or an outbuilding (which are not eligible for IA).

For non-flood incidents:

- The residence has cosmetic damage, such as paint discoloration or loose siding.
- The residence has minimal missing shingles or siding.
- There is damage to an attached structure (e.g., porch, carport, garage, outbuilding, etc.), gutters, screens, landscaping, and retaining walls or downed trees that do not affect access to the residence.

Minor conventionally built homes have sustained a wide range of damage that does not affect the structural integrity of the residence but could affect habitability.

For flooding incidents:

- The waterline is at 1 to 3 inches in an essential living space. Residences with water lines between 3 and 18 inches should be also categorized under minor damage unless other factors are validated that make the damage major (e.g., duration and contaminants of the floodwaters, location of the electrical outlets, etc.).
- There is damage to mechanical components (e.g., furnace, boiler, water heater, HVAC, etc.)

- There is nonstructural damage to roof components over essential living spaces (e.g., shingles, roof covering, fascia board, soffit, flashing, and skylight).
- There is nonstructural damage to the interior wall components, to include drywall and insulation.
- There is nonstructural damage to exterior components.
- There are multiple small vertical cracks in the foundation and damage to the chimney (i.e., tilting, falling, cracking, or separating from the residence).
- There is damage to mechanical components (e.g., furnace, boiler, water heater, HVAC, etc.).
- There is damage or disaster-related contamination to a private well or septic system.

Major conventionally built homes have sustained significant structural damage and require extensive repairs to make habitable.

For flooding incidents:

- The waterline is above 18 inches or above the electrical outlets in an essential living space. Residences with water lines between 3 and 18 inches should be categorized under minor damage unless factors are validated that make the damage major (e.g., duration and contaminants of the flood waters, location of the electrical outlets, number of essential living spaces affected).

For non-flood incidents:

- There is failure or partial failure of structural elements of the roof over essential living spaces (e.g., rafters, ceiling joists, ridge boards, etc.).
- There is failure or partial failure of structural elements of the walls (e.g., framing, sheathing, etc.).
- There is failure or partial failure of foundation (e.g., crumbling, bulging, collapsing, horizontal cracks of more than 2 inches), and shifting of the residence on the foundation by more than 6 inches.

Destroyed conventionally built homes are total losses (i.e., the damage is so severe that the home cannot be repaired and/or requires demolition). One of the following factors may constitute a status of destroyed, regardless of the cause of damage/disaster type:

- There is complete failure of two or more major structural components (e.g., collapse of foundation, walls, or roof).
- The water line is at the roofline or higher.
- Only the foundation remains.
- The residence has a confirmed imminent danger (e.g., impending landslides, mudslides, or sinkholes).

Insurance Coverage

Capturing an accurate picture of the number of insured and uninsured homes is critical to the damage assessment process. Large numbers of damaged uninsured homes or damaged homes without insurance applicable to the peril may suggest a greater need for supplemental federal assistance. Generally, this information is developed in conjunction with state insurance commissions or through other avenues such as GIS or U.S. Census Bureau information.

To protect the PII of impacted individuals and the proprietary information held by the insurance industry, insurance information is typically aggregated at the county, census block, or ZIP Code level.

In order to estimate the level of applicable insurance coverage, states, territories, and tribes should work with local governments to verify information related to insurance coverage and occupancy status (primary residence, secondary residence, and vacant property). Insurance types that may cover disaster-related perils include the following:

- Homeowners insurance
- Condominium insurance
- Insurance for manufactured homes
- Renters insurance
- Flood insurance
- Sewer backup rider
- Earthquake rider
- Landslide rider
- Subsidence rider
- Tornado rider
- Structural-only insurance
- Fire-only insurance
- Contents-only insurance

Insurance Coverage Specifics

FEMA only considers insurance coverage which includes the peril(s) listed as a cause of damage identified for the disaster when determining eligibility for assistance. An applicant is not required to submit flood insurance documents for a wind-only disaster. When applicants are impacted by multiple perils, FEMA compares insurance benefits and verified loss amount separately for each peril.

Disaster survivors in a special flood hazard area (SFHA) that have previously received assistance and have not maintained their required flood insurance are ineligible for flood-insurable real and personal property assistance from FEMA in future flooding disasters, except for non-insurable losses, such as private bridges, wells, septic, etc. Additionally, if flooding has impacted homes in a community that does not participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), FEMA is prohibited from providing assistance to residents in the identified flood plain for damage that would have otherwise been available through the program. FEMA will coordinate with state, tribal, or territorial governments to identify and communicate the status of non-participating communities at the outset of the damage assessment process.

Refer to Appendix I: Individual Assistance Housing Insurance Matrix for additional information on the impacts of insurance coverage.

Assessing Available Resources

In addition to assessing the cost of assistance for uninsured homes and personal property losses, states, tribes, or territories must also do an assessment of several other factors that will ultimately be packaged into an impact statement for a Presidential disaster declaration request.

Federal disaster assistance under the Stafford Act is intended to be supplemental in nature and is not a replacement for emergency relief programs, services, and funds provided by SLTT governments, NGOs, or the private sector. FEMA will evaluate the availability of resources and, where appropriate, all extraordinary circumstances that contributed to the absence of sufficient resources.

State, Tribal, or Territorial Government Assistance Programs

State, tribal, and territorial governments have a responsibility to take care of their citizens. In furtherance of that responsibility, some state, tribal, and territorial governments have developed assistance programs. These programs vary in the amount and type of assistance available, requirements, and funding sources. When a state, tribal, or territorial disaster assistance program may be available to support disaster-related unmet needs, narrative statements should be included in the declaration request to outline the assistance that will be provided and how/if the program may be applied to address needs unmet by the FEMA IA programs. As an example, a state, tribal, or territorial government program may have in place a self-funded assistance program specifically related to disaster assistance or generally available for housing repair or other needs that could be utilized.

Assistance from Voluntary Organizations

Voluntary, faith, and community-based organizations will often provide support to disaster survivors following an incident. Some voluntary organizations perform their own damage assessments to identify disaster survivor needs. These assessments may be helpful to SLTT governments in illustrating the scale and magnitude of the event and all limitations that impact their ability to address survivor needs, thereby highlighting the need for Stafford Act assistance. It is important to note that financial information related to assistance provided by NGOs, including the overall cost of the operation, may be sensitive and is not required for damage assessments.

Cumulative Effect of Recent Disasters

Recent disasters can have a dramatic impact on a state, tribal, or territorial government's ability to recover. For this reason, FEMA considers all disasters that have impacted the state, territory, or tribe within the last 12 months. This is discussed in 44 CFR Part 206.48 (a)(5).

FEMA considers Stafford Act Presidential disaster declarations, as well as state, tribal, or territorial declarations made by the governor or tribal chief executive and the extent to which the state, tribal, or territorial government has spent its own funds to support recovery.

State, tribal, or territorial governments are encouraged to include information related to prior disasters—including the localities designated in the state, tribal, or territorial declaration and specific expenses incurred by the state, tribal, or territorial government—in their request for federal assistance. While not required, additional information related to the ability of the state, tribal, or territorial government to provide support following the disaster being assessed (e.g., the status of state, tribal, or territorial government assistance programs) can be included in impact statements.

Assessing and Demonstrating Impacts

There is no set number of damaged homes that will automatically trigger a Presidential disaster declaration for a state, tribe, or territory. Each disaster must be evaluated individually on the impacts that have overwhelmed the capacity and resources of the state, tribal, or territorial government. During the PDA process, state, tribal, or territorial governments should consider all factors that FEMA uses to evaluate a disaster request and write a compelling impact statement to demonstrate how the impacts of the disaster have generally outweighed the capacity and resources of the impacted governments.

As previously mentioned, state and tribal declaration factors are different. In most cases, the factors used for states overlap with the factors used for tribes, but in some key areas, FEMA uses different evaluation factors for tribal IA declaration requests. For the full details of the factors FEMA uses to evaluate tribal IA declaration requests, refer to Appendix D: Tribal-Specific Considerations.

Privately Owned Access Routes

FEMA may provide financial assistance to repair privately owned access routes (i.e., driveways, roads, or bridges) damaged as a result of a Presidential-declared disaster. Assistance for privately owned access routes is intended to restore access to the owner's primary residence. In instances where multiple households share a privately owned access route, assistance is shared among applicants, requiring additional coordination and documentation between FEMA and the applicants.

Impact Statements

Capturing the impact of damage in a narrative format is a necessary part of the Presidential disaster declaration request process. States, territories, and tribes should remember that information that cannot be included cleanly or easily in the cost of assistance estimate should be documented in an impact statement. Impact statements illustrate the impact of the disaster and can help show whether the disaster is beyond the capacity of the impacted jurisdiction and if supplemental federal assistance is required to recover. Typically delivered in a series, impact statements should include numbers or statistics that lend context to the disaster. These statements, included in the governor's or tribal chief executive's request, are important because the impact of a disaster will be considered, regardless of the cost of assistance estimate. These statements are also important for giving context to potential damages that cannot be assessed at the time, like privately owned access routes.

Example IA Impact Statement

While statistical information provided by the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that homeownership for Washington County is less than 40 percent, the homeownership rate in the area along the Washington River impacted by recent flooding is much higher. Local emergency management has stated that many of these residents have lived in the homes for multiple generations and may be uninsured or underinsured because they do not have a mortgage requirement for maintaining insurance on the property. Based on this input, it is estimated that insurance coverage for the affected homes is approximately 25 percent. As homeowners without insurance, there is likely to be a high eligibility rate for FEMA's Individuals and Households Program (IHP) in this county. Additionally, the local emergency manager stated that up to 10 percent of the impacted homes along the Washington River in this county are not primary residences and are used by residents that spend more than half their year in other parts of the county. These residents are unlikely to be eligible for FEMA assistance.

Documenting Relevant Impacts

Cause of Damage

States, territories, and tribes should verify the cause of damage, which is listed next:

- Earthquake
- Fire
- Flooding (including mudslide)
- Hurricane or typhoon
- Landslide
- Severe storms
- Sewer backup
- Utility outages and impacts

- Straight-line winds/derecho
- Tornado
- Tsunami
- Terrorism
- Volcanic eruption

Concentration of Damage

The concentration of damage to communities is considered when evaluating requests for the FEMA IA program. High concentrations of damage may indicate a greater need for federal assistance in some areas. However, FEMA also recognizes that widespread damage throughout a large area may come with its own challenges that can also be difficult for a state, tribe, or territory to manage.

Disaster Impacted Population Profile

Disasters can disproportionately impact people with disabilities, people with limited English proficiency, people with lower income, people who are unemployed or homeless, people who live in extremely rural or urban areas, children, older adults, and others with access and functional needs. Part of the assessment should include an evaluation of the people in the impacted areas. This information may be helpful in identifying areas of increased need that require a more robust response from the state, tribal, or territorial government and the Federal Government. The following data points available from the U.S. Census Bureau and Tribal Government Census Bureau can be used by states, territories or tribal governments to help illustrate impact:

- The percentage of the population living under poverty thresholds;
- The percentage of the population already receiving government assistance, such as Supplemental Security Income and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits;
- The pre-disaster unemployment rate;
- Disaster-related unemployment and impacts to major employers in the affected area;
- The percentage of the population that is 65 years and older;
- The percentage of the population that is 18 years and younger;
- The percentage of the population with a disability;
- The percentage of the population who speak a language other than English and speak English less than “very well”; and
- All unique considerations regarding American Indian and Alaskan Native tribal populations that may not be reflected in the U.S. Census Bureau data.

Impact to Critical Community Infrastructure

Disasters can have dramatic impact on infrastructure that supports normal community functions. State, tribal, or territorial governments and local jurisdictions are encouraged to outline how damage to infrastructure has impacted commerce, disrupted normal life in the community, and/or will complicate the recovery of individuals that depend on access. The following types of impacts to a community’s infrastructure may adversely affect a population’s ability to reside within the community and should be considered when preparing narrative impact statements included in the declaration request for federal assistance:

- Loss of roads or bridges that serve as the sole/primary transportation route in a community;
- Impact to water or sanitary treatment facilities;
- Impact to schools, government offices, and other important public infrastructure;
- Impact to public transportation, including busses, rail, and accessible transportation services; and
- Impact to supply of power and water to residential homes.

Transportation infrastructure or utility disruptions may render housing uninhabitable or inaccessible. Such conditions may affect the delivery of life-sustaining commodities, provision of emergency services, ability to shelter in place, and efforts to rebuild. The local, state, or tribal government may provide information regarding the impact on transportation infrastructure and utilities of a period greater than 72 hours. Examples include closed roads and bridges; impacts to public transportation, such as a bus system; and extended utility outages. To the extent known, information should be provided on the length of time for critical infrastructure and utilities to be restored.

Generally, trauma considered when evaluating requests for the FEMA IA program includes disruptions to normal community functions and extended power or utility outages. As trauma is discussed, preparers are encouraged to consider the ability of IA program components to address the need. These findings should be incorporated into the impact statement.

Community Lifelines

When drafting impact statements that look at the impacts of a disaster, states, tribes, or territories should evaluate how a disaster has disrupted FEMA’s community lifelines:

- Safety and security
- Food, water, and shelter
- Health and medical
- Energy (power and fuel)
- Communications
- Transportation
- Hazardous materials

When a community lifeline is disrupted, impacts to the community will be significant and action must be taken to stabilize that lifeline.

For more information, refer to FEMA guidance on community lifelines: <https://www.fema.gov/lifelines>.

Disaster-Related Deaths and Injuries

The number of individuals who are missing, injured, or deceased because of a disaster may indicate higher levels of trauma and underscore the need for supplemental federal disaster assistance, such as crisis counseling. State, tribal, or territorial governments are encouraged to capture and report disaster-related fatalities and injuries and include them in impact statements developed for the declaration request.

Emergency Sheltering Information

Information related to congregate and non-congregate care sheltering operations (i.e., shelter with family, dorms, ships, or tents) can help to estimate the number of people displaced from their homes and serve as a key gauge that can be used to illustrate the scale and magnitude of the disaster. Activity related to emergency sheltering should be included in the declaration request for assistance, especially in cases when shelters are required for more than 72 hours and when displaced residents are unable to return to their homes because of damage sustained in the disaster. Information that can be helpful in developing these statements includes the following:

- Location of each shelter,
- Daily overnight population for each shelter,
- Number of schools closed because a facility is being used as a shelter,
- Number of residents provided with hotel rooms as part of a sheltering program,
- Support provided by government and partners to assist with emergency sheltering,
- Assistance and services required to support people with access and functional needs in emergency shelters, and
- Location and population of shelters established to support household pets.

Feeding Operations Information

This information can be helpful in illustrating the scale and scope of the disaster, especially when government assistance is required or feeding operations are maintained for more than 72 hours. Information that can be used to describe activity and impact may include the following:

- Number and location of fixed feeding sites (by county),
- Number of vehicles providing mobile feeding,
- Jurisdictions being supported by mobile feeding,
- Number of meals served, and
- Partners involved in feeding operations.

Information Related to Distribution of Emergency Supplies

The quantity and type of assistance provided through distribution can be helpful in illustrating the scale and magnitude of the disaster. This is especially true following disasters like urban basement flooding where damage assessment may be difficult, when distribution is used to address critical life-saving/-sustaining needs (e.g., distribution of shelf-stable meals and water or health-related distribution), or when government assistance is necessary to support distribution of emergency supplies. Information that can be used to describe activity and impact may include the following:

- Distribution used to address a critical life-saving or -sustaining need,
- Durable medical equipment,
- General categories of items (e.g., cleanup kits, shelf-stable meals, medicine, etc.),
- Government assistance required,
- Jurisdictions served by distribution, and
- Trend line of the volumes of distributed items by type.

Individual Client Assistance (Client Casework) Information

State social service agencies and disaster service organizations like the American Red Cross will routinely open cases following a disaster to support the immediate needs of survivors. This information can be helpful in illustrating the disaster impact to survivors in a community and can be used to illustrate the overall scale and magnitude of the disaster. Information that can be used to describe activity and impact may include the following:

- Agency or organization providing assistance,
- Number of cases opened,
- Number of clients served in cases,
- Number of cases closed,
- Number of health services contacts,
- Number of mental health contacts,
- Types of assistance requested,
- Presence of resources to meet the needs of clients,
- Number of cases expected to be referred for substantive repair or rebuild assistance, and
- Number of cases with unmet needs.

Information Referral Services

Information referral services like 211 and 311 are frequently used by people dependent on the social service network and may serve as a key source of information related to the needs of the community. Increased call volume and the general type of services requested may also help to illustrate the scale and magnitude of the disaster and assist with

identifying areas of unmet need. Information that can be used to describe activity and impact may include the following:

- Number of calls received following the disaster, as compared to average steady-state call volume;
- ZIP Code where calls were received from;
- General types of assistance requested; and
- The presence or absence of a service provider to refer callers to for their categories of need.

Other Relevant Impact Data

When the factors addressed in 44 CFR or in the Tribal Declarations Pilot Guidance do not fully capture the impact of a disaster, the state, tribal, or territorial government requesting Stafford Act assistance may use other impact information that further describes the situation and the need for FEMA assistance. Information regularly used by states and tribal government includes the following:

- Evacuations – estimated duration,
- Lack of building materials,
- Contractor shortages,
- Extreme weather conditions and seasonal shifts that may impact recovery,
- The loss of low-cost or subsidized housing,
- Economic Impact created by displaced employees or damaged businesses,
- Disaster-related unemployment, and
- Cumulative effect of recent disasters.

Unique Conditions That Affect Tribal Governments

When a federally recognized tribe is requesting a Presidential disaster declaration, FEMA will consider whether there are needs or conditions that are unique to the tribal community, including but not limited to the following:

- Needs associated with remote locations (e.g., accessibility, food, water, and medical supply availability, etc.),
- Disaster's impact on the tribe's economy, and
- Cultural, historic, or spiritual considerations that may be protected under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act or the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act.

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CHAPTER 4: PUBLIC ASSISTANCE DAMAGE ASSESSMENTS

FEMA's PA program aids SLTT governments and certain types of PNP organizations so that communities can quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies declared by the President. Through the PA program, FEMA provides supplemental federal disaster grant assistance for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and the restoration of disaster-damaged, publicly owned facilities and specific facilities of certain PNP organizations. The PA program also encourages protection of these damaged facilities from future incidents by providing assistance for hazard mitigation measures. For detailed information related to PA program policies, refer to the [PAPPG](#).

Concept of Operations for PA PDAs

Initial Damage Assessment

The IDA is the basis on which all additional disaster assistance is provided. IDAs capture damage information and impacts and require an understanding of FEMA work categories and the ability to identify and document relevant disaster impacts. With information gathered during the IDA, states, territories, or tribes can establish a PDA plan of action and make an informed request to FEMA for a joint PDA.

Visually Confirming Damage

It is important to consider that all PDAs must include visual confirmation of IDA damage information for the damage to be considered valid.

When an incident occurs, the state, tribal, or territorial government organizes and coordinates the IDA process with local governments to ensure PA priorities and needs are effectively communicated and captured. The local or tribal government identifies damage and estimates the cost to impacted property and infrastructure in its jurisdiction and records all other information or data that might support the need for additional resources, such as the capacity of local resources to support response and recovery efforts. For more information on work eligible for PA, see Appendix J: Public Assistance Work Eligibility Matrix.

The process for IDAs is as follows:

1. State or territory starts reaching out to its local and tribal governments to initiate the IDA process.
2. Tribal governments start to determine if they want to participate in the state declaration request or request their own declaration.