

Attend FEMA Public Assistance Applicant Briefings for July 9-11, 2024, Storm (DR4810, "Beryl")

August 21, 2024



Email flood recovery or FEMA PA program questions to:
ADM.2024FLOODS@Vermont.gov

President Joseph Biden has signed a Major Public Assistance disaster declaration, **DR4810**, for seven Vermont counties to assist communities in recovering costs for the repair of public infrastructure damaged by severe storms and flooding on **July 9-11, 2024**. **The declaration covers Addison, Caledonia, Chittenden, Essex, Lamoille, Orleans, and Washington counties.** Orange County has not yet been declared but is being requested as an add-on.

FEMA's Public Assistance program allows communities to receive **75% reimbursement for emergency storm repairs to public infrastructure**. **Municipal applicant briefings** are listed below. You should attend one of these briefings to learn about any changes in Public Assistance since your municipality's last Public Assistance claim.

It is important to note this declaration does not include damage to private and public property caused by storms on July 30. A separate FEMA major disasters declaration request will be made for that storm soon. Homeowners and renters should still report damages and losses related to the July 30 storm to 2-1-1. The declaration does include [Individual Assistance](#) in the same counties.

Municipalities in the declared counties now qualify for **75% reimbursement of recovery costs** arising from the storm under the Federal Emergency Management Agency [Public Assistance Program](#) (PA). Eligible costs include debris removal, road and public building repairs, staff overtime responding to and cleaning up after the storm, and contractor assistance. *This program is not for individual homeowners or business owners.*

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When Are the Public Assistance Applicant Briefings?

Applicant briefings will be held virtually and in person. Municipalities have three opportunities to participate.

1. Friday, August 23, 2024, from 10 AM - Noon, (VIRTUAL ONLY) Teams meeting online.

Click to [Join the meeting](#) | Meeting ID: 238 355 273 19 | Passcode: Lx5dJQ

or dial in by phone (audio only) | [+1 802-828-7667](tel:+18028287667),[,438276921#](tel:+18028287667) United States, Montpelier |
Phone conference ID: 438 276 921#

2. Wednesday, August 28, 2024, 10 AM - Noon (IN-PERSON ONLY) at Lyndon Public Safety Building Conference Room, 318 Main Street, Lyndonville.

3. Thursday, August 29, 2024, from 10 AM - Noon (IN-PERSON ONLY) Hinesburg Town Hall, 10632 VT 116, Hinesburg.

These briefings are for **Public Assistance only**. They will not provide information for individual assistance to homeowners or businesses.

It's best to participate in an in-person or online briefing so you can ask questions about FEMA policy and process updates. If you miss those live opportunities, you can watch the **August 23rd Virtual Applicant Briefing** online.

- Recording is [HERE](#).
- Slide Presentation is [HERE](#).

What Happens After the Applicant Briefing?

Vermont Emergency Management posted a memo outlining [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\) Public Assistance Grant Steps](#). In brief, the next few steps are:

- Municipalities that sustained damages submit a Request for Public Assistance (“RPA”) through the FEMA Grants Portal within 60 days of disaster declaration. For the July 9-11, 2024, disaster (DR4810), **the deadline to apply for FEMA PA is September 20, 2024.**
- FEMA assigns a Program Delivery Manager (“PDMG”) within a month after your Request for Public Assistance is approved.
- Your FEMA PDMG will hold an Exploratory Call with you to discuss the process, describe damages, and begin to upload documents to Grants Portal. **You must complete the Damage Inventory form (an Excel worksheet) within 60 days of receipt.**

- About a week after the exploratory call, a Recovery Scoping Meeting is held to assign costs by “FEMA Categories” and meet with FEMA Team (federal and state). Regular meetings then are held between the municipality and its PDMG.

Before a site visit is scheduled for your municipality with FEMA and Vermont Emergency Management (VEM), your legislative body should formally **designate a single person to serve as your municipality's primary point of contact (POC)**. Your POC should be an excellent communicator, meaning:

- be clear, concise, correct, coherent, complete, and courteous, both when speaking and in writing;
- have good attention to detail;
- be able to understand and follow processes; and
- work cooperatively with many varying parties (federal, state, local, residents, etc.).

How Does a Municipality Submit a Public Assistance Application?

Access the FEMA Public Assistance grant portal at <https://grantee.fema.gov/> and **log into your municipality's current FEMA account**. Select **DR4810** to connect to the July 9-11, 2024, flood event. If your municipality does not have an account, please create one. Do not create a duplicate account for your municipality!

If your municipality is new to the FEMA Grants Portal, FEMA's [Applicant Quick Guide Grants Portal Account and RPA \(Mar 28 2020\)](#) can be helpful.

You can submit a request for Public Assistance ahead of the briefings. Wait patiently. FEMA will only be in touch **after** you are an **applicant in the FEMA Grants Portal** and **after you have attended an applicant's briefing**.

You do not need to wait for an insurance determination before filing your FEMA Public Assistance request. You **do** need to track which costs each entity covers to avoid duplication of benefit and potential payback of FEMA funds.

What Does the Disaster Declaration Cover?

Damage categories for this event include Categories A through G: debris removal, emergency protective measures, roads/bridges, water control facilities, buildings/equipment, utilities, and parks, recreational and other facilities.

Generally, you must have at least \$3,900 in costs to be eligible for any FEMA reimbursement. Include everything you can think of in your damage assessments, even if you think FEMA won't cover it. It is much easier to drop things from an application than it is to add them later. Also include "iffy" projects. They will not jeopardize other projects and might get funded.

You can make permanent repairs now. Make all repairs following proper procurement and meeting your State Codes and Road Standards. Don't forget to obtain permits if any are required.

FEMA Public Assistance does not cover damages to roads and bridges on Federal-aid highways. Federal-aid highways are public roads that are classified as arterial, urban collectors, and major rural collectors. You can identify the Federal-aid highways in your municipality using VTrans' [Vermont Functional Class and Federal Aid Highways webmap](#). If you have damages on roads or bridges on the Federal-aid highway system, they may qualify for [Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\) Emergency Relief](#) funding. **Municipalities MUST work through their [VTrans District](#) to access this funding.** District staff and the VTrans Municipal Assistance Bureau will help you navigate this program.

What Documentation is Needed for the Reimbursement Request?

FEMA requires a breakdown of project costs by site, including GPS location (start and stop), materials, labor, equipment, and contracted services. Your community will be responsible for providing information to document that its facilities, work, and costs are eligible based on the applicable laws, regulations, and policies. At a minimum, FEMA usually requires the “who, what, when, where, why, and how much” for each item claimed.

Damaged facility documentation requirements:

1. Break costs down per road site!

2. Must be the municipality's legal responsibility to make the repairs.
3. ANR permits and Army Corps permits must be in place when working in/around water. Reach out to your ANR River Engineer ASAP to obtain these and ensure that you are complying with State General Stream Alteration standards for any in-stream repairs. [ANR Stream Alterations Request](#) and [Army Corps Permit](#).
4. Road maintenance records.
5. Labor timecards with **hours worked, pay rates, fringe calculations**, and a copy of the municipality's **pay policy**.
6. Contractor **RFPs and bids** as well as the municipality's **procurement policy**.
7. Quantities of materials used and invoices for costs or load tickets (gravel, culverts), by site.
8. Equipment and operator hours, by site.
9. Photos (before and after repairs) with GPS start/stop locations to show damage.

Do You Need to Bid Contractor Work?

During the immediate emergency response, you may use existing contracts and arrangements, provided they are cost-reasonable and short-term.

For major permanent repairs, you must procure contractors competitively.

- Any contract that will be over \$250,000 for permanent repairs must be put out for full and open competition.
- Contracts below \$250,000 will need to follow your local procurement policy, typically contacting at least three contractors and posting to the [Vermont Bid Registry](#). Document your procurement effort.

You also can procure help to conduct the administrative portion of the Public Assistance process. This is crucial if you are short-staffed. Administrative costs are 100% reimbursable, but they are capped at 5% of the total cost of all your projects.

What You Should Know about Debris Removal

PA funds are available to eligible applicants in declared counties for debris clearance, removal, and disposal operations. Public Assistance debris can include downed trees, sand, building wreckage, and damaged property. To be eligible for FEMA funding, the debris removal work must:

- eliminate immediate threats to human lives, public health, and safety.
- eliminate immediate threats of significant damage to improved public property; and/or
- ensure economic recovery of the affected areas to the benefit of the community-at-large.

Debris must be collected from within the public right of way only (on public property or in the public right of way). Some guidelines include:

- Before picking up debris, photograph where debris was picked up and where it was placed (disposal area). Photographs are **REQUIRED! Use GPS points.**
- Include all labor and equipment costs.
- If you hire a contractor to pick up debris (it must be cost reasonable and procured), you must have a debris monitor who ensures the contractor is picking up and hauling what your invoice from them says. A monitor can be a current town employee or a hired contractor.

Where to Learn More about FEMA Public Assistance

For more information on the FEMA PA process, please visit [Process of Public Assistance Grants | FEMA.gov](#) and/or [Public Assistance | Vermont Emergency Management](#).

VLCT created Flood Recovery resources for the July 2024 flood event. This information may be helpful:

- [FEMA PA Compliant Contracts](#)
- [FEMA PA Quick Tips for Municipalities](#)
- [FEMA Public Assistance Program](#)
- [State of Emergency Legal FAQs](#)
- [FEMA Public Assistance FAQs](#)
- [FHWA Emergency Relief Program for Federal-aid Highways](#)

How to Submit a PACIF Insurance Claim

PACIF members: please report all flood claims as soon as possible through PACIF's [Report a Claim](#) webpage. The sooner PACIF's claims representatives get involved, the more effectively we can apply our resources and the more quickly the claim can be processed. Claims must be damage sustained to insured buildings, contents, and vehicles.