
FISCAL TOPICS

Fiscal Services Division

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State and Local Disaster Funding

Background

The Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEMD) is responsible for the administration of State emergency planning matters and the coordination of available resources in the event of a disaster. According to Iowa Code section [29C.2\(4\)](#), a “disaster” is defined as a man-made or natural occurrence that threatens the public peace, health, and safety of the people, or that damages and destroys public or private property. For an occurrence to be classified as a disaster, and therefore eligible for State disaster funding, it must first receive a disaster proclamation from the Governor.

Governor’s Disaster Proclamation

When a disaster exists, or threatens to occur, the Governor may issue a written proclamation of a state of disaster emergency. A state of disaster emergency is effective for 30 days unless terminated or extended by the Governor, or rescinded by the General Assembly or Legislative Council. The proclamation must explicitly state which counties are impacted by the proclamation and whether the disaster is a public health disaster.

Iowa Code section [29C.6](#) grants the Governor authority to exercise certain powers during a disaster. These powers include the ability to utilize all available resources of the State and its political subdivisions as “reasonably necessary” to respond to the disaster, as well as redirect State departments to perform or facilitate emergency management.

A Governor’s disaster proclamation also allows for the activation of the following programs:

- The Iowa Individual Assistance Grant Program
- The Iowa Disaster Case Management Program
- The Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)
- The State Contingent Fund Loan Program

Individual Assistance

The Iowa Individual Assistance Grant Program, administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS), provides grants of up to \$5,000 for households with incomes at or below 200.0% of the federal poverty level. These grants may be used for home or car repairs, the replacement of clothing or food, and temporary housing. Funding for the Program comes from the [Disaster Aid Individual Assistance Grant Fund](#), which is under the authority of the Executive Council.

When the Program is activated, information and application instructions are available on the [DHS website](#). Applicants have 45 days from the date of the disaster proclamation to submit a claim. If a presidential disaster declaration for individual assistance is issued for a county that is already receiving State individual assistance, then the State program is automatically discontinued by the federal program for that county.

More Information

Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management: homelandsecurity.iowa.gov
LSA Staff Contact: Evan Johnson (515.281.6301) evan.johnson@legis.iowa.gov

Disaster Case Management

The Iowa Disaster Case Management Program connects disaster case managers with those impacted by disasters to develop and implement a recovery plan. Disaster case managers provide guidance and advice on disaster recovery, as well as referrals to obtain resources or services. They also act as a single point of contact to connect disaster victims to all available resources. Once activated, the Program remains in effect for 180 days unless extended or until all available funds are expended.

The Program is administered by the DHS and funded by the Executive Council. The DHS contracts out disaster case management services and provides payment based on the contracted entity's actual direct and indirect costs. Assistance is provided on a first-come, first-served basis.

State Mutual Aid

The Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) is a mutual aid agreement between all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. The EMAC allows for the sending of personnel, equipment, and commodities between states to assist with response and recovery efforts during a Governor's disaster proclamation.

States that receive assistance through the EMAC are obligated to reimburse states that provide assistance. Any expense, except workers' compensation, incurred while performing an EMAC mission is reimbursable provided that the expense is reasonable, is mission-related, is incurred during the conduct of the mission, and can be documented. States may also donate services in whole or in part. If the disaster receives a presidential declaration, then all EMAC expenses are reimbursable by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Additional information about the EMAC is available [here](#).

State Contingent Fund Loan

Pursuant to Iowa Code section [29C.20](#)(1)(a)(6), a political subdivision may apply for a loan from the State Contingent Fund if the political subdivision is in an area declared by the Governor to be a disaster area due to a natural disaster or to expenditures necessitated by the political subdivision toward averting or lessening the impact of the potential disaster.

Loans are made without interest and at the discretion of the Executive Council. A loan may be made up to 75.0% of the showing of obligations and expenditures of an actual or potential disaster. Repayment of the loan is made by the maximum annual levy pursuant to Iowa Code section [24.6](#), or by the appropriate levy authorized for a political subdivision not covered by Iowa Code section 24.6. The aggregate total of loans may not exceed \$1.0 million during a fiscal year.

Local Disaster Response

Local emergency management personnel are often the first to respond to disasters. Local Emergency Management Commissions (LEMC) are responsible for disaster mitigation, planning, response, and recovery. An LEMC exists in each of Iowa's 99 counties and is comprised of a member of the County Board of Supervisors, the County Sheriff, and the Mayor from each city within the county.

Funding for LEMCs originates from each county's Local Emergency Management Fund. Pursuant to Iowa Code section [29C.17](#)(2), the Fund may receive moneys in any of the following ways:

- A countywide special levy pursuant to Iowa Code section [331.424](#)(1).
- A per capita allocation funded from city and county general funds or by a combination of city and county special levies which may be apportioned among member jurisdictions.
- An allocation computed as each jurisdiction's relative share of the total assessed valuation within the county.
- A voluntary share allocation.
- Other funding sources allowed by law.

Local Mutual Aid

If the local response to a disaster is not sufficient, then a political subdivision may request assistance from other political subdivisions through the Iowa Mutual Aid Compact (IMAC). The IMAC is a voluntary

agreement between LEMCs, counties, cities, and other political subdivisions in Iowa that allows for the sharing of resources in the event of a disaster or emergency. A political subdivision that provides aid under the IMAC will be reimbursed by the political subdivision receiving aid for all expenses incurred unless another agreement is reached.

The IMAC may be activated once a disaster is proclaimed by either the Governor or a political subdivision. If local resources are not sufficient, the political subdivision impacted by a disaster may work with its County Emergency Manager to request State assistance. This could lead to the issuance of a Governor's disaster proclamation for the impacted county.

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