



Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

November 18, 2025

Keith Turi, Acting Associate Administrator for the Disaster Assistance Directorate
Office of Response and Recovery
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street Southwest
Washington, D.C. 20472

Through: C/O Michael Chesney, Acting Regional Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region 5
536 South Clark Street, Sixth Floor
Chicago, IL 60605

Dear Mr. Turi:

I am writing to respectfully appeal the denial of a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Wisconsin for Public Assistance and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. This appeal is pursuant to Section 423 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR §§ 206.36 and 206.46.

The storms that impacted Wisconsin Aug. 9 -12, 2025, were extremely damaging to the communities across the state, in Door, Grant, Ozaukee, Milwaukee, Washington, and Waukesha Counties. These communities range from Wisconsin's highest-density urban area to rural farming villages in southwest Wisconsin and tourism-dependent towns on the Door County peninsula. The storms destroyed roads, public buildings, utilities, businesses, and homes. Government officials and non-governmental organizations have worked countless hours to ensure these communities can recover, but the costs of this disaster have exceeded local and state capacity. Denying Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation grants to these communities will have severe and long-lasting impacts.

In response to the letter denying our Public Assistance request on October 23, 2025, and the letter denying our Hazard Mitigation request on October 28, 2025, I directed Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) to gather additional information and do a new comprehensive analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data to appeal these decisions. As part of this review, WEM and FEMA conducted an additional Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment for Public Assistance.

This assessment identified an additional \$1,036,750 in damages, bringing the total validated damages to \$27,590,949—two-and-a-half times state’s official per capita threshold for FEMA Public Assistance.¹ Beyond the immediate costs, these damages will cause long-lasting economic harm to the affected communities.

The millions of dollars in damage to businesses, infrastructure, utilities, has caused considerable financial strain on these communities. It will continue to stress budgets as local governments struggle to cover the costs of repair throughout the period of long-term recovery. Federal assistance is critical when the disaster exceeds local and state capacity. Both the Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs will stabilize the communities in these six counties and prevent long-term displacement, financial strain, and economic loss.

Given this new analysis and implications which are included in this letter, I respectfully request you review the updated information in detail and reverse the decision to deny Public Assistance and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to Wisconsin. The following information supports this request.

Local Impacts

Milwaukee County

Milwaukee County received a historic amount of rainfall during the August storm period, with 14.55 inches of rain within a 24-hour period. As a result, multiple sanitary sewers and a sewage treatment plant overflowed; critical infrastructure was damaged; and several areas were inaccessible during peak flooding Aug. 9 - 10 because roads were inundated in what is estimated to be a 1,000-year flood event. The disaster also disrupted municipal services, closed businesses and schools, and created severe debris and public health hazards.



Photo: Submerged cars parked on the street in West Allis. Courtesy: Dena Deberry (open source)

¹ The statewide threshold for FY2025 is \$1.89 per capita, which is \$11,139,127 based on 2020 U.S. Census figures (<https://www.fema.gov/assistance/public/tools-resources/per-capita-impact-indicator>).

With millions of dollars in validated damages to infrastructure, utilities, and businesses, and under-insured households concentrated in the hardest-hit neighborhoods, Milwaukee County's recovery capacity is strained. Federal assistance is critical to stabilize housing, restore essential services, and prevent long-term displacement and economic loss. Vulnerable populations, including seniors, and renters, were disproportionately affected and face long recovery timelines.

Overall, flooding caused more than \$22 million in validated damages in Milwaukee County, with more than \$7.8 million of validated damage in the City of Milwaukee alone. The damage includes:

- More than \$3.8 million in debris cleanup costs.
- \$2.5 million in damage at 26 school facilities including water damage to classrooms, cafeterias, and HVAC systems.
- More than \$4.4 million in damage to Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District infrastructure including water treatment facilities, the Deep Tunnel System, sanitary sewage monitoring equipment, and bypass stations.
- More than \$550,000 in damage at 10 libraries.

Other areas of the county were also impacted by the August storms and flooding. In Wauwatosa, more than \$1.76 million in damage occurred at Hart Park. Damaged areas of the park included the football field, playground, and other park facilities. The life safety impacts would have been significantly worse if this park was not created in part with hazard mitigation grants.

In River Hills, nine roads were inundated with up to four feet in flood water. Four culverts were washed out and shoulder washouts occurred across 11 roads. The total of validated damage in the village was more than \$820,000.

In the Village of Brown Deer, more than \$1.7 million in damages were validated, which included \$1,650,000 in estimated repair costs to the roads and culverts.



Photo: Brown Deer road damaged by flooding. Source: CBS 58

The Village of Fox Point removed debris village-wide; made repairs to washouts of road shoulders, walking paths, culvert pipes, and bridge abutments; as well as suffering other substantial damage to water works and public buildings. Validated damages totaled \$741,998.

Flooding severely disrupted businesses across Milwaukee County, with healthcare, retail, and cultural facilities among the hardest hit. In Brown Deer, Rogers Behavioral Health Clinic sustained extensive flooding, rendering its facility unsafe and displacing around 100 employees and patients. Additional businesses in the commercial corridor also reported losses.



Photo: Flood damage inside the Milwaukee Repertory Theater set/costume facility. Courtesy: Milwaukee Repertory Theater

In Wauwatosa, flooding closed major employers and cultural institutions, including Aurora storage facilities, Milwaukee Repertory Theater's set/costume facility, Hansen Company, and MKE Trucking. Collective losses are estimated at \$25–30 million with many facilities lacking flood insurance. Local restaurants such as Jose's Blue Sombrero and Café Hollander also closed, leaving dozens of employees temporarily out of work and facing uninsured losses. Event cancellations like the 2025 USA Triathlon Sprint National Championships and Paratriathlon National Championships, scheduled for August 10, compounded revenue losses for nearby small businesses. These closures and layoffs will ripple through the community, creating near-term unemployment and threatening long-term economic stability for corridor businesses already operating on thin profit margins.

In the immediate aftermath of the heavy rains, nearly 40,000 residents in the county lost power for an extended period. Milwaukee County and its 19 municipalities rapidly activated emergency operations, prioritized life safety through water rescues and sheltering, and coordinated damage assessments with state and volunteer partners. Local fire departments carried out dozens of water rescues, and on August 10, the county requested and received two additional swift water rescue teams through mutual aid to assist with rescues.

Multiple shelters were opened to help house displaced residents, with several voluntary agencies providing food, mental health services, and flood cleanup kits. Mutual aid and non-government partnerships were critical in addressing surge demand for rescues, debris removal, and household support. Sustained coordination will be required to manage debris clearance, long-term housing recovery, and restoration of critical facilities and utilities.



Photo: Fairgoer trying to get in their vehicle Aug. 9 at State Fair Park. Courtesy: Denise Jones (open source)

During the peak flood period, the Wisconsin State Fair was ongoing in West Allis. Fairgoers had to wade or even swim through rising floodwater as they tried to leave the State Fair Park. The tunnel between the fairgrounds and the Milwaukee Mile was flooded for hours.

On Saturday, August 9, the Wisconsin State Fair Park began making cancellations due to the inclement weather. All rides and attractions were closed for the day beginning at 3:52 p.m., with a brief 30-minute period of operations around 6:45 p.m. (scheduled to be in operation until 11:00 p.m.). The Main Stage concerts were cancelled at 7:40 p.m. Between 8:45 p.m. and 8:51 p.m. it was announced that due to excessive flooding, the Park would be closing (scheduled to be in operation until 12:00 a.m.).

On Sunday, August 10, the decision to remain closed was communicated to the public at 8:04 a.m., prior to the public opening of any gates/entrances. The cancellations between Saturday and Sunday led to an estimated attendance loss of over 100,000 fairgoers and a revenue loss of \$2.3 million for the State Fair Park. It is estimated that food/commercial vendors were impacted by a \$5.2 million revenue loss caused by cancellations, and game/ride operators by a \$360,000 revenue loss.

The Main Stage concert cancellations resulted in a \$354,000 loss in tickets refunded to almost 6,000 concertgoers. Exhibition events for Dog Sports and the Champions Challenge Horse Show were cancelled and didn't allow for those exhibitors to showcase.

The total loss in revenue for this cancellation due to flooding was over \$8 million.

Waukesha County

Waukesha County provided an active and all-encompassing response to the August storms and flooding. The county received the second highest amount of rainfall, with 12.61 inches of rain falling in the northern portion of the county in a 24-hour period beginning August 9, 2025. This caused significant flooding that impacted several community lifelines. To help provide resources and coordinate the response to this devastating event, the county declared a state of emergency on August 10.

FEMA's Public Assistance program would provide relief for more than \$1.17 million in local government disaster costs that would not be eligible under Wisconsin's public assistance program, the Wisconsin Disaster Fund. At a time when Wisconsin state tax levy limits, inflation, and other external factors are already straining local budgets, these costs will ultimately be borne by local taxpayers, many of whom are striving to recover themselves.



Photo: Emergency repairs at Millpond Dam in Village of Merton

This includes the Village of Merton, with a population around 4,000, where a dam required more than \$130,000 in emergency repairs to prevent further destabilization caused by flooding. As a result, the village has had to divert funds that are critical to the health, safety, and welfare of its residents and to support the economic viability of businesses.

Across Waukesha County, highways sustained approximately \$300,000 in damage. This damage will result in reductions in services the county can provide to its residents without being granted federal assistance through the Public Assistance program.

Some of the other key areas impacted by this disaster include safety and security; food, water, and shelter; health and medical; energy; communications; and transportation.

Examples of this include:

- Law enforcement and fire departments in multiple municipalities, including Muskego and Waukesha, required additional staff and increased hours to assist with evacuations, water rescues, and emergency road closures to protect life safety.
- Floodwaters damaged vital equipment needed for emergency responses, such as radios and vehicles, in Elm Grove, Brookfield, Pewaukee, and Menomonee Falls.
- Waukesha County's Aging and Disability Resource Center's transportation program experienced disruptions due to delays, detours, and cancellations. This resulted in increased fares and clients being late for work or medical appointments.
- The County's Children and Family Services spent additional hours and resources to provide emergency childcare for families needing time to clean out homes from flood damage.
- Several municipal government properties experienced damage to their facilities, publicly owned infrastructure, equipment, vehicles, and grounds. The City of New Berlin suffered \$16,827 in damages to Fire Department Engine 8, and the Village of Menomonee Falls had to repair three emergency vehicles totaling \$19,427.
- Multiple communities increased debris removal services by \$380,061 to ensure safe and sanitary conditions.
- Severe flooding overwhelmed wastewater collection and treatment systems, resulting in sewage bypasses, overflows, and lift station failures.
 - In Delafield, continuous pumping operations occurred with portable trash pumps and other measures to prevent raw sewage backup in 200 residential basements.
 - In Waukesha, two sanitary sewers had overflow, which discharged 10,600 gallons of untreated wastewater after lift stations were inundated and a broken sewer main required emergency repairs and bypass pumping.
 - In Muskego, five bypass locations were established and one lift station was submerged for 16 hours before restoration. Another lift station was under five feet of floodwater and rendered inoperable. The repairs to this lift station were estimated to be over \$400,000.
- Besides the Merton Rolling Dam mentioned above, several other dams in the county were threatened, including the Linnie Lac Dam in Muskego, which was overtopped for an extended period, and the Pewaukee Dam where rip rap was hastily added to maintain stability and prevent erosion.
- Multiple municipalities reported low to no availability of affordable rental housing options as a direct result of the flooding impact and/or the housing market's current state.



Photo: Damaged road in Menomonee Falls, Waukesha County

- We Energies, the electricity and natural gas provider for Waukesha County, reported that the first round of storms and flooding in this event between August 9-10 resulted in 76,000 customers in the county losing power. The second round of storms and flooding in this event beginning on August 12 impacted 25,000 customers.
- There were 33 municipal and county road closures due to flooding in the county. This created transportation issues including increased emergency response time and public transportation system impacts.

Waukesha County hosted a Multi-Agency Resource Center at the County Expo grounds on September 11 to provide flood survivors with a one-stop shop for resources, bringing together Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster as well as local and state government representatives. Distributed resources included food, cleaning supplies, and more.

Washington County

Washington County was also heavily impacted by the August storms and flooding. Heavy rainfall led to a total accumulation of 10-13 inches in localized areas throughout the county. This resulted in flash flooding along the Milwaukee River, which inundated several commercial buildings and overwhelmed sewer lines throughout the county, resulting in the spread of sewage into basements.

More than \$1.09 million in public infrastructure damage was validated in the preliminary damage assessments through FEMA. Without federal assistance with the Public Assistance program, these costs will ultimately be borne by local taxpayers, many of whom are striving to recover themselves.



Photo: Flooding caused significant damage to the Indian Lore Bridge in the Town of Farmington, Washington County.

The damage included the Indian Lore Bridge failure. This bridge is in the Town of Farmington, and its closure caused traffic to be rerouted by as many as 10 miles. It serves as a primary route not only for those living there, but it also has heavy use from agricultural traffic, emergency services, and tourists. As a result of the bridge closure and the long detour, farmers had to pay increased fuel costs.

One of the most severe impacts from the flooding was to sanitary systems and water supplies in several communities. There were sanitary sewer overflows at two lift stations in the Village of Germantown. During this time, the Menomonee River nearly overtook a third lift station. To protect it, village staff worked to construct a dyke composed of compost, hay bales, and sandbags. The Department of Public Works also operated pumps continuously for 72 hours to prevent the lift station from flooding. In addition, a fire truck pumped 5.8 million gallons of river water away from the lift station for more than 65 hours. If the lift station by County Line Road were to have been compromised, thousands of additional basements could have experienced sewer back-ups.

In the City of West Bend, utility staff reported to the wastewater treatment plant to prevent flood waters from inundating the storm sewer systems. By putting additional pumps in place, they were successfully able to manage the volume of rainwater, river inflow, and effluent discharge.

The water supply in several communities was negatively impacted. The Village of Richfield reported that several private wells may have been inundated with flood water. Due to the number of vehicles and homes that were exposed to flood waters, the wells could be contaminated with toxins from fuel, household cleaning supplies, pesticides, and other contaminants. Several wells were flooded in the Village of Germantown, forcing residents to

take precautions with their drinking water and conduct testing to ensure it was safe for consumption. Additionally, one of the wells in the Village of Germantown was out of service due to a positive test for E. Coli.



Photo: Efforts to save lift station in Village of Germantown. Courtesy: WISN Channel 12 /Hearst Television

Several major businesses in the county also sustained damage from the August storms and flooding, disrupting local commerce and economic stability. One business district, located in the Village of West Bend experienced well over a foot of flooding, causing several small businesses to close for a week or more to clean up and repair the damage. This resulted in a loss of wages and salaries for several employees, creating a strain on families and individuals in the community.

In response to flooding caused by heavy rains and storms, several response actions were conducted in the county. These include:

- The county provided no-fee dumpsters for county residents to drop off flood-damaged items. The county public works department assisted with downed trees, washed-out road shoulders, and various other flood-related damage to homes, businesses, and public infrastructure.
- The county's emergency management director coordinated damage assessments in ten communities and coordinated with Wisconsin Emergency Management for additional resources that went beyond the county's capacity.
- The West Bend Library and Recreation Center closed due to flooding, eliminating resource lifelines for individuals in need of services and community support.
- One neighborhood in Germantown became overwhelmed with flooding, and initiated a voluntary evacuation of 48 residents. The high school in the village was used to provide temporary shelter for eight of those residents. During the voluntary evacuation, the Salvation Army partnered with the Milwaukee Fire Bell Club to provide refreshments to first responders who were conducting evacuations in the affected neighborhood.



Photo: Voluntary Evacuations in Germantown. Courtesy: Bob Soderberg, Germantown Village President

The flooding also caused significant damage throughout the county. One residential structure was destroyed, 63 houses experienced major damage from water and sewage entering the basements of structures. On top of this, four rental units and five multi-family housing structures in the county received major damage. Several individuals and families were displaced due to flood waters compromising foundations and sewage backups into basements and living spaces. Those who vacated their homes dealt with structural concerns, increasing mold concerns, and other severe damage, such as HVAC and water heater destruction. As a result, many people relied on family or nearby hotels to secure safe and reliable shelter.

A larger portion of the impacted population throughout Washington County are elderly or have disabilities. Multiple churches distributed cleaning supplies and offered direct services to elderly and disabled populations that were directly impacted by the flooding. 2-1-1 Wisconsin was activated for residents to report damage as well as to help connect county residents with potential resources.

Grant County

On August 10 northern and central Grant County experienced severe thunderstorms with torrential rainfall that produced widespread flash flooding with impacts to infrastructure in several rural municipalities. More than \$427,000 in Public Assistance costs were validated in Grant County.

In the Village of Bagley, the failure of the primary stormwater drainage system led to widespread flooding of homes, businesses, and infrastructure. First responders and

regional swift water rescue teams evacuated 12 structures, conducted searches of flooded buildings for victims, and secured hazards such as floating liquid propane tanks.



Photo: Flooding in Bagley. Courtesy: Josh Copsey (open source)

In the City of Lancaster, a water main was washed out and broken, and city vehicles and equipment were damaged or destroyed when several city buildings near the wastewater plant flooded.

Rural township roads, culverts, and bridges throughout the county sustained extensive damage with debris and standing water making many roadways impassable. County highway crews implemented protective measures, assisted townships with emergency barricading, and continued to remove debris from roadways. They also cleared plugged culverts and drainage structures, conducted repairs, and provided engineering support.

Residential damages reported to date include collapsed or compromised foundation walls; structures that had water above the first floor; flooded basements resulting in the destruction of furnaces, water heaters, and other utilities; and widespread mold and mildew contamination. Some basements experienced sewage backflow due to overwhelmed sanitary system infiltration. Rural residents reported impassable driveways, damaged septic systems, and contaminated wells. At least one business sustained water damage exceeding three feet inside the structure.



Photo: Flooding damage along Old 61 in Boscobel. Courtesy: Bobbi Prinz (open source)

Three shelters for flood evacuees were open overnight on August 10, one each in the Village of Bagley, the Village of Blue River, and the City of Boscobel. They accommodated a total of 23 residents for one night. 25 cleanup kits have been distributed. Volunteers have assisted with cleanup, removing wet drywall and insulation, sanitizing homes and basements, and other efforts to make properties habitable and safe. The County Aging and Disability Resource Center has been assisting elderly and disabled residents impacted by flooding. Grant County Emergency Management implemented a case management system and hired a temporary case manager to assist individuals and families with unmet needs. They are also working to secure state and local funding to assist survivors.

The Village of Bagley and City of Boscobel are rural communities with below average household incomes and high poverty levels, 20.0% and 19.2%, respectively (United States Census Bureau, 2020 US Census). This and the magnitude of local resources already expended will make recovery a challenge without additional assistance.

Ozaukee County

Heavy rainfall inundated areas throughout Ozaukee County, located in southeastern Wisconsin. Parts of the county received 9 inches of rain in a few hours. The City of Port Washington, the villages of Grafton and Thiensville, and the Town of Cedarburg were heavily impacted. Due to the extreme rain, Cedar Creek and the Milwaukee River overwhelmed stormwater systems and inundated roads, bridges, and critical utilities. Damage to homes, businesses, and public property occurred in these areas. Additionally, a major interstate, Highway 43, was closed due to flooding in two locations for several hours, resulting in detours and delays.



Photo: I-43 closure due to flooding. Courtesy: 511 Wisconsin

Homes throughout the county experienced minor damage and were affected, with many residences losing living space. In addition to the damage to residences, there were impacts to mechanical systems, HVAC, and electrical services. Some residents are reported to have evacuated to other locations on their own.

In addition to residential structures, there was damage to municipal stormwater control structures in the City of Port Washington. Storm sewage systems in multiple municipalities were overwhelmed resulting in damage to public parks, county/town roads, and culverts throughout the event. Besides the interstate highway closures mentioned above, multiple local and county roads were also closed due to the flooding between August 9 and August 15 with some closures continuing past August 15 in the City of Mequon. These closures not only created longer commute times for residents, but also lengthened response times for local law enforcement, fire services, and emergency medical services. Critical facilities sustained damage: sewage and flood waters inundated the Mequon City Hall and one sewer lift station was impacted. Water and wastewater cleanup operations were required in the cities of Port Washington and Mequon and the Village of Grafton. Electrical outages occurred throughout the county, with most power restored within 24 hours.

During the event, fire and police departments throughout the county rescued residents from stranded vehicles. Public works and law enforcement agencies increased staffing to manage road closures, construct barricades, and remove debris. There is a substantial fiscal impact to the county and municipalities due to this event that will affect recovery, hinder tourism, and affect public services.



Photo: Culvert failure on City of Mequon road. Courtesy: City of Mequon Dept. of Public Works

Door County

Door County primarily experienced downed trees from strong winds which damaged roadways making them impassable while also taking down utility lines. This occurred during the peak tourism season for the county and impacted locals and tourists alike. The validated Public Assistance impacts were more than \$418,524 for the county.

Although the National Weather Service had issued only a marginal risk for severe weather that day, a rapidly intensifying storm cell developed over Green Bay and moved onshore with little advance warning. The storm produced wind gusts exceeding 80 mph and a confirmed tornado touchdown within Peninsula State Park before continuing northeast through the county.

The combination of straight-line winds and tornado activity caused widespread destruction across multiple municipalities, including the villages of Ephraim and Egg Harbor, and the towns of Liberty Grove and Baileys Harbor. Thousands of trees were uprooted or snapped, damaging homes, vehicles, and public infrastructure. Debris blocked major roadways, isolating neighborhoods and limiting access for emergency responders. Power was knocked out across the entire northern half of the county, with many areas remaining without electricity for several days.

Peak power outages reached over 10,000 in Door County, which has a permanent population of 30,066 (United States Census Bureau, 2020 US Census). Some outages lasted over 48 hours. This has a particularly severe impact on the county due to the high population, 31.5%, of residents over age 65.

State Highway 42, one of two main highways in the county, along with many municipal roads, was impassable north of Sister Bay. County dispatch received over 700 9-1-1 calls in the first hour after the storms resulting in all county safety agencies deploying to assist

with blocked roads and downed power lines, and to rescue trapped individuals. A shelter that housed 10 people overnight August 9-10 was opened in the Village Sister Bay.

The Town of Baileys Harbor, located on the Lake Michigan side of the Door Peninsula, experienced significant impacts from the severe storm event. Powerful straight-line winds caused widespread tree damage, resulting in downed power lines, blocked roadways, and extended power outages throughout the community.



*Photo: Fallen trees and power lines on North Shore Road in Sister Bay.
Courtesy: Jane Stevens (open source)*

One of the most serious incidents occurred at the Cana Island Lighthouse, one of Door County's most visited historic sites. A group of approximately 20 visitors became stranded on the island when fallen trees blocked the only access road for several miles. The Baileys Harbor Fire Department led the rescue operation, which required several hours of cutting through heavy debris to reach the group and safely escort them to safety.

The town remained without power for several days following the storm, affecting residents, local businesses, and visitors. Many tourists staying in seasonal accommodations were left without electricity, refrigeration, or communication capabilities. The cleanup process required extensive debris removal from public rights-of-way and local roads before utility crews could begin restoration work.

Baileys Harbor's local economy, which depends heavily on tourism and seasonal activity, suffered additional hardship as a result of the extended power outage and access limitations. The combination of stranded visitors, prolonged infrastructure disruptions, and economic interruption placed a substantial burden on local emergency responders and

public works personnel, whose resources were already stretched thin by countywide storm impacts.

The Town of Liberty Grove, located in northern Door County, experienced severe impacts from the storm event, which brought destructive straight-line winds and widespread power outages. Downed trees and power lines made travel extremely difficult for emergency responders throughout the Village and Town areas. Roads were completely blocked in multiple locations, preventing fire, EMS, and law enforcement vehicles from reaching calls for service.



Photo: Downed trees blocking only road leading from Cana Island. Courtesy: Cana Island Lighthouse

The Town of Liberty Grove was without power for several days following the storm, affecting residents, local businesses, and hundreds of visitors staying in seasonal accommodations. The storm occurred during the peak of Door County's tourism season, stranding many tourists in Airbnbs, cottages, and hotels without electricity, air conditioning, or access to reliable communication.

In Newport State Park, located along the Lake Michigan shoreline in Liberty Grove, the southern section of the park was struck by powerful straight-line winds. The damage was severe enough to trap 10 hikers who were unable to exit the park due to blocked trails and fallen trees. Firefighters and park staff worked for over eight hours using chainsaws and heavy machinery to cut their way through the debris to reach the stranded campers.

The trapped hikers had consolidated into a single campsite after a large tree fell on a neighboring tent site. It was a remarkable outcome that no serious injuries occurred. After rescuers reached the group, the hikers were safely transported to a Red Cross shelter established at the Sister Bay–Liberty Grove Fire Department.

The following day, additional rescues were conducted by boat to reach other campsites that remained inaccessible by land. The Red Cross shelter transitioned into a community reception center, providing essential services such as phone charging, showers, and potable water for both residents and visitors affected by the extended power outage.

The storm's impact on Liberty Grove and Newport State Park demonstrates the combination of life-safety threats, extensive infrastructure damage, and prolonged power loss that overwhelmed local resources and required a coordinated emergency response.



Photo: Cleared debris field in Newport State Park. Courtesy: Door County

The Village of Egg Harbor, a waterfront community of approximately 1,485 residents on the shores of Green Bay, experienced some of the most severe impacts from the storm event. Straight-line winds estimated at over 80 mph came directly off the Bay, striking the shoreline area from Point Beach through downtown Egg Harbor with devastating force.

The intense winds caused extensive tree and power line damage throughout the Village, blocking primary and secondary roadways and isolating sections of the community for several hours. Firefighters and public works crews spent hours cutting their way through downed trees and debris to restore emergency access and reach affected residents.

Due to the storm's severity and the community's dense tree canopy, Egg Harbor incurred the highest debris removal costs of any municipality in Door County. Cleanup operations required significant manpower, heavy equipment, and extended work hours to clear public rights-of-way, reopen transportation routes, and safely remove hazardous debris from public spaces.

In addition to the physical damage, the storm severely disrupted local commerce. Egg Harbor is a major tourism destination, with small businesses, restaurants, and lodging facilities that rely heavily on summer visitors for their annual income. Power outages,

impassable roads, and visible storm damage led to reservation cancellations and business closures during the height of the tourist season.

The combination of extensive debris, infrastructure strain, and economic interruption placed a considerable burden on local government resources. For a small municipality with limited staffing and budget capacity, the response and recovery demands of this storm event were far beyond typical operational capabilities.

The Village of Ephraim is a small waterfront community of approximately 345 residents located along Green Bay in Door County, Wisconsin. The community experienced significant impacts from a severe weather event that produced straight-line winds and a brief EFO tornado that touched down in nearby Peninsula State Park before continuing as a waterspout just offshore of Ephraim.

These damaging winds caused widespread power outages that left the entire Village without electricity for several days. During this critical period, essential services were disrupted, and many residents and business owners were forced to rely on costly alternative power sources or close entirely.

Ephraim's local economy is heavily dependent on seasonal tourism, with the majority of businesses operating primarily between May and October. The storm struck during the peak tourist season, resulting in immediate cancellations and early departures by visitors who left hotels and lodgings that had been fully booked only days earlier. Restaurants, shops, and small resorts lost significant revenue, and the prolonged outage further delayed cleanup and reopening efforts.

For a small community with a limited year-round population and a short economic window to sustain local employment and generate tax revenue, the loss of several days of business operations represents a substantial economic setback. The impacts extend beyond individual business owners to affect the Village's overall fiscal health, reducing sales and lodging tax collections that support essential public services and infrastructure maintenance.

The cumulative effect of the storm's physical damage, power outage, and economic disruption underscores the severe impact this event had on the Village of Ephraim and the broader Northern Door County region.

State Agency Response

The following information outlines the nature and amount of state resources that were deployed to respond to the significant flooding and wind damage from the August 9-12 storms across Wisconsin.

Emergency Declaration

In response to the situation, I took appropriate action under state law and directed the execution of the State Emergency Plan on August 11, 2025, in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act. I issued Executive Order #272 on August 11, 2025, proclaiming that a

State of Emergency existed statewide. In this Order, I directed all state agencies to assist as appropriate to support response and recovery efforts statewide. Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha counties, along with many municipalities, declared States of Emergency by August 11, 2025.

The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) opened at Level 2 – Partial Activation – at 12:00 p.m. on August 10 to coordinate state assistance. The SEOC remained open to provide resource support and situational awareness to the affected jurisdictions through August 25. In total 31 personnel from Wisconsin Emergency Management and 11 from other agency partners worked in the SEOC to support the response.

Wisconsin Emergency Management

From the SEOC WEM coordinated the deployment numerous resources requested by the counties, including two swift water rescue teams, National Guard high water rescue mission packages, 12,500 sandbags a sandbag machine to protect Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center, and aircraft to conduct aerial damage surveys.

Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) also sent dozens of personnel to directly support local response efforts. WEM Region Directors deployed immediately to the hardest-hit counties to provide guidance and assistance to county emergency management directors and elected officials. WEM's Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL) deployed to Milwaukee for 17 days to establish volunteer and donations management operations and provide long-term recovery guidance.

Milwaukee also requested the State's Incident Management Team to support their county emergency operations center and assist with damage assessment. WEM mobilized 18 members of the team to Milwaukee on August 11, where the team organized and managed a damage assessment operation that completed surveys of over 4,000 properties in just 3 days. Over 140 personnel took part in the operation, including staff and volunteers who served on field survey teams, data analysis and quality control, logistics, and administrative support.

WEM's Geographic Information System (GIS) staff provided 140 hours to support analytics and real-time mapping of flood zones, road closures, geolocated aerial imagery, and damage assessment surveys. GIS staff provided direct technical support to county damage assessment efforts and were critical to completing the damage assessments so quickly. WEM was able to submit high-quality damage assessment data to FEMA beginning on August 15 that expedited virtual assessment prior to the on-site FEMA assessment that started on August 21. Because of that FEMA completed these assessments in only two days instead of the four that were planned.

With the approval of FEMA Individual Assistance on September 11, WEM immediately began working with FEMA to plan, organize, and implement the IA operation under FEMA's state-led approach. This included establishing a Joint Field Office in the SEOC, which resulted in significant administrative cost savings to FEMA. WEM staff also assisted with the development of a Joint Incident Action Plan, worked with counties to identify locations and obtain resources to establish 7 Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) and identify locations

for temporary survivor assistance locations at local events and community centers. WEM jointly managed the IA operation with FEMA for the duration of the 60-day IA application period and deployed personnel to staff every shift at each DRC location.

WEM's Public Information Officer established a Joint Information System to share information, provide guidance, and ensure messages were going out accurately and without delay. Among their other duties, they drafted safety messaging to the public before, during, and after the flood event, gather and share information with 211 Wisconsin, monitor media and public reports to establish situational awareness, and publish press releases.

Immediately after the incident, WEM activated the State Recovery Plan and began coordinating with recovery partners. As part of the plan, on September 5 WEM activated the Wisconsin Recovery Task Force (WRTF) to organize and manage the state's assistance throughout the recovery process over the long-term. The WRTF comprises all state agencies that have a role in disaster recovery and ensures that state resources and programs are coordinated with local, federal, and non-governmental efforts.

On September 8, 6 WEM staff organized and coordinated Joint Preliminary Damage Assessments (JPDA), accompanying Federal Emergency Management Agency, county and local officials in the field validating initial damage assessment reports for use in determining whether the state qualified for Public Assistance, which was part of Wisconsin's request for a major disaster declaration from the President.

Throughout the disaster, nearly 60 WEM staff have supported the flood response in the SEOC, county emergency operations centers, and damage assessment teams, and recovery support. WEM's costs to support the flooding response and recovery are estimated to exceed \$250,000.

Air Coordination Group

The Wisconsin Air Operations Branch in the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) utilizes the Air Coordination Group (ACG) to facilitate the planning and execution of air support to joint, multi-agency response forces in the field. State Aviation assets from the ACG collected high resolution photos and videos to provide situational awareness, support for planning response and recovery efforts, and damage assessments. This group consisted of staff members from the Wisconsin Drone Network, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Civil Air Patrol (CAP), Wisconsin State Patrol (WSP), Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM), and the Wisconsin National Guard.

The following is a summary of the work conducted by the SEOC Air Operations Branch, and the ACG in response to the recent flooding event:

- ACG damage assessment flight maps (2), image sharing mapping application, 480 images
- 10.1 hours spent by WSP conducting an aerial damage assessment
- 3.5 hours spent by DNR Aeronautics conducting an aerial damage assessment

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) worked with county highway commissioners to address flooding issues and assess damage to federal and state roads,

culverts, and bridges. WisDOT representatives coordinated with county highway staff for equipment needs and delivery of barricades, signs, portable messaging boards, and other resources to affected counties. WisDOT staff also worked with county highway staff for roadways with extended closures that had significant traffic impacts. These included an Interstate Highway 43 northbound full roadway closure in Ozaukee County, a State Trunk Highway 175 full roadway closure in Milwaukee County, and an Interstate Highway 41 northbound two-lane closure in Washington County.

The WisDOT Electrical Field Unit responded to calls for service related to signals not operating across the region, which caused extremely hazardous driving conditions. 511 Wisconsin, a free 24/7 traveler information system, provided information on road conditions, road closures, and recommended detour routes to the public. WisDOT also published information for the public on the status of road closures. The total estimated cost for WisDOT's flood response is \$930,000 so far.



Cars submerged in lingering flood waters on a roadway near American Family Field on August 10, 2025. Photo taken by Noah Reading.

WisDOT also worked to stabilize a failed area of embankment on the Union Pacific Railroad which had recently been completed as part of the I-43 North-South (Glendale to Grafton) project and opened to active rail traffic in December 2023. The estimated cost to WisDOT for the embankment repair work is \$160,000.

WisDOT continues to make repairs to damaged infrastructure from the storms. To date, WisDOT has estimated costs associated with traffic control and debris removal/cleanup on roadways, as well as repair and replacement of damaged roads, at more than \$1.2 million dollars.

WisDOT's Division of State Patrol assisted with residential evacuations in the Village of Germantown (Washington County) and enforced closures of Interstate Highway 41 in Washington County and Interstate Highway 43 in Ozaukee County. The State Patrol also assisted local police departments with enforcing closures of Milwaukee County expressways that were flooded during the storm and provided staffing in the State Emergency Operations Center.

Department of Administration

DOA's Bureau of State Risk Management (BSRM) provided technical assistance to state agencies and the University of Wisconsin on procedures to address any potential asset losses. BSRM instructed state agencies to conduct property and vehicle damage inspections, begin emergency recovery and repairs through vendor contracts, and report damages to property through DOA forms and contacts.

BSRM received reports of losses from approximately seven state agencies, including University of Wisconsin campuses. BSRM continues to collect, review and determine the scope of these losses, however, it is currently estimated that the total lost estimates as of early November were \$914,416.79. Reported damage to state and university property includes buildings, building contents, and vehicles. The damage specifically to DOA-owned assets is currently limited to two vehicles.

Department of Natural Resources

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provided significant personnel and operational support during and after the August storm events. Initial operations focused on monitoring river levels and assessing the condition of impacted dams in coordination with regional engineers and dam owners. Over the course of the incident, heightened monitoring was required for 17 dams across the affected region.

In direct support of local response and recovery efforts, the DNR deployed 28 staff members from four divisions to assist Milwaukee County's damage assessment teams on August 13 and 14. DNR's Division of Public Safety and Resource Protection maintained continuous engagement with local emergency response partners, supporting evacuation operations, search and rescue missions, and on-the-ground situational awareness ("ground-truthing") throughout the Southeast Region. Conservation Wardens were staged in active response areas across all affected counties to ensure rapid deployment as conditions evolved.

DNR's Environmental Management program, particularly the Spills Response Team, experienced a substantial increase in workload due to flood-related incidents affecting public and private infrastructure. Additionally, flooding forced the temporary closure of the DNR's Waukesha Service Center, further impacting operational capacity. Despite these challenges, DNR staff remained actively engaged in safeguarding public safety and the environment throughout the response and initial recovery period.

Wisconsin National Guard

The Wisconsin National Guard (WING) provided support to flooding response efforts from August 10 to 11. The Wisconsin Joint Operations Center (JOC) conducted call triage during the early morning hours of August 10 on the Wisconsin Emergency Hotline from citizens

and interagency partners. In response to a request by Milwaukee for high water rescue assistance, the WING Joint Staff initiated a Crisis Action Planning Group on August 10 to mobilize a mission package consisting of five high water rescue vehicles and necessary support personnel. Upon approval, 27 servicemembers from the WING were placed in a State Active Duty (SAD) status with nine vehicles, all of which were repositioned to support storm response and future operations. Although Milwaukee County later withdrew their request, all 27 personnel and equipment remained on a SAD standby status until August 11 in anticipation of any follow-on requests. Since August 11, the WING has remained postured to support any flood response efforts across the state and has been working with WEM to assess and validate additional requests as they are submitted.

Department of Health Services

Wisconsin Department of Health Services (WI DHS) responded to the State Emergency Operations Center as a response partner for public health, medical, and mass care support. Following the activation, WI DHS fulfilled an emPOWER data request from Waukesha County, monitored emergency room and hospital visits for flooding related injuries to track trends, and fielded several concerned citizen calls through their human services on-call team. The state survey agency has monitored and communicated with impacted health and residential settings. Due to the FoodShare benefits lost during the incident and following power outages, WI DHS has extended the deadline for FoodShare benefits lost for residents in five counties. WI DHS has also worked with partners to authorize fee-exempt testing for 1,000 post-flood well testing kits per request from Washington County, communicated through social media messages about how to test and rectify private wells impacted by flood waters, and addressed questions from local health departments about exposure to and health concerns from contaminants following the flooding event.

WI DHS identified the need for Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) benefits in Milwaukee, Washington, and Waukesha Counties and submitted an application at the end of October, which was subsequently denied. DHS is leading the development of the Crisis Counseling Regular Services Program and is continuing the application for the Disaster Case Management Program based on community need. DHS is continuing their participation in the Wisconsin Recovery Task Force and has been working with Milwaukee on public health recommendations for inquiries about sewage-containing floodwater and potential riverbank contamination after a sewer overflow event due to the flooding. DHS has been assisting with mold assessment guidance including general assessment guidance at many impacted homes throughout the city, and more specific information and in-depth assessment notes at specific properties. Finally, DHS is continuing to monitor flood related emergency department visits, and providing information on the flood health impacts to the State Climatology Office and responding to concerned citizen calls since the incident.

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) reached out to regional, county, city, and neighborhood economic development groups to gather impacts on businesses, particularly small businesses. Concurrently with that effort the WEDC began the process of identifying a partner who may implement a disaster recovery program, as well as looking for financial options that would allow a program to be funded.

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection's (DATCP) Bureau of Weights and Measures conducted increased inspections in flooded areas to check for water in underground storage tanks the week of August 11. Four facilities reported water in their underground storage tanks in Washington, Waukesha, and Milwaukee Counties. DATCP also issued a press release warning consumers about scammers who may target owners of affected properties and provided other consumer protection resources to the public.

Wisconsin Department of Tourism

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism (WDT) reached out to Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) to gather impacts on tourism related businesses and attractions, and communicate any information received to relevant agencies. Additionally, WDT is a sponsor partner via MOU with the Wisconsin State Fair and saw quantifiable losses related to the early closing of the fair on Sunday, including 3 DMOs who were unable to attend and promote their destinations.

Voluntary Agency Response

The Wisconsin State Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL) has been mobilized through the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) to support the efforts by municipal, county, and state officials with volunteer and donations management and Long-Term Recovery Groups through technical assistance and guidance. The State VAL coordinated with the SEOC to ensure that relief is being delivered to those in need. The following is a summary of the work the State VAL has been coordinating with Wisconsin Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) and the Southeast Wisconsin Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD).

United Way of Wisconsin and 211 Wisconsin have been supporting county emergency management with collection of unmet needs, referrals for services, and damage data reported by individuals from the impacted communities. The numbers reflect a total of 26,725 damage reports from survivors. However, due to limited resources from both the government and nonprofits only 10,120 of those survivors have been successfully referred to relief organizations for support; leaving a total of 16,605 survivors with no supplemental support.

The United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County has begun collecting financial donations to support long-term recovery efforts. These funds will be available to relief organizations for distribution through the Long-Term Recovery Group forming in the Southeast Wisconsin COAD.

The organization known as Crisis Cleanup was activated to support the flood response and recovery effort. This organization has created a program to allow relief organizations to track the needs and completed cases of homeowners that need cleanup assistance. So far during this event 7,707 cases of cleanup assistance have been recorded and 5,454 of those cases remain open and in need of cleanup assistance for their property.



Photo: American Red Cross volunteer with a flood survivor at a shelter location in Milwaukee in August. Courtesy: American Red Cross Wisconsin.

Team Rubicon, one of the largest organizational presences in the state, has been on scene in the greater Milwaukee area for support. This organization has been responding since August 14 and has worked to resolve over 200 cases of cleanup assistance, but thousands of cases remain unresolved. Team Rubicon has been working with four strike teams, a total of 30 volunteers, to perform their missions in the area.

The American Red Cross (ARC) volunteers and staff opened three sheltering sites for this event. Those sheltering sites were consolidated and now the ARC is operating one site at a high school with approximately 50 survivors sheltering there each night. The ARC activated their client assistance program, and supported 350 clients before the program ended.

Samaritan's Purse brought in six teams to provide cleanup and relief to affected residents from the floods. These teams are supporting cleanup efforts as well as providing direct financial support to those impacted by the disaster. Their organization started work orders on over 600 cases and completed approximately 400 before their demobilization on Nov 1.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief has been active in the area since August 12. This organization has brought in more than 2,000 cleanup kits to be distributed to residents. Those kits were all distributed and more are being assembled; however, there is still a large need for this type of resource for survivors. With more than 10,000 requests for cleanup kits recorded by 211 there is still a gap of approximately 7,000 homes needing cleanup kits.



Photo: Salvation Army volunteers helping to distribute flood cleanup kits and bottled water to flood survivors in August. Courtesy: Salvation Army

The Salvation Army has been providing support since the beginning of the event on or around August 10. The Salvation Army has been supporting the distribution of cleanup kits from the ARC Mobile distribution and from their own Corps Thrift Stores in the Milwaukee area. They are also continuing to support feeding and hydration needs for both volunteers and survivors, having supplied more than 1000 meals so far. However, survivors who lost their food and are struggling with income disparities nonprofits cannot meet all their needs.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is supporting 211 Wisconsin and the United Way of Wisconsin with remote volunteers to enter information into the Crisis Cleanup online tracking system so that survivors with cleanup needs can be contacted and assisted by organizations doing cleanup. They have also provided chaplains trained in emotional/spiritual care to support the United Church of Christ's Hospitality Center providing relief and respite to both volunteers and survivors.

The United Church of Christ operated a hospitality center for those seeking assistance and respite during these times. This organization, along with the Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC), is also supported efforts with the American Red Cross and the local government to find an alternate sheltering site as schools are preparing for the new school year. In collaboration with the WCC, they were also able to organize the donation of 1,000 cleanup kits from New England and provided those to The Salvation Army for distribution. However, there is still a need for 7,000 cleanup kits based on calls made to 211 seeking assistance.

Christ in Action - Midwest, demobilized on October 3, reducing the number of volunteers supporting emotional spiritual care, and after providing assistance to approximately 100 homes.

Southern Baptist Disaster Relief of Minnesota and Wisconsin was successful in cleaning out approximately 30 homes during their deployment and their demobilization has decreased the number of volunteers available to provide emotional spiritual care.

Tzu Chi of Milwaukee has been offering volunteer and resource assistance as needed to other responding nonprofits. They have also provided offers of financial assistance through donations to the survivors of the flood. They have demobilized and are no longer offering survivor assistance.

Adventist Community Services is working to get teams deployed to the Milwaukee area to support survivor needs for cleanup and other assistance. They have also provided critically valuable insight into the process of opening and operating a community warehouse for donation goods. They have demobilized and are no longer supporting this event

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has begun to support cleanup and muck out for survivors. They have also opened and offered JustServe.org for those organizations that wish to communicate their needs for volunteers with the public. This organization is now only supporting with weekend cleanup events as they can. They cannot support cleanup of more than 12 to 16 homes a month.

Wisconsin's 24-Month Disaster History

Unfortunately, this is not the only recent event to draw on the resources and capacity of the state and its counties. In the previous 24 months, the State of Wisconsin, including many of these same counties, has been impacted by a number of events that have required response by resources from the State and one or more counties.

In the past two years, local applicants reached the federal damage indicator on 24 separate occasions (\$4.60 per capita for Federal Fiscal Year 2024 and \$4.72 per capita for Federal Fiscal Year 2025), making them eligible to receive assistance from the Wisconsin Disaster Fund, the State's assistance program that provides reimbursement to local governments and electric cooperatives for debris removal, emergency protective services, and damage to roads and bridges. These incidents are listed in the table below.

Date	Counties/Tribes	Event Type
10/22-23/2023	Clark, Jackson, Wood	Flood
2/8/2024	Green, Rock	Tornado
4/1-5/2024	Door, Marinette, Oconto, Outagamie; Oneida Nation	Wind
5/18/2024	Wood	Wind
5/21/2024	Clark, Columbia, Dane, Door, Eau Claire, Iowa, Lafayette, Marathon, Outagamie, Sauk	Tornado/Wind
5/24/2024	Columbia	Flood/Wind
6/3-5/2024	Columbia, Dodge, Rock	Flood

Date	Counties/Tribes	Event Type
6/18/2024	Bayfield, Douglas, Polk, Taylor	Flood
6/28/2024	Dane	Flood
7/4-7/2024	Clark, Crawford, Grant, Sauk, Waupaca	Flood/Dam Failure
7/13-15/2024	Buffalo, Crawford, Grant, Juneau, Marathon, Monroe, Rock, Sauk	Flood
8/15/2024	Iron	Flood
8/26-30/2024	Barron, Kewaunee, St. Croix, Washburn	Flood/Storm
9/21/2024	Crawford, Grant	Flood
3/14/2025	Jefferson	Wind/Storm
3/19/2025	Door, Florence, Forest, Langlade, Marathon, Marinette, Oneida, Price, Vilas; Forest County Potawatomi, Sokaogon Chippewa Community	Winter Storm/Wind
4/28/2025	Barron, Polk, Shawano	Tornado/Wind
5/15/2025	Chippewa, Clark, Dodge, Racine, St. Croix	Tornado/Wind
6/19-30/2025	Clark, Pepin, Price, Sauk, Wood	Flood/Storm
7/3-9/2025	Dunn, Marinette	Flood/Wind
7/11/2025	Grant	Flood
7/15-19/2025	Bayfield, Dane, Marathon, Waushara; Lac du Flambeau Band	Flood/Tornado/Wind
7/22-30/2025	Menominee, St. Croix	Flood/Wind

After these disasters, county and local governments are eligible to recoup some of their costs through the Wisconsin Disaster Fund (WDF) and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Disaster Damage Aids program. The state has reimbursed approximately \$3 million and has nearly \$3 million in open requests for the above disasters. These requests will drain the \$3 million that Wisconsin currently has appropriated for this program and leave little or no funding available to reimburse the 6 counties for the severe damages they incurred in August.

Preliminary Damage Assessment

On August 25, 2025, Wisconsin requested a hybrid joint federal, state, and local survey of damaged areas. The Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) for Public Assistance (PA) was conducted first as a desk review beginning on September 3, 2025, with in-person assessments beginning on September 8, 2025. The PDA was completed on September 17, 2025. Teams surveyed damages for PA in Door, Grant, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha counties.

Subsequently, Wisconsin completed a virtual PDA on November 3, 2025, to ensure any new, updated, or missed damages were validated. The desk review began on November 10, 2025, and was completed on November 13, 2025.

For the PA PDAs, the impacted counties are a combination of urban and rural agricultural areas. The information below is extracted from Table A-1 (Enclosure B) submitted with FEMA Form 010-0-13 for the complete dataset and warrant expansion. The PDA conducted to develop Table A-1 included the participation of six counties. Based on this information, the damage per capita for the State of Wisconsin amounts to \$4.68. This amount of damage per capita exceeds the \$1.89 state threshold.

- **Milwaukee County** – Of the six counties, Milwaukee County has reported the highest countywide damage per capita loss at \$24.13. Verified damage in Milwaukee County currently amounts to \$22,671,441. Damages occurred in all categories of work, with close to \$6 million in Category A due to the amount of debris removal and disposal needed.
- **Door County** – Verified damages in Door County currently amount to \$418,524, resulting in a high damage indicator of \$13.92 per capita. Door County had more than 90% of their damage as a result of extensive debris removal. They also had verified damages in Categories B, E, and F.
- **Grant County** – Verified damages in Grant County currently amount to \$427,848, resulting in a high damages per capita amount of \$8.24. Damage occurred in Category A and C, with 87% of damage occurring in Category C.
- **Washington County** - Verified damages in Washington County currently amount to \$1,094,818, resulting in a high damage per capita amount of \$8.01. Damages occurred in all categories of work, with more than half documented in Category C.
- **Waukesha County** – Verified damages in Waukesha County currently amount to \$2,506,590, resulting in a damage per capita amount of \$6.16. Damages occurred in all categories of work, with more than half documented in Category C.
- **Ozaukee County** – Verified damages in Ozaukee County currently amount to \$471,726, resulting in a damage per capita amount of \$5.16. All categories of work had documented damages, except Category F, with categories A and C making up the majority.

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

The State of Wisconsin requests that the President reconsider the denial of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) for the communities impacted by the August 9-12 severe weather event. HMGP provides much-needed federal funds for long-term hazard mitigation actions in these areas.

The National Institute of Building Sciences publication *Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves: 2019 Report*² demonstrated that for every federal dollar spent on riverine flood mitigation, seven dollars are saved in future flood damages. Taxpayer dollars at the federal, state, and local levels are regularly used to fund flood response and recovery efforts. Capitalizing on

² https://nibs.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/NIBS_MMC_MitigationSaves_2019.pdf.

riverine flood mitigation is an unequivocally sensible investment. Authorizing the HMGP in the impacted communities will allow Wisconsin to leverage federal, state, and local dollars to prevent costly future flood damage.

Investing in flood mitigation measures provides an opportunity to avoid future loss of life and eliminate repetitive, expensive flood damage in these communities. Through strategic implementation of cost-effective mitigation measures, the State of Wisconsin, in conjunction with the impacted communities, has an opportunity to reduce the financial burden of future disasters to the taxpayers of our state and country.

To restore the impacted areas and decrease future flood risk across the region, Wisconsin is committed to identifying as much state, local, and non-governmental funding as possible to direct toward this recovery process. Currently, Wisconsin does not have any open application periods for FEMA hazard mitigation grant opportunities. Therefore, there is no FEMA hazard mitigation funding available for these communities to apply for. In the coming months, the affected communities will implement pre-planned mitigation measures and investigate new ones to reduce the impact and cost of future flood hazard events. However, without an open application period, available funding resources will be limited. The need for mitigation funding will exceed the state and local resources due to the magnitude and severity of this flooding.

The impacted counties together have 326 repetitive loss properties and 9 severe repetitive loss properties. That means floods have damaged these properties on several occasions, and they have received multiple high-dollar-value paid claims through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which is heavily subsidized by taxpayer dollars. These properties are costly to the NFIP and a high priority for Wisconsin's hazard mitigation program. For properties like these that have repeated damage, and those that are destroyed or uninhabitable, one of the most effective mitigation measures is acquisition and demolition to remove the structure and prevent future damages in that location.

Through the voluntary program, property owners receive fair market value for their homes and move to a safer location outside the flood hazard area. This action eliminates the risk to residents' lives and structures, and the lives of first responders who no longer have to rescue residents from flooded areas. It lowers response and recovery costs as well as costs to the taxpayer-subsidized NFIP. It also prevents neighborhoods from becoming blighted. With the acquired land, communities can create recreational areas that will serve as flood storage in times of high water.

Some structures or neighborhoods have historic or intrinsic value and should not be removed. In those cases, elevation or floodproofing of the structure may be most appropriate to avoid future damage. Proposed projects under this disaster include structure buyouts, elevations, or floodproofing; overhead sewer systems; storm sewer improvements; road elevations; and warning systems. Previous similar mitigation measures in these areas have proven very successful.

Previous successes in August flood impacted communities

The communities affected by this flood disaster have experienced flood events in the past and have effectively used federal funds to implement hazard mitigation measures. Projects are listed in the table below.

Municipality	County	Mitigation Project	Number of Properties	Federal Funding Source
C. Brookfield	Waukesha	Acquisition/ Demolition	3	HMGP & FMA
C. Glendale	Milwaukee	Acquisition/ Demolition	9	HMGP
C. Milwaukee	Milwaukee, Waukesha	Acquisition/ Demolition	21	HMGP
C. New Berlin	Waukesha	Acquisition/ Demolition	1	HMGP
C. Wauwatosa	Milwaukee	Acquisition/ Demolition	23	HMGP
V. Brown Deer	Milwaukee	Acquisition/ Demolition	9	HMGP
V. Elm Grove	Waukesha	Acquisition/ Demolition	4	HMGP
V. Menomonee Falls	Waukesha	Acquisition/ Demolition	17	HMGP
V. Whitefish Bay	Milwaukee	Flood Risk Reduction: storm sewers, detention basin, bioswales	50 for 10- year storm; 97 for 100- year storm	HMGP

HMGP = FEMA's post-disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

FMA = FEMA's Flood Mitigation Assistance program

These measures, which have included acquisition and demolition of flood prone structures and storm sewer upgrades, have reduced the long-term risk and damages caused by flooding. Three projects in particular demonstrated effectiveness during the August flooding disaster.

City of Wauwatosa

In the City of Wauwatosa, 23 flood-damaged structures were acquired and demolished using HMGP funding after severe flooding in 1997. The city acquired 65 additional structures in the area with local funding through the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District. They then used the open space to create Hart Park, which is widely used for

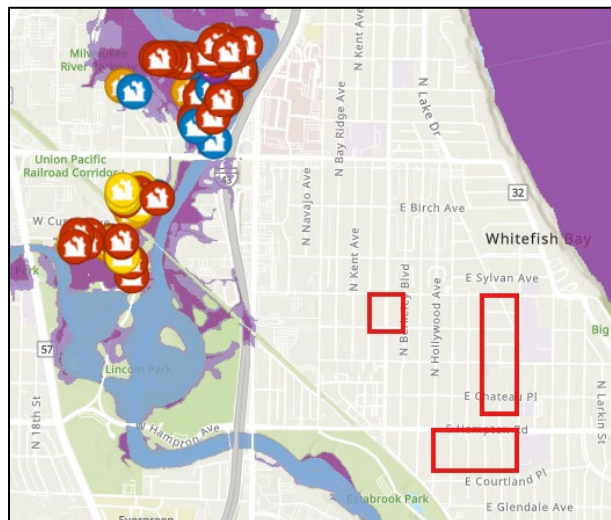


Photo: Image shows where 23 properties (in orange), mainly rental properties, were removed. No water rescues and no need for individual assistance was needed due to this mitigation effort.

recreation and now houses a football field, two pavilions, and a restroom facility. In this event, Hart Park flooded, and sustained some damage, but the damage would have been far greater if dozens of apartments still occupied the site. More importantly, because those apartments had been removed, no lives were put at risk and no water rescues were required.

Village of Whitefish Bay

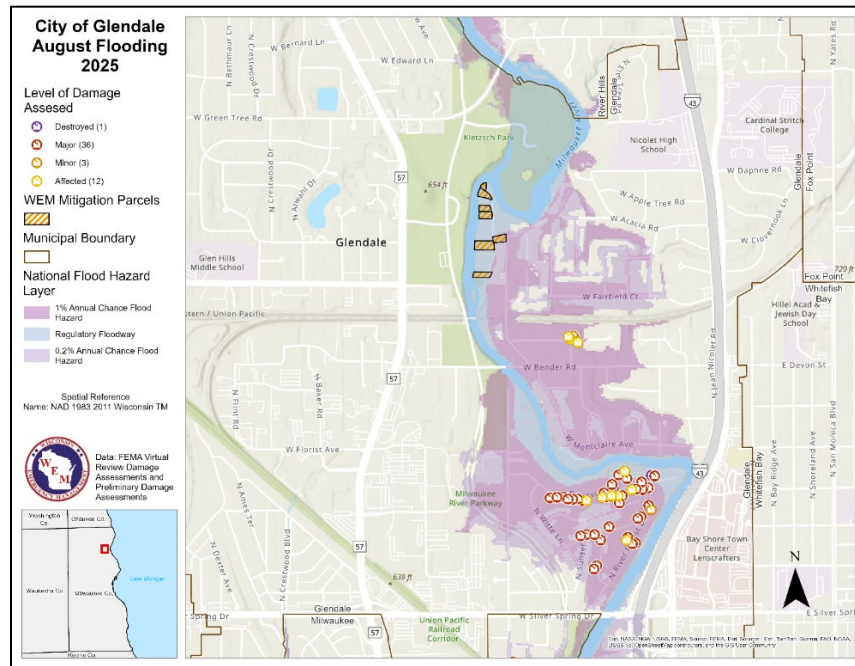
After the catastrophic flooding in Milwaukee County in 2010, the Village of Whitefish Bay used HMGP funds to implement a project to improve the storm sewers, install a dry detention basin, and create bioswales in the median of a major road to ameliorate flooding in a neighborhood near the Milwaukee River. The neighborhoods intended to be protected by this project are marked in red on the map. Homes near the project site, marked with circles on the map, suffered damage or were destroyed in this flood event (purple = destroyed; red = major damage; orange = minor damage; yellow = affected; blue = inaccessible). Nearby Estabrook Park was also underwater. The homes benefiting from the project were not impacted by this event.



Map: Residential areas protected by prior mitigation (red outline) had no damages, while nearby areas were flooded.

City of Glendale

Recognizing the need to remove structures from the floodplain, the City of Glendale in Milwaukee County started a buyout program after 2010 flooding. The structures acquired were on a point in the floodway of the Milwaukee River. During the 2025 flood, none of the 7 buyout parcels experienced damage, but less than a mile away on another point in the floodplain of the Milwaukee River, one home was destroyed, 36 experienced major damage, and another 15 had minor damage or were affected. In the map below, the polygons represent the acquired parcels and the dots represent the 2025 damage, indicated a need for continued mitigation efforts in this area.



State resources not enough to address resilience

Flooding is the most common and costly disaster in Wisconsin, and the state currently invests considerable resources in hazard mitigation through the following programs:

- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Municipal Flood Control Grant Program
 - This program funds flood mitigation projects with acquisition/demolition of flood-prone properties as the top priority.
 - Typically funded at \$2 million per biennium.
- Wisconsin Emergency Management Pre-Disaster Flood Resilience Grant
 - This program funds restoration projects in flood-prone areas to increase natural flood storage.
 - Typically funded at \$2 million per biennium.
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation Disaster Damage Aids Grant
 - This program funds road repairs from disaster damages and includes mitigation measures.
 - Typically funded at \$1 million per year.
- DNR Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program

- This program is used in part to acquire and demolish flood-prone properties, and focuses on land stewardship and recreation.
- Typically funded at \$33 million per year.

While the state is making efforts to recover from this disaster and build for a better future, due to the magnitude of this event, those resources alone will not be enough to address the needs of so many that have been impacted. Federal funding is a critical piece of the puzzle. Wisconsin is requesting the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program only for the impacted communities in the state because there are still many unmet needs in those communities. Federal mitigation dollars will make a substantial contribution to the recovery efforts.

Successful grant management

Wisconsin has been effective in its use of the HMGP funds in the past. The state has four open disaster grants under the HMGP, three of which will be in close-out before the end of the year. None have open application periods. The state implements projects, draws down funds, and closes grants efficiently as shown in the tables below.

Open HMGP Disasters	First Project Obligation	Status
FEMA-4402-DR-WI	2020	In closeout
FEMA-4459-DR-WI	2021	Work complete; closeout starts 11/24/2025
FEMA-4477-DR-WI	2021	Work complete; closeout starts 12/6/2025
FEMA-4520-DR-WI (COVID)	2022	Application period closed; waiting for FEMA to award additional subgrants; 16 subgrants have already closed or are ready for closeout.

Open BRIC Funding Cycles	First Project Obligation	Status
BRIC FFY 2020	2021	Work complete; closeout starts 12/20/2025
BRIC FFY 2021	2022	Fully awarded; in progress; closeout starts 10/6/2027
BRIC FFY 2022	2023	Fully awarded; in progress; closeout starts 9/22/2026
BRIC FFY 2023	2024	Fully awarded; in progress; closeout starts 9/26/2027

Unobligated funds

Approximately 50% of funds from the HMGP under the State of Wisconsin's most recent disaster before the August flooding, DR-4520 (COVID), have yet to be obligated. However, Wisconsin has completed and submitted its documentation to FEMA for these projects and

is waiting for FEMA to complete its reviews. Below is a table showing funds that have yet to be obligated by FEMA. Any additional unobligated balance is relatively small and may be used to cover minor cost overruns in existing grants.

Subapplicant	Amount	Notes
City of Sheboygan	\$8,243,466.67	Submitted to FEMA 2/1/2023. Waiting on FEMA review and grant award.
Village of Almena	\$880,363.00	Submitted to FEMA 7/31/2023. Waiting on FEMA review and grant award.
Village of Potosi	\$2,752,160.32	Submitted under BRIC 2022. FEMA had not approved by April, 2024. Moved project from “alternate” to “funded” status under HMGP.
Jackson County	\$142,804.93	Phased project; FEMA has only awarded Phase 1 of 2 so far.
Village of Wrightstown	\$139,415.54	Phased project; FEMA has only awarded Phase 1 of 2 so far.
Village of Altoona	\$1,185,569.40	Strategic Funds Management; FEMA has only awarded 1 of 3 project increments and 1 of 7 management costs increments so far. WEM requested release of the next increment in July 2025.
Management Costs	\$2,512,208.17	Strategic Funds Management; FEMA has only awarded 2 of 3 increments so far despite WEM requesting release of the next increment in April 2025.
Total	\$13,343,779.86	

Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) takes very seriously its responsibility to the people of our state and our nation to be effective stewards of taxpayer dollars. Wisconsin is an Enhanced Plan state, meaning we have demonstrated that we have a robust statewide mitigation program involving federal, state, local, nonprofit, and private partners. We have also demonstrated strong grants management processes through annual reviews by FEMA as well as biennial in-depth grants monitoring.

Using all available funds, implementing cost-effective projects, and closing grants timely are priorities for WEM’s hazard mitigation program. This has allowed us to put in place and effectively execute a Program Administration by States (PAS) agreement with FEMA for the HMGP for every disaster declaration for over 10 years. This agreement allows WEM to take on certain program administration tasks, like approving demolition time extensions and hazard mitigation plan updates, to relieve FEMA of some of the burden. There is of course ample federal oversight written into the agreement to ensure WEM is meeting all requirements and responsibilities.

Conclusion

Without the support of a Major Disaster Declaration for the Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs, Wisconsin will face significant challenges in achieving an effective recovery from this event. I have determined that the severity and magnitude of these storms exceed the capabilities of the State and affected local governments to respond and recover adequately.

Therefore, I am formally appealing the denial of \$27,590,949 in Public Assistance for the counties of Door, Grant, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha.

Furthermore, I am formally appealing the denial of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for the counties of Door, Grant, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha. The state has an approved Enhanced State Hazard Mitigation Plan.³

In closing, I want to reaffirm the urgency of this appeal request and emphasize the need to assist the survivors and communities as quickly as possible so that life can return to normal. Responding to the disaster is only part of a larger picture to create stability after a disaster. Investing in hazard mitigation will reduce future costs many times over and is a strategic investment in Wisconsin's flood resilience. It protects taxpayers, communities and future generations from larger impacts of natural disasters.

I therefore respectfully request that you review the documentation and declare a major disaster for the State of Wisconsin.

Your favorable consideration of this request is truly appreciated.

Respectfully,



Tony Evers
Governor

Enclosures

Enclosure A: Public Assistance
Enclosure B: Weather Summary

³ <https://wem.wi.gov/state-planning/>.