



Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

May 22, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Through: Acting Regional Administrator Fredric Kaehler
FEMA Region V
536 South Clark Street, 6th Floor
Chicago, IL 60605-1521

Dear Mr. President:

I write to you on behalf of the people of the State of Wisconsin, the Oneida Nation, and communities devastated after severe storms in April brought widespread destruction from hail, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and flooding. Families have lost their homes, businesses, and livelihoods, and far too many people are facing uncertainty, loss, and grief.

These losses are beyond the capacity of state, tribal, and local resources to manage. To validate our reasoning, Joint Preliminary Damage Assessments (JPDAs) were conducted for both Individual Assistance and Public Assistance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The JPDA for Individual Assistance in 19 counties and one tribal nation found 1,576 residential structures were assessed (648 affected, 548 minor, 439 major, 31 destroyed) with total damage costs estimated at more than \$9.8 million.

The JPDA for Public Assistance validated \$17,661,572 in public sector damage in 14 counties and one tribal nation, which exceeded the state's per capita indicator by more than \$6 million.

Under the provisions of Section 401 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, I request that you declare a major disaster for the State of Wisconsin as a result of severe storms, tornadoes, hail, and flooding that occurred April 13-23, 2026. This request includes the following counties for FEMA's Individual Assistance program: Bayfield, Brown, Buffalo, Jackson, Jefferson, Juneau, Kenosha, Manitowoc, Marathon, Milwaukee, Outagamie, Racine, Rock, Sauk, Vernon, Washington, Waukesha, Waupaca, and Winnebago. The Oneida Nation is also included in this request.

I am also requesting the following counties to receive eligible funding through FEMA's Public Assistance program: Bayfield, Iowa, Jackson, Jefferson, Juneau, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marathon, Outagamie, Racine, Rock, Sauk, Vernon, and Waupaca. I also ask for the Oneida Nation to be included in this request as well.

I respectfully ask you to approve all available federal assistance measures and expedite the deployment of these vital recovery resources. On behalf of all of those affected by these disasters, I thank you for your immediate attention to this matter and for your commitment to the welfare of the people of Wisconsin and the Oneida Nation.

Weather Event

Multiple rounds of severe thunderstorms and heavy rainfall brought large hail, tornadoes, high winds, and torrential rainfall to much of Wisconsin between April 13 and April 17, 2026. The widespread, heavy rain resulted in flash flooding and record-breaking river flooding, with major river flooding persisting through April 23.

- **April 13, 2026**

Severe thunderstorms quickly developed over west central Wisconsin during the afternoon and early evening hours of April 13. Storms organized along the frontal boundary, bringing torrential rainfall to central Wisconsin, where soils were already saturated from rain earlier in the month and the residual effects of 2 to 3 feet of snow that fell in mid-March. During this time period, 3 to 6 inches of rain fell in some areas, with significant flash flooding observed in portions of central Wisconsin. In addition to the heavy rain, there were multiple reports of large hail across this area, and one tornado in Taylor County.

Later that night, storms began to move south and organized into a powerful line as they moved across south central and southeastern Wisconsin. Widespread wind damage occurred across this area, along with an embedded tornado circulation in Dodge County. Several weather stations recorded wind gusts in excess of 100 MPH.

- **April 14, 2026**

A period of warm, sunny weather and breezy south winds caused the frontal boundary to surge back north as a warm front, with humid, unstable air overspreading the southern half of the state by the afternoon hours. Initial thunderstorms developed over southwestern Wisconsin during the afternoon, with numerous intense supercell thunderstorms occurring into the evening hours. These storms brought several tornadoes to southern Wisconsin, including an EF-3 tornado near Union Center in Juneau County and an EF-2 tornado in northern Waukesha County in the Town of Lisbon.

Giant hail, reported to be up to 3.5-inches in diameter was reported in western Wisconsin as well as hail up to 3 inches in diameter in the Madison area, causing widespread damage. Torrential rainfall of 3 to 6 inches resulted in flash flooding over portions of southern and southeastern Wisconsin, with additional heavy rain and flooding observed over central Wisconsin.



Photo (L): Nearly baseball-sized hail in Madison, WI on April 14, 2026. Image courtesy: Albert Betancourt.

Photo (R): Hail in Westby, WI on April 14, 2026. Image courtesy: Fred Casper.

- **April 15, 2026**

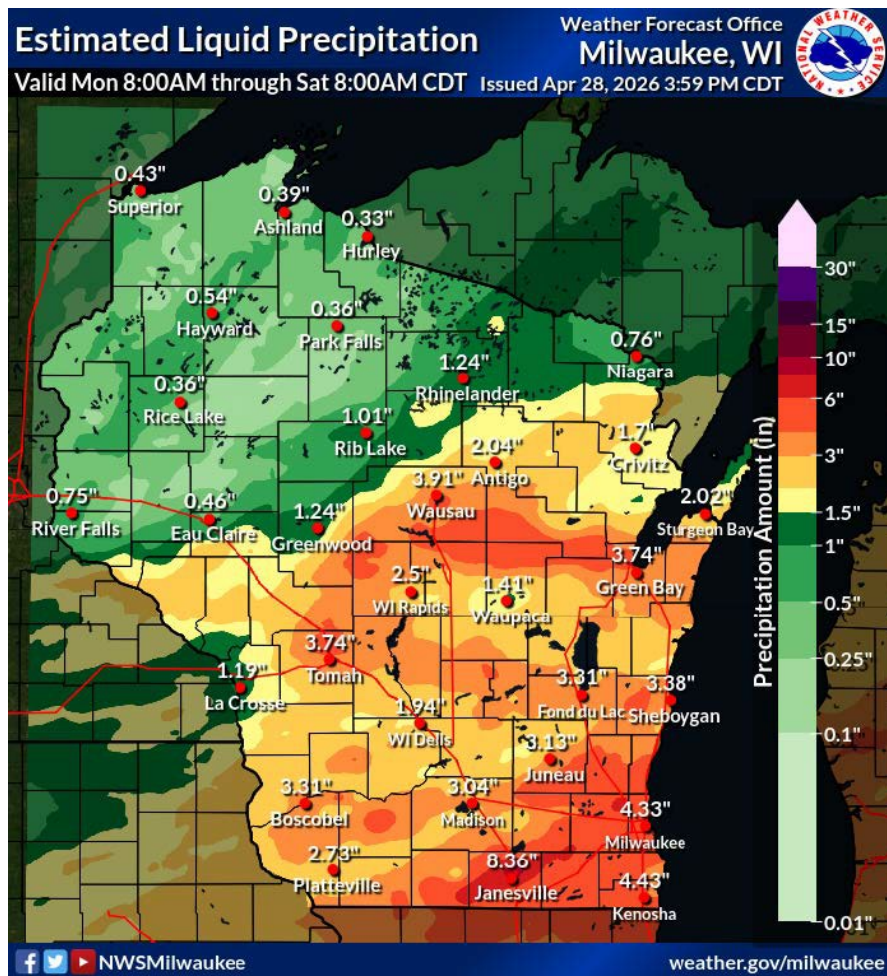
Yet another round of severe thunderstorms and torrential rainfall affected southern Wisconsin during the evening of April 15. Storms initially developed over southwestern Wisconsin and northeastern Iowa and moved east through the evening hours. An EF-1 tornado occurred near Elkhorn in Walworth County. Substantial flooding also occurred in the Milwaukee metropolitan area; this affected several major roadways including I-43 in northern Milwaukee and WI-175 near American Family Field, as well as numerous side streets.



Photo: People being rescued from vehicles during flash flooding in Milwaukee on April 15, 2026. Courtesy: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

- **April 17, 2026**

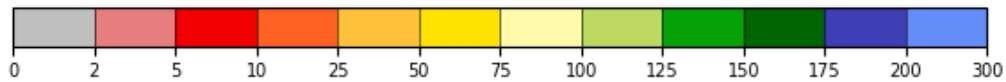
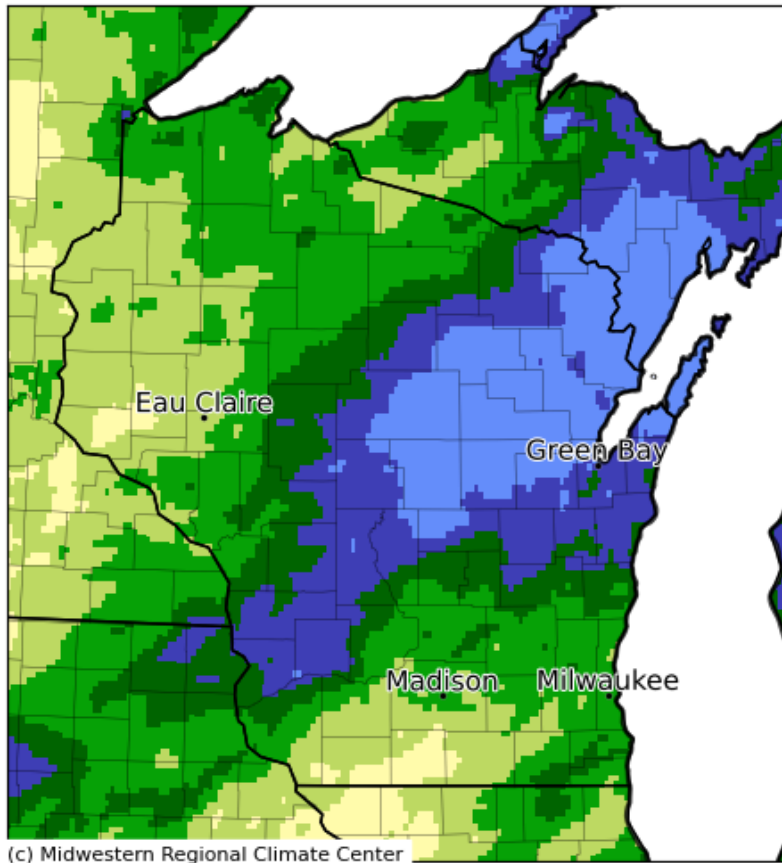
A final round of severe weather and flash flooding occurred during the afternoon and evening of April 17. Numerous supercell thunderstorms affected central, western, and southern Wisconsin during this time, before forming into a broken line of storms over the eastern and southeastern part of the state. This round of storms brought at least 14 tornadoes, including an EF-3 near Cream in Buffalo County, and another EF-3 in Ringle in Marathon County. Multiple, short-lived tornado circulations also occurred in Rock, Walworth, and Racine counties late in the evening. Another 3 to 6 inches of rain affected portions of southern Wisconsin, much of which had already experienced repeated rounds of heavy rain. This resulted in widespread flash flooding, with the greatest impacts across the Janesville area in Rock County.



Cumulative rain totals over the course of four days include 10.25” in Rock County, 7.38” in Waukesha, and 5.63” in Waupaca. This heavy rain followed an extremely wet period, particularly for northeastern Wisconsin, which experienced precipitation up to 300% of normal from, This was capped by a historic blizzard that dropped record amounts of snow across the state at the end of March, elevating precipitation 500% of normal in those areas for the two weeks prior to the event. In short, soils in much of the state were already saturated and many creek, stream, and river levels were already high, with some rivers in flood stage. This set the stage for the major flooding that occurred with the heavy rainfall starting on April 13.

Accumulated Precipitation: Percent of 1991-2020 Normals

January 01, 2026 to April 12, 2026



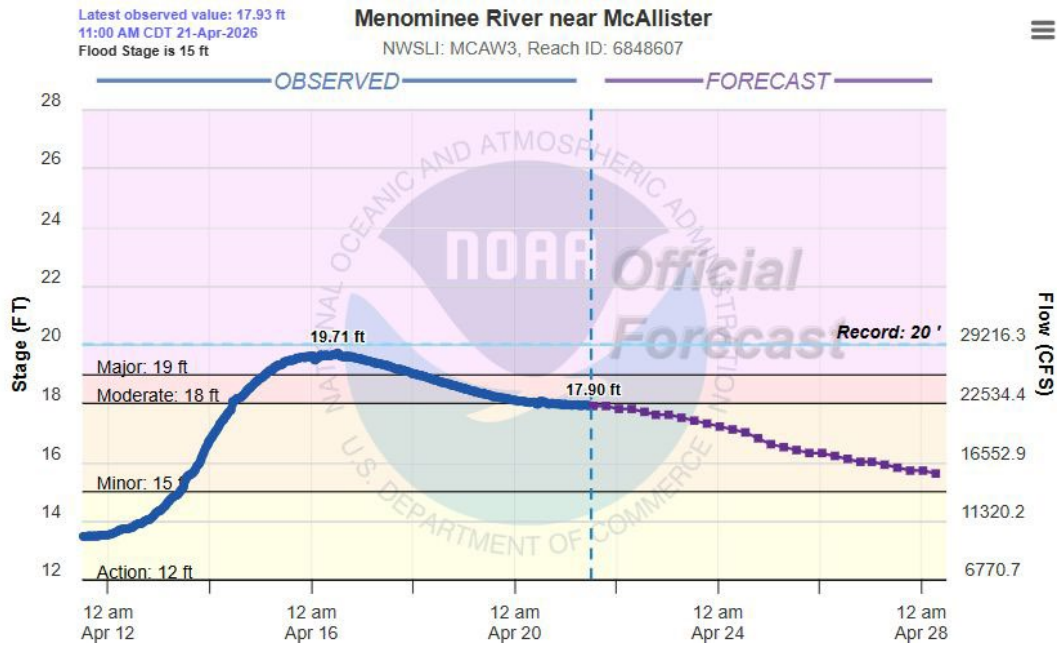
Source: PRISM Weather Data and NCEI Normals: 1991-2020

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River Flooding Summary

- **Menominee River**

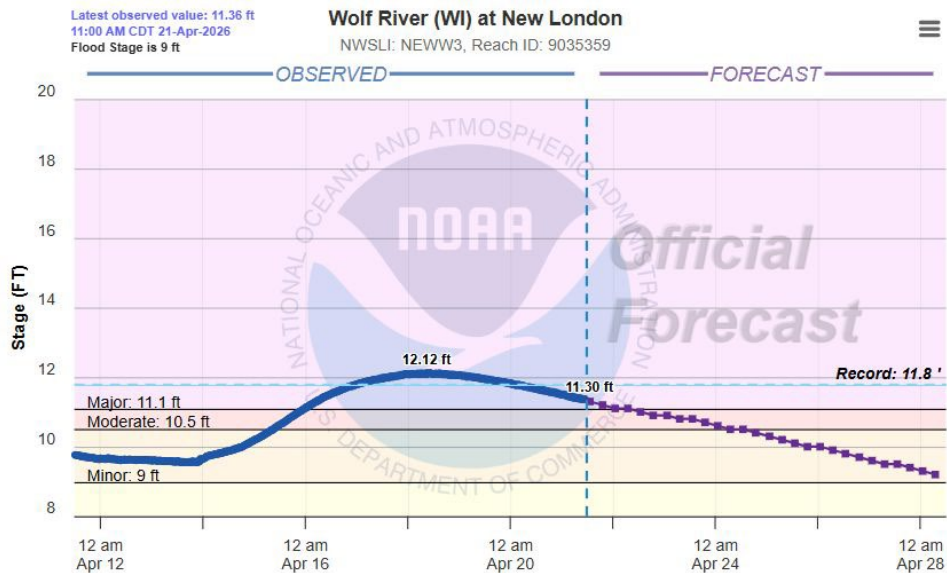
Many locations along the Menominee River reached flood stage on April 13. This flooding was due to the combination of rainfall and melting snow from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The highest river levels were observed at McAllister, where the river was in major flood stage from April 15 to April 18. The river crested at McAllister at 19.71 feet, which is just below the record crest of 20 feet.



- Wolf River**

Flooding was observed along the Wolf River, particularly at Shiocton and New London. The Wolf River at Shiocton was already in flood stage on April 13 and then rose above its previous record crest of 14.1 feet on April 15 and remained above this level through April 21. The river crested in major flood stage on April 18, at 15.06 feet.

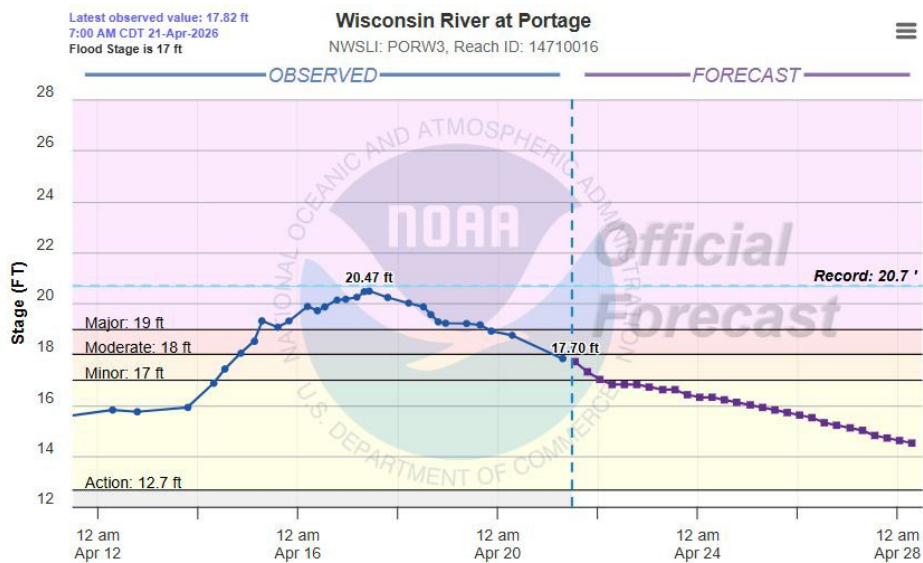




At New London, the river was also already above flood stage on April 13. The river rose to major flood stage late in the evening of April 15, and remained in major flood stage through the early morning hours of April 22.

- **Wisconsin River**

Significant rainfall in the Wisconsin River basin led to major river flooding at some locations, as well as high releases from Petenwell and Castle Rock dams. Releases at Castle Rock exceeded 45 kcfs on April 15 and 16, topping out at 47.7 kcfs. Action stage at Castle Rock Dam starts at 10 kcfs. In addition to upstream waters from the Wisconsin River, significant inflows from the Yellow River also contributed to the need for Castle Rock to release such high amounts of water downstream. The Yellow River at Necedah was in major flood stage from April 16 to April 17, cresting at 18.39 feet.

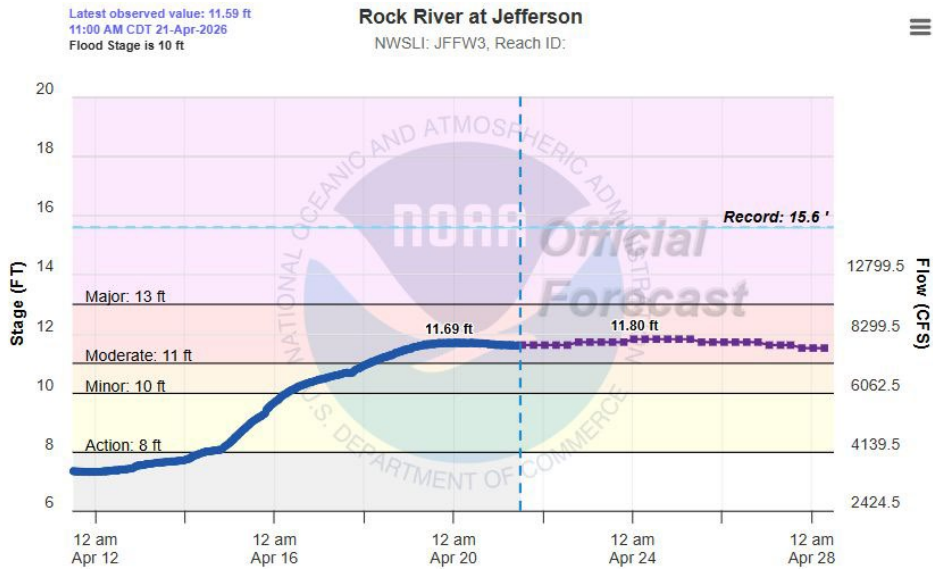


The significant water releases from Castle Rock Dam contributed to near-record flooding along the Wisconsin River at Portage. At Portage, the river rose above major flood stage on April 15, and remained there through April 19. It crested on April 17 at 20.47 feet, just below the record of 20.7 feet.

The near-record levels at Portage led to significant concerns about the integrity of the Caledonia-Lewiston Levee, should it become overtopped and potentially fail.

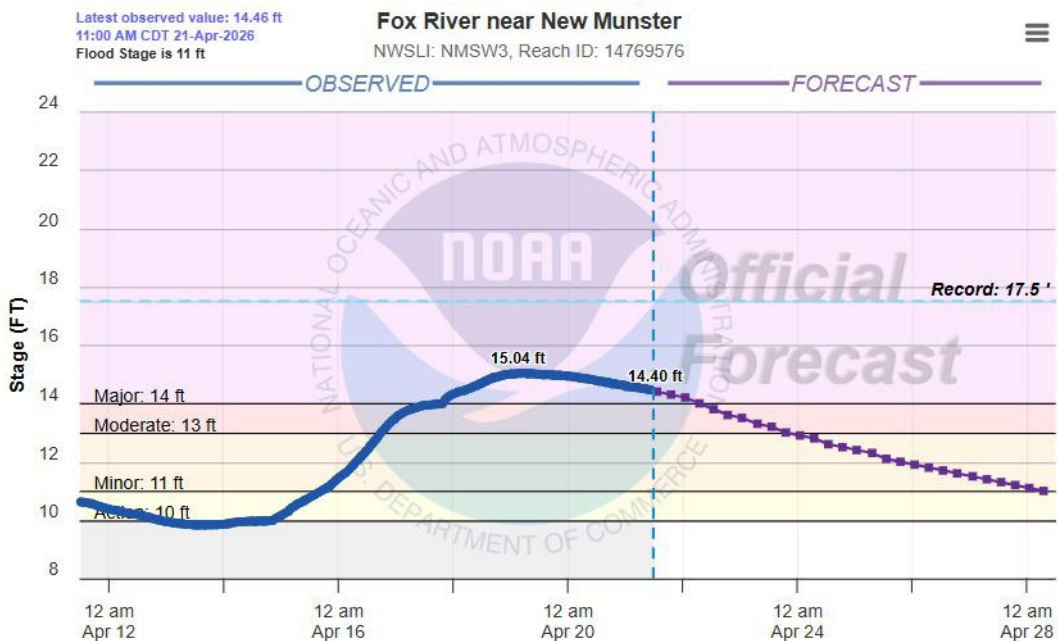
- **Rock River**

Heavy rain across the Rock River basin led to rises along the river from Watertown south to Afton. The river rose to minor and moderate flood stage between April 19 and 22 (depending on location) and remained at flood stage for a number of days.



- **Lower Fox River**

Significant rises were observed along the lower Fox River in Waukesha, Racine, and Kenosha counties due to multiple waves of heavy rainfall. At New Munster, the river rose to major flood stage on April 17, and remained there through April 22, cresting at 15.04 feet on April 19. The river gauge at New Munster went below major flood stage on the morning of April 23rd.



Emergency Declarations

In response to this near-record level flooding, dozens of tornadoes, and heavy rainfall, I took appropriate action under state law and directed the execution of the State of Wisconsin Emergency Plan on April 14, 2026, in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act, and issued Executive Order #289 on April 15, 2026, 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.

Local Impacts

Rock County

Rock County experienced four rounds of severe weather, producing straight-line winds, large hail, flash flooding, river flooding, and one EF-1 tornado. Total rainfall of 4–10 inches was recorded countywide April 12–18, with 3.62 inches falling on Janesville in a single night on April 17-18. The EF-1 tornado struck Emerald Grove with maximum winds of 100 mph. The Rock River at Afton crested at 12.2 feet, just below the major flood stage record of 13.5 ft. Both rural and urban areas were impacted, including the cities of Janesville and Beloit and surrounding villages and towns. Approximately 88% of the county’s population is estimated to live in communities affected by the disaster. Emergency declarations were issued by Rock County; the City of Janesville; and the towns of Rock, Fulton, Milton, Janesville, Bradford, La Prairie, and Harmony.



Photo: Fire department arriving to assist stranded motorists in Janesville, WI. on April 17, 2026. Courtesy: WMTV

The most acute housing impacts occurred on the night of April 17-18. Police coordinated the removal of over 100 stalled vehicles from flooded streets. Janesville Fire deployed boats to evacuate 11 individuals from flooded cars and structures in the Town of Rock. The Emerald Grove community sustained tornado damage to houses and outbuildings. Rock River flooding inundated parks and low-lying residential areas throughout the county.

Approximately 28% of Rock County housing units are renter-occupied, limiting many affected residents’ ability to self-fund repairs. An estimated 10% of the county population lives below the poverty level. An estimated 31.2% of Rock County households include one

or more persons age 65 or older (~20,795 households). The Wisconsin Department of Health Services resources were activated to support vulnerable populations. Approximately 2.8% of Rock County residents speak English less than “very well,” creating potential barriers to accessing damage reporting, emergency alerts, and disaster assistance programs.

Public infrastructure damage includes but is not limited to roads, bridges, culverts, public parks, and public facilities. Notable among public facility damage is Washington Elementary School in the Janesville School District, which sustained significant flood damage and will be closed for an undetermined period of time with students being relocated to other sites for the remainder of the school year and possibly beyond. Over 300 individual public works-related damage sites have been reported across Rock County. The Rockport Road bridge in the Town of Rock was completely washed out, with rebuilding estimated at up to \$1 million — a cost the town cannot bear without federal disaster funding. Additional road closures included US Highway 14 and County A, County MM, Johnson and Noss Roads, County H at Mineral Point Road, Hanover and South Ellis, Van Allen and Maple, Johnson and Tripp, Milton-Shopiere and Maple, and the County KK bridge. In Janesville, closures included Milton Avenue, Memorial Drive, Pontiac at Ruger, Rockport at Afton, Deerfield at Ryan Road, Lodge at Woodlane, and multiple park access roads.



*Photo: Flood damage inside Washington Elementary School in Janesville, WI.
Courtesy: School District of Janesville*

The flooding event caused widespread and quantifiable damage across the City of Janesville's public stormwater infrastructure and natural drainage corridors. Assessments identified significant deposition of vegetative debris, sand, and silt within the storm sewer system, with an estimated 40% of the City's 236 miles of storm sewer pipes and approximately 25% of its 7,665 storm inlets requiring debris removal and cleaning. Severe

erosion occurred at storm sewer outfalls, where roughly 90% of the City's 1,033 outfalls experienced washouts, structural undermining, and loss of geotextile and riprap protection. Spring Brook Creek and Blackhawk Creek — primary drainageways for the City's east side — experienced extensive bank erosion, washouts, and debris accumulation that compromised multiple previously completed shoreline stabilization projects. The City's greenbelt drainage system suffered similar impacts, including major erosion, displacement of large riprap, heavy vegetative debris movement, and damage to outfall protection structures. These documented impacts reflect systemwide infrastructure degradation directly attributable to the flooding event and will require contracted services for debris removal, stabilization, and full restoration to pre-disaster function.

Outagamie County

From April 13 to 23, waters from the Shioc River, Black Creek, Embarrass River, and Wolf River overwhelmed the northwest quadrant of Outagamie County. The flooding severely impacted housing across multiple communities, with extensive uninsured losses, prolonged displacement, damage to essential utilities, and the disruption of critical public services. The breadth and severity of these impacts exceed the capacity of local and state resources, demonstrating a clear need for federal assistance to support affected residents and aid long-term recovery.



Photo: Flooding in Shiocton, WI on April 17, 2026.

Shiocton, where the four waterways converge, bore the brunt of the storm. Flood waters exceeded 15 feet and residents were evacuated two days into the disaster. Six local volunteer fire departments knocked on every door to move families to safety. The Shiocton evacuation lasted from April 15 to April 23, with most of these families not returning home for at least six days. In the meantime, they moved in with nearby friends, co-workers, and, in some cases, into American Red Cross emergency shelters.



Photo: Flooded home in Shiocton, WI.

Shiocton residents returned to standing water containing contaminants from chemical spills and sewer backups. The water levels impacted basements and main levels. Damage to essential home systems—such as furnaces, water heaters, electrical components, and appliances—was widespread, and many homes were inaccessible. Households are facing substantial uninsured losses, as standard homeowners’ insurance does not cover flood damage. Displaced residents dealt with additional expenses for temporary lodging throughout the evacuation period, further compounding the financial hardship.

Outside of Shiocton, homes in Nichols and in the towns of Bovina, Liberty, and Hortonia experienced flood damage. Residents within these areas had limited access to critical services and emergency response as numerous roadways were inundated or impassable.

In addition to residential damage, the flooding disrupted the operations of essential public facilities. In Shiocton, the village hall, police station, and fire department were inaccessible for periods of time, impacting continuity of government operations and emergency response capabilities. The local school was forced to close for 10 days, and the public library was shut down.

Critical infrastructure sustained extensive impacts. We Energies shut off natural gas service to homes where meters were submerged, a necessary life-safety measure that significantly delayed re-entry and increased recovery needs. Damage to the wastewater treatment facilities in Shiocton and Nichols have raised concerns about continued operations. Fire departments in both communities experienced service interruptions, and postal services were disrupted.

While Outagamie County's overall poverty rates are well under national and state levels, the same is not true for Shiocton and neighboring municipalities such as the Village of Nichols, the towns of Bovina and Liberty, and the City of New London. There, median income is lower, poverty is higher, and the tax base is limited.

In Shiocton, there is no major industry aside from cash cropping; a dozen businesses dot the downtown. The only tourist attraction is a three-day sturgeon run in the spring that

was ruined by the flood. The population is stagnant and has not grown in 35 years. The Village has a modest \$1.2 million annual budget, which includes a \$440,000 levy. Now, with approximately \$945,881.11 in total recorded public infrastructure costs—more than twice its municipal levy—plus a recent, mandatory \$400,000 upgrade to the local utility and crumbling, aging water and sewer infrastructure, the Village will require a serious infusion of federal aid.

Waupaca County

Waupaca County entered the April flooding event with significantly reduced capacity after first responding to record-setting snowfall from March 14-16 and then an ice storm on April 2. As a result, many jurisdictions began the flooding event with strained personnel and resources already committed to ongoing recovery operations.

A rapid increase in temperatures, combined with additional precipitation during April 13 - 17, led to accelerated snowmelt and a significant rise in water levels throughout the county. Local agencies transitioned from recovery operations to full-scale flood response, coordinating efforts across fire, law enforcement, EMS, public works, and emergency management.



Photo: Flooding in New London, WI on April 17, 2026. Courtesy: City of New London

Waupaca County conducted multiple evacuations as rising floodwaters and infrastructure failures created immediate life-safety threats. Evacuations started in Clintonville on April 13, Marion on April 14, Manawa on April 15, and Fremont on April 16. In the Town of Big Falls, law enforcement executed downstream evacuations under emergency conditions on April 15 due to the potential failure of a severely eroded dam.

The City of New London undertook large-scale evacuations on April 15 as widespread flooding impacted more than 100 homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure, including both primary bridges and essential service facilities. In the Village of Fremont, approximately 100 to 150 residents were evacuated using high-clearance vehicles to reach flood-inundated areas. These evacuation operations required significant multi-agency

coordination, were hindered by limited access routes, and placed substantial strain on already depleted local resources.

Communities remained evacuated for several days, and some more than one week. The County began initiating a phased re-entry on April 21, and most residents were back in their homes by April 23. There are still some seasonal homeowners impacted who have not accessed their homes.

Flooding compromised critical transportation routes across the county, closing or restricting major roads and significantly limiting mobility. In New London, both primary bridges were shut down due to high water, isolating parts of the community, while the city's utilities building was abandoned as floodwaters encroached, disrupting essential services. Public safety facilities, including fire and police departments, became inaccessible at times, forcing operational adjustments.



Photo: Crews work to secure Big Falls Dam on April 14, 2026. Courtesy: WGBA

In Big Falls, severe erosion at a dam required emergency reinforcement to prevent structural failure. This required continuous sandbagging to stabilize the structure. Crews filled and placed large numbers of sandbags, which were reinforced with roughly 30 truckloads of gravel and sand placed as overpack to prevent further erosion and support the dam's integrity.

Throughout the county, public infrastructure required ongoing assessment and repair; and access routes into impacted areas were threatened by erosion and potential washouts. The scale and duration of these impacts placed strain on local resources, equipment, and personnel, leaving communities with substantial repair needs and diminished operational capacity.

Businesses across Waupaca County experienced significant damage and disruption during the flooding event. In New London, numerous businesses were inundated by floodwaters, contributing to widespread loss of property and community displacement. Fremont's main

commercial corridor sustained heavy damage, with multiple businesses severely impacted or destroyed, and a local campground suffered extensive losses as structures were submerged. Countywide, many businesses were forced to close due to flood damage, adding to economic strain and prolonging community recovery needs.

Milwaukee County

The April 2026 flooding caused significant economic and social hardship for homeowners across Milwaukee County, particularly in neighborhoods that were also heavily affected during the August 2025 flood. Many households were still completing repairs, awaiting contractor availability, navigating insurance claims or appeals, living with unresolved flood-related damage due to insufficient resources, and trying to recover financially when this second April 2026 disaster caused renewed flooding, property loss, and damage to homes and personal belongings.

Many residents lacked flood insurance or were underinsured, leaving families with limited financial resources to absorb repeated losses impeding their ability to complete repairs, replace damaged belongings, or temporarily relocate during cleanup. Contractor shortages and the high regional demand for cleanup and repair services have delayed recovery efforts and increased repair costs.

Repeated basement flooding and prolonged moisture exposure have also created ongoing health and safety concerns, including mold growth, respiratory risks, and unsafe living conditions. Some residents remain in damaged homes because they lack alternative housing options or cannot afford temporary relocation.

The flooding has also produced significant social and emotional strain. Residents report increased stress, anxiety, and uncertainty related to financial hardship, housing instability, repeated cleanup efforts, and concern about future flooding events. Elderly residents, households with limited incomes, and families in socially vulnerable neighborhoods face disproportionate recovery challenges and are at greater risk of long-term displacement.

Collectively, the significant impacts of the April flooding event have weakened household financial stability, strained community support systems, and reduced many residents' ability to recover without outside assistance. Milwaukee County experienced storms with widespread flooding impacts, following repeated periods of heavy rainfall across the region. The storms caused widespread basement flooding, sewer backups, utility service disruptions, and structural damage to homes. The flooding primarily impacted dense urban residential neighborhoods within the City of Milwaukee and nearby municipalities. Many of these neighborhoods are identified as highly vulnerable through the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) and contain concentrations of low-income households, elderly residents, renters, and residents with limited English proficiency.

According to 211 Wisconsin damage report data, 674 flood-related damage reports were submitted between April 14 and May 7, 2026. The highest-impact ZIP codes included 53209 (93 reports), 53218 (91), 53206 (65), 53216 (57), 53223 (48), and 53225 (38). Many of these same neighborhoods experienced significant flooding during the August 2025 disaster. Numerous households had exhausted savings, had not yet completed repairs, or had unresolved insurance claims before sustaining additional damage during the April 2026 event. Repeated flooding has compounded structural damage; increased displacement

risk; deepened recovery challenges for residents already facing financial hardship; and intensified mental health stress, anxiety, and recovery fatigue among residents.

Between April 14 and May 7, 2026, Milwaukee County received 643 mappable damage reports through the 211 system related to the April severe weather and flooding event. Analysis found that 81% of all damage reports originated from census tracts with elevated social vulnerability (SVI scores at or above the 75th percentile), while more than half of all reports came from census tracts at or above the 90th percentile of vulnerability scores.

Impacted areas also showed elevated concentrations of populations commonly associated with increased disaster-related access and functional needs, including households with children, individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals who speak English less than well. Particularly notable, 71% of damage reports originated from areas with elevated concentrations of children under age 17, and 41% originated from areas with elevated percentages of noninstitutionalized persons with disabilities.

Taken together, available data strongly suggests that the April 2026 storms disproportionately impacted households located within areas of elevated social vulnerability, including populations more likely to experience access and functional needs, communication barriers, mobility challenges, and medical dependencies that can complicate disaster response and recovery.

Damage reports generated substantial additional requests for assistance including:

- Financial Assistance: 405 requests
- Utility Disruptions: 348 requests
- Structural Damage Reports: 315 requests
- Clean-Up Kits: 309 requests
- Showers/Laundry Services: 36 requests
- Transportation Assistance: 33 requests
- Shelter/Housing Assistance: 27 requests
- Sandbags: 12 requests
- Shelter for Pets/Livestock: 3 requests

Other types of assistance provided by voluntary agencies not specified above:

- Crisis Cleanup – volunteer coordination platform connecting households and NGOs
- Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin – FoodShare Replacement benefit assistance and referrals to emergency food programs
- Hunger Task Force – FoodShare Replacement benefit assistance and referrals to emergency food programs
- IMPACT 211– collection of damage reports, unmet needs data, and resource referrals
- Salvation Army – emotional and spiritual support
- Southeast Wisconsin Community Organizations Active in Disasters (SEWI COAD) – Supporting communication and coordination among recovery organizations
- St. Philip’s Disaster Relief (Minnesota) – volunteer support
- Team Rubicon USA – basement cleanup and rebuilding support
- United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) – donation of clean-up kits
- United Way 211 – Supporting damage report and data collection on unmet needs
- Wisconsin United Methodist Church (UMC) Disaster Response Committee – Crisis Cleanup data entry required to coordinate volunteer assistance, and lodging for volunteer groups

- Wisconsin Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (WI VOAD) – Supporting coordination between local and statewide efforts

Despite these efforts, significant unmet needs and operational limitations remain. Recovery organizations and local jurisdictions were already heavily engaged in long-term recovery operations from the August 2025 flooding disaster limiting available volunteer capacity, staffing, and material resources for this event. Impacted activities include case management, volunteer coordination, rebuilding efforts, debris management, mold remediation, and distribution of cleanup supplies.

Additionally, because severe weather impacts occurred across multiple areas of Wisconsin for this incident period, many NGO partners and volunteer groups were simultaneously deployed elsewhere in the state, limiting the availability of assistance in Milwaukee County.

While voluntary agencies continue to provide critical support, the scale and complexity of household damages continue to exceed available community-based recovery resources. Most notably:

- Limited volunteer capacity for flooded basement cleanup, muck-outs, and debris removal.
- Limited organizational capacity to coordinate and distribute cleanup kits and recovery supplies at scale.
- Insufficient resources to address major household repair needs such as cracked foundations, damaged furnaces, water heater replacement, electrical repairs, and other essential home items.
- Limited financial assistance programs available through NGOs for costly structural or mechanical repairs.
- Ongoing shortages of skilled volunteer labor and contractors available to support recovery and rebuilding activities.

The Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) reported that repeated heavy rainfall between April 13–18 overwhelmed portions of the regional sewer system across Milwaukee County. Over five days, some areas received more than seven inches of rain. The heavy rainfall exceeded the system’s designed capacity, and wastewater and stormwater backed up throughout the region, causing both combined sewer and sanitary sewer overflows in multiple municipalities, including Milwaukee, West Allis, Bayside, and River Hills. These overflows contributed to flooded basements, contamination concerns, mold risks, and prolonged cleanup needs for residents already recovering from prior flood events.

Marathon County

A severe weather outbreak significantly impacted parts of Marathon County during the afternoon and early evening of April 17. There were several confirmed tornadoes that resulted in numerous structures being damaged. An EF-1 tornado occurred northwest of Gandon tracked into southeast Lincoln Co. An EF-3 tornado formed nearly at the same time southwest of Ringle. Local emergency management in Weston confirmed damage to homes and mobilized fire department units to the scene. Up to 75 houses in Ringle were damaged. Isolated large hail and heavy rainfall also impacted the county, with localized totals ranging from 1 to 4 inches. These torrential downpours caused flash flooding, particularly in Marshfield where 2.65 inches of rain fell. Emergency dispatchers there

reported multiple vehicles stranded in deep water on city streets. Three townships reported road closures due to water over several of their roads and that culverts were washed out.



Photo: A home destroyed by a tornado in Ringle, WI on April 18, 2026.

The Riverside Elementary School received a significant amount of damage to several classrooms, hallways, and the HVAC system on the roof. School was closed for two weeks and classes were held in a temporary facility until repairs were made and the school could be safely reopened. The Central Wisconsin Airport had several facilities damaged to include their sand storage building, the Fixed-Based Operator building, and the Center Operations Airport building. Various electrical repairs were also required.

During and after the storms, Marathon County utilized the following resources: Medical Reserve Corp for damage assessment, the Salvation Army for donation and volunteer management, the American Red Cross for damage assessment and cleanup equipment. In addition, Team Rubicon was contacted for structure repairs, Mennonite Disaster Services for food and water, the United Way of Marathon was utilized for 2-1-1, and Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin for monetary donation management.

The Ringle Fire Department was converted to a donation receiving site which quickly spilled over to the attached Ringle Town Hall building. Fire trucks were moved outdoors during this time. The town hall was used as a donation reception area and could not be used for government meetings until the donated items were moved to The Salvation Army facility in Wausau.

A hazardous waste pick-up site was established in the Town of Ringle in the area most impacted by the tornado. This site was established and maintained by the Marathon County Solid Waste Facility. For mental health concerns, a volunteer agency provided their services as needed. The school district provided counselors for students and staff returning to the damaged school.

Marathon County's Emergency Operations Center was opened immediately following the tornado impact and began to support the local responders with resource requests and

information. Several area public safety agencies responded to the tornado impact area: the Marathon County Sheriff's Office, the Ringle Fire Department, the Wausau Fire Department, and several other local fire departments. The Marathon County Highway Department and the Marathon County Parks and Recreation Department were placed on standby for potential response.

Over the past twelve months, the county has incurred flash flooding, flooding, hail, thunderstorms with wind, tornadoes, and a blizzard. Most of these events were able to be handled locally but have stressed available local resources. Federal assistance will be needed to recover from this widespread event.

Vernon County

Vernon County experienced severe and widespread destruction during the April 2026 storms, which produced baseball to softball-sized hail across the communities of Chaseburg, Westby, and the surrounding valley areas. Public damage to buildings, equipment, utilities, park and recreation facilities, and debris removal totals nearly \$1.5 million dollars, placing exceptional strain on a small rural jurisdiction.



Photo: Home damaged by hail in Westby, WI.

Westby, a community of about 2,432 residents with a median household income of \$69,556 dollars and a poverty rate of approximately 14.5% percent, endured especially catastrophic impacts. More than 1,000 homes were damaged, with several hundred sustaining major losses to roofs, siding, and windows. These repairs frequently exceed thousands of dollars per household, and many residents face significant out of pocket costs due to insurance depreciation or incomplete coverage. Vehicle losses were also extensive; most vehicles left outdoors were totaled, and many households lost all their cars, often without full insurance coverage.

Critical facilities and public assets sustained substantial damage. The local school suffered shattered skylights and windows and hundreds of roof punctures, requiring immediate emergency patching and delaying classes. Multiple churches, including those operating food pantries, endured structural damage. A nursing home reported building impacts, and six police vehicles, along with an Aging and Disability Resource Center van, were totaled.

Vernon Electric Cooperative also reported damage to its solar field. While power outages affected a few hundred residents, durations ranged from one to seven hours.

The scale of residential destruction, uninsured and underinsured losses, and damage to critical facilities and public infrastructure has created severe financial pressure for Vernon County and especially for the moderate-income community of Westby. These impacts exceed local response and recovery capacity. Federal assistance is essential to support rebuilding, restore essential services, and address the significant funding gaps faced by households, public agencies, and community institutions.

Winnebago County

Severe weather began affecting residents of Winnebago County during the overnight hours of April 13. Initial impacts included urban flooding in the cities of Neenah and Menasha, where heavy rainfall led to sewer backups in multiple homes. As floodwaters receded upstream in Shiocton, New London, Manawa, and Weyauwega, river and lake levels rose substantially in Winnebago County.

The Town of Wolf River, a rural community of 2,100, experienced the most significant impacts, where dozens of homes were damaged. Evacuation was recommended for residents as the waters crested at 7'10" on April 21. The back-to-back disasters of the March 2026 winter storm followed by the April 2026 flood have a dramatic impact on the Town of Wolf River's finances and ability to provide resources and services for their community and respond to future disasters.

The cities of Neenah, Menasha, and Oshkosh; the Winnebago County portion of the City of Appleton; and the villages of Winneconne and Fox Crossing also experienced scattered housing impacts. During the storm event of April 13, sewage backed up into homes in Menasha.

The County took protective measures, including the deployment of more than 20,000 sandbags throughout the Town of Wolf River, where many homeowners continue to rely on sandbags for property protection. The Winneconne-area initiated sandbagging on April 19, followed by sandbag support from the City of Oshkosh after declaring a state of emergency on April 23. The cities of Neenah and Menasha and the Village of Fox Crossing also provided sandbags to neighborhoods at risk.

Flooding caused utility disruptions, as well as health and safety concerns across the county. Gas and sanitary sewer services were shut off to homes in the Town of Wolf River during the April 13 rainfall. The Menasha wastewater treatment plant experienced overflows causing sewage to back up into homes. The Winnebago County Public Health Department distributed well-water testing kits to residents with flooded wells; results are still coming in due to the slow recession of water levels. It is expected that impacted residents will have increased mold impacts because of the duration of the event in which their homes were inundated with floodwater.

Community resources, such as shelters and volunteers, were concentrated in harder-hit Outagamie and Waupaca counties. Winnebago County directed residents to those facilities and encouraged use of the Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) in the Town of Fremont. Because of the duration of this event in the Town of Wolf River, clean-up days on May 1 and 2 were poorly attended by locals from outside the Town. Winnebago County is working

with neighboring counties to create a long-term recovery group to support future long-term needs of our residents.

Juneau County

Juneau County was impacted higher than average rainfall, major flood stage water levels on rivers and tributaries causing flooding (exacerbated by northern snowpack melt), tornados, and hail. The combination of these events led to long duration flooding in the northern part of the county and flash flooding in the southern part. The Wisconsin River, significantly over major flood stage, was pushed to a peak discharge of 47,740 cfs and stayed there for almost 24 hours. Action flood stage occurs at only 10,000 cfs. While flood response was underway, an EF-3 tornado tracked 9.23 miles through the Driftless Area. In total, 35 critical roadways became impassable due to the flooding and another eight were closed from tornado-caused downed trees.

A damaged power transmission line caused a 24-hour outage affecting about 700 utility customers and degrading both wireless and wired communications. The Village of Wonewoc experienced temporary disruption of government operations. River adjacent campgrounds and businesses incurred losses from site flooding and closures. Costs from damages to public property including infrastructure, emergency protective measures, and debris removal were significant.

Juneau County's demographics heighten vulnerability and limit recovery capacity. The County's median household income is about \$67,270, while 13% of residents live below the poverty line, nearly 22% are age 65 or older, and more than 17% have a disability. These factors significantly constrain the ability of households to absorb uninsured or underinsured losses.



Photo: Home destroyed by tornado near Union Center, WI on April 14, 2026.

Local response agencies were fully engaged in simultaneous sandbagging, debris clearance, emergency coordination, and public warning operations. Five volunteer fire departments and 40 volunteers were deployed, but resources were strained by the dual incidents. Prior disasters over the past year—including an ice storm, wind events, localized flooding, and a blizzard—had already reduced local budgets and response capacity.

Brown County

Brown County experienced severe flooding after historic water levels overwhelmed local waterways. A blizzard in March that dropped over 2 feet of snow was followed by an additional 3–6 inches of rainfall beginning on April 13. Floodwaters from upstream communities in Waupaca and Outagamie counties impacted Brown County, especially in communities along the Fox River. Flooding inundated homes, closed roadways, and forced the international Port of Green Bay to shut down. The severity of this disaster created substantial disruption to residents, transportation routes, and essential regional commerce. Flash flooding also caused widespread pockets of damage throughout Brown County. Impacts occurred well outside mapped floodplains, affecting both low-lying and higher-elevation areas. Homes in the City of Green Bay and the Village of Howard were assessed as being destroyed, with additional damage reported in other municipalities. Structural damage to foundations, basement flooding, utility damage, and sewer back-ups were reported. These impacts were dispersed across both urban and rural areas, and no single concentration of damaged homes was identified. The initial reported numbers are expected to rise as assessments continue. Many affected residents indicate they lack flood insurance and will require financial assistance to recover.

The Port of Green Bay, which handles international shipping, was shut down as a result of flooding on April 17 until May 14. The amount of water flowing through the Fox River created unsafe navigation conditions for ships through the port. The flow rates are regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who are under strict laws that limit the Corps' ability to reduce the flows to assist the Port.

The port services 14 terminal operators, which use truck lines to provide overnight delivery within a 400-mile radius. Major railroads and highway infrastructure connect to the Port with commodities throughout the United States, which include coal, limestone, petroleum, wood, and machinery among other things. Companies were forced leave ships docked in the Port for weeks or reroute ships down to other ports and transport loads via truck at a cost of \$1 million per vessel. Documented losses are over \$5 million and are estimated as high as \$15 million. One major local supplier of paper products ran out of materials needed for continuing operation.

Buffalo County

During the afternoon of April 17, Buffalo County partially activated their EOC with 3 personnel to monitor incoming weather. Around 3:23 p.m. a tornado was confirmed on radar by debris field, and two deputies were dispatched to Cream, an unincorporated community located in the town of Lincoln. Upon their arrival they confirmed that one house was leveled, and one house was badly damaged. An EMS Team was then dispatched from Alma along with two firefighting units to respond to a location along Wisconsin Highway 88. As the EOC monitored the storm, two more debris fields were identified on County Highway U. After a quick assessment and learning there were no injuries or deaths, drones were flown over the path of the storm. The EF-3 tornado tracked about 9 miles through mostly rural woods and farmland. One home was destroyed, major damage was caused to another, and minor damage to several other homes. Two farms took near direct hits causing a collapse of silos, barns, and outbuildings but no livestock loss.



Photo: Home destroyed by a tornado in Buffalo County, WI on April 17, 2026.

Iowa County

Iowa County sustained significant and widespread damage as a result of the severe storms and prolonged rainfall. The cumulative impact of repeated precipitation events led to ground saturation, rapid runoff, and extensive flooding across the county. These conditions caused substantial damage to critical public infrastructure and overwhelmed local response capabilities.

Iowa County has a population of approximately 23,867 residents, while the towns of Eden, Highland, and Dodgeville (that were hit the hardest) have populations of approximately 732, 867, and 5,042 respectively, highlighting the limited local tax base and financial capacity available to absorb disaster-related costs. In addition, 20.5% of the county's residents are 65 and older, and 7.6% of the population lives in poverty, representing a significant vulnerable population. Over 30% of the county are renters who, if impacted, may be limited to self-funded repairs.

The impacts occurred countywide, affecting multiple jurisdictions simultaneously, including the towns of Dodgeville, Highland, and Eden, as well as the Village of Avoca and a historic school in the Iowa Grant School District. The Village of Highland experienced straight-line winds with large hail, damaging several homes. In Avoca, flooding from the Wisconsin River and multiple tributaries exceeded bank full capacity, combined with significant runoff, resulted in rapidly rising water levels that threatened residential areas and critical access routes. Core transportation infrastructure and networks across the county sustained severe damage, with widespread washouts, culvert failures, shoulder collapses, and debris-covered roadways. The geographic distribution and volume of damage significantly complicated response and recovery operations. This storm will cost the County and its residents thousands upon thousands of dollars in damage.

The financial and operational burden placed on Iowa County and its municipalities is substantial and ongoing. The widespread infrastructure damage, combined with prolonged response operations and the need for permanent repairs, has created impacts that far exceed local fiscal capacity. Without supplemental state and federal assistance, recovery efforts will be significantly delayed, and the long-term resilience of affected communities will be compromised.

Bayfield County

Straight-line winds caused damage in several areas of Bayfield County on April 17, including the towns of Pilsen, Washburn, Barksdale, Barnes, Cable, Namakagon, Lincoln, Bayview and the cities of Washburn and Bayfield. Multiple houses were reported to have significant damage; one house was destroyed. Local power outages also occurred in the areas of Barnes, Cable, Namakagon, Washburn, Barksdale, Pilsen, Eileen, and Bayview. Many energy dependent citizens were without power for 24-48 hours and had to be relocated to a family member's home or to the County Emergency Operations Center.

Fire departments, EMS agencies, and law enforcement agencies were out with traffic control and extinguished fires due to downed power lines and closed roads. EMS agencies provided oxygen support and other assistance to energy-dependent individuals and care facilities.

The county is very rural with limited numbers of first responders; dispatchers were inundated with calls and were nearly overwhelmed trying to keep up with demand. Recovery from this incident is beyond local means and will require federal support.

Jackson County

Jackson County was impacted by severe storms, flooding, and tornadoes throughout the period of storms. They have responded diligently; however, federal support is necessary for local recovery. The Town of Komensky and the Ho-Chunk Nation were affected by this disaster, and both have declared States of Emergency. Jackson Electric Cooperative also had significant impacts. Two tornadoes occurred on April 17: an EF-1 along Interstate 94 in the northwestern corner of the county, and a second tornado less than 30 minutes later southwest of Hatfield, in the Town of Komensky. Law enforcement, emergency management and the local fire departments went house to house, contacting the homeowners and ensured there were no injuries. The town put up road closure signs to help disperse onlookers in the area. Jackson County Sheriff's Department patrolled the area to help slow traffic while Jackson Electric and Jackson County Highway Department worked beside the roadway. In response to flooding in the county, emergency management contacted the American Red Cross to provide clean-up kits to homeowners if requested. Jackson County Public Health put out information to the public on how to test your well water after the flooding. The county had a number of roads that were impacted due to flooding or tornado debris in the roadway. Some of the roads were shut down for several days.

Jackson County Electric Cooperative had several utility disruptions due to large trees and power lines that fell when the tornado went through. Some residences in the Town of Komensky were without power for a few days while new power lines and poles were being installed.

Homeowners have had to take time off from their jobs due to the ongoing cleanup process. Jackson County has provided active response to flooding, severe storms and tornados however, due to the scale of this event Jackson County has outpaced the local resources available and will need federal support to fully recover.

Jefferson County

Jefferson County experienced flooding and wind damage, causing significant residential losses, basement and well damage, septic system damage, and loss of personal property. Many of those impacted are not covered by standard homeowners' insurance. Local businesses faced losses from closures, spoilage, and access issues. Agricultural losses included crop damage and infrastructure impacts. During this incident period, no deaths were reported in the county, however one elderly resident was injured when the roof of their home was blown off.

Basement flooding and septic failures created unsafe living conditions. There were concerns over potable water among private well users, with recommended water testing. No shelters were opened, but 60 cleanup kits were distributed through Salvation Army. Vulnerable populations faced elevated risks during outages and travel limitations. There was a temporary disruption in access to food, fuel, and household supplies.

The severe weather caused hazardous travel conditions, flooding, and downed trees and utility lines. Widespread power outages caused critical facilities to rely on generators with an increased fuel demand. The power outages reduced the reach of emergency public information. The storms caused power outages of up to 22 hours in some areas; up to 4 days in rural areas.

The flooded roads, washed-out shoulders, and debris caused major mobility disruptions with widespread road closures that affected school transportation, commerce, and emergency access. Public works operated under sustained, elevated demand for repairs and debris clearance.

There was a high demand for law enforcement, fire, EMS, and public works across multiple jurisdictions. Response times were impacted due to impassable roads. Conditions increased needs for welfare checks, evacuations, and hazard mitigation. Healthcare providers experienced staffing and patient transportation challenges.

A local State of Emergency was declared on April 14, 2026; two municipalities also issued disaster declarations. The county EOC was activated and municipalities relied on county-level coordination and resource support.

Overall, the damage that occurred in Jefferson County continues to create long-term financial strain on residents, businesses, agricultural operations, and local governments. While a few insured losses account for a portion of recovery efforts, substantial uninsured and underinsured losses remain in both the private and public sectors, creating ongoing unmet needs and recovery challenges countywide. Federal assistance will be required to assist the county, its residents, and local communities in full recovery.

Kenosha County

Kenosha County experienced an EF-1 tornado, heavy rainfall, flooding, and stormwater overflows. These conditions affected multiple communities, including the City of Kenosha; the villages of Paddock Lake, Salem Lakes, and Somers; and the Town of Wheatland. Impacts extended across urban, suburban, and rural areas, causing widespread damage and operational challenges throughout the county.

Kenosha County declared a disaster on April 19, with additional local declarations issued by the villages of Bristol and Salem Lakes and the Town of Wheatland. The Kenosha County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated to coordinate response. No deaths or serious injuries occurred. One resident in Salem Lakes—who was paraplegic—required emergency evacuation when rising floodwater surrounded their home, prompting activation of the Kenosha County Dive Team. The individual was temporarily sheltered in a hotel until floodwater receded.

Flooding and storm effects caused water intrusion into homes and basements, flooded yards and driveways, limited property access, and damaged accessory structures. Residents faced cleanup burdens, temporary loss of use of basements, debris removal needs, and out-of-pocket repair costs.

Flooding, debris, downed trees, and storm-related hazards blocked numerous roads. Culverts, ditches, and stormwater systems were overtopped, washed out, or obstructed, requiring barricades, emergency traffic control, clearing operations, and ongoing assessment for repairs or replacement. Across all jurisdictions, agencies responded to 52 storm-related calls for service. The most significant impacts involved roadways, culverts, drainage systems, and stormwater conveyance features that required immediate inspection and protective actions. Flooding, downed utilities, and roadway hazards significantly restricted access for emergency services and the public.

Responding organizations included law enforcement, fire/EMS, emergency management, public works, utility companies, highway departments, and municipal administration.

Response actions included:

- Emergency Operations Center activation and coordination
- Incident monitoring and countywide situational awareness
- Road closures and barricade placement
- Traffic control and public safety measures
- Debris removal from roadways and access routes
- Field damage assessment and documentation
- Monitoring of flooded areas and changing drainage conditions
- Public information and warning support
- Interagency coordination for protective actions and early recovery

Agencies had to manage overlapping operational demands simultaneously due to tornado and flooding impacts occurring in several jurisdictions over ten days. Personnel and equipment were committed to debris operations in one area while other jurisdictions were dealing with flooded roads, drainage failures, residential impacts, and utility concerns. This created sustained demand on staffing, equipment, communications, and administrative tracking.

Prolonged rainfall also caused flooding in low-lying and poorly drained neighborhoods throughout the county. Examples include:

- Village of Somers: Tornado impacts along County Highway EA caused downed power lines and route closures for several days, limiting travel and emergency access.
- Village of Salem Lakes: Flooding cut off access to homes along Riverside Drive, N Riverside Drive, Shorewood Drive, and S 6th Street.
- Town of Wheatland: Portions of 314th Avenue and 71st, 76th, and 77th Streets, along with Highway W, became impassable.

In the Village of Somers, tornado damage disrupted utility lines, causing power outages. These outages disabled sump pumps, leading to flooded basements and additional property damage. This represents a cascading impact, where utility failure not only interrupted essential services but also worsened residential losses and increased recovery needs.

Flooded and debris-covered roadways also created immediate hazards for motorists, residents, and responders. Downed trees, damaged utilities, standing water, and storm debris further limited safe travel and required rapid protective actions. Health and safety risks persisted after the storm. Concerns included contamination in flooded areas, unsafe cleanup conditions, and prolonged exposure to water-damaged environments.

To support recovery, 106 Red Cross clean-up kits were distributed, and Kenosha County Public Health offered free well testing for flooded properties to protect private water supplies. Flood clean-up kits also helped residents safely remove debris, mud, and damaged materials from homes and yards.

The event particularly affected residents with mobility limitations, access challenges, and transportation barriers. Flooding restricted travel, limited normal access to homes, and created significant challenges for individuals who rely on dependable mobility, stable shelter, and uninterrupted daily support.

This extended severe weather event created widespread residential, infrastructure, public safety, and public health impacts across Kenosha County.

Kewaunee County

Extensive flooding in Kewaunee County resulted in flooded basements, infrastructure damage, and road closures after the April storms. These severe weather systems brought record-breaking rainfall with totals ranging from 5 to 8 inches during the first days of the event. Residential impacts across the area included homeowners in Pierce, Carlton, and Franklin experiencing 18–24 inches of water in their basements. This resulted in failed mechanical systems and utility damage. Residents of Carlton also reported soil erosion on their properties.

Infrastructure and critical public works experienced strain as well. The Village of Casco wastewater treatment facility operated at or above capacity due to snowmelt from previous weather events and the heavy rainfall of this event. To prevent services to residents from being interrupted, a significant amount of staff overtime was incurred to maintain operations.

The flooding caused road closures, washouts, and blocked culverts across Kewaunee County. The communities with the most significant impacts include the towns of Lincoln, Pierce, Red River, and West Kewaunee. Debris and sediment clogged culverts and bridges,

leading to structural damage and roadway collapse once waters receded. Road closures left homeowners without secondary access for emergency responders, and immediate emergency repairs were required to prevent residents from becoming stranded. Five heavily used county parks also sustained substantial damage, including debris, downed trees, and trail and road washouts.

With the county preparing for peak tourist traffic to Door County and increased agricultural vehicle use during planting season, timely roadway restoration is critical to maintaining resident access, emergency response capability, and economic stability. Impacted rural areas have little capacity or funding to undertake these repairs on their own. Federal funding is necessary to repair these damages so communities can begin the recovery process.

Manitowoc County

Severe storms and rainfall resulted in significant impacts across Manitowoc County. Residents in towns and villages outside of designated floodplains—many of whom had never experienced flooding of any kind—found their basements suddenly filling with knee-deep water or sewage.

Manitowoc County encountered several major infrastructure and utility related concerns due to the torrential rainfall. The Shoto Dam on the West Twin River required several tons of rock to fill an eroding breach next to the dam to prevent it from failing. In the Village of Mishicot, increased inflow and infiltration of clear water into the wastewater system, combined with a power failure, caused a lift station pump to fail. The failure resulted in residential sewer back-up. The surge of clear water into the wastewater system also resulted in the release of some untreated sewage into a local river. The power outage impacted to 3/4 of the village for 2 hours. Public works was required to have staff on site for additional overtime to handle these problems.

The Village of Mishicot, the Town of Mishicot, the Village of Two Rivers, and the Village of Maribel all experienced culvert failures and washouts, along with structural damage to roads. Some of the washouts were strong enough to send cars and recreational trailers downstream, needing to be recovered later. The Town of Mishicot had several culverts wash out, two bridges flood, and closed roads— one due to a partial collapse. Over 1,300 people live in the town, many of them farmers. The road closure impacted those who haul milk or waste, or access the fields for agricultural purposes.

Racine County

Racine County issued a local disaster declaration on April 21, 2026, following severe flooding, high-winds, and tornadic events. No fatalities or major injuries occurred, but the county experienced residential, infrastructure, utility, and business damage as well as increased government response costs.

Homes along the Fox River experienced the most flood damage. High winds also caused many downed trees, often falling on roofs and causing damage. All the homes with reported damage were single-family, owner-occupied, with insurance rates unknown. Many of the homes have begun or completed repairs, including ripping out carpet, pumping out water, disinfecting, mold removal, cosmetic repairs, and repairing roof damage. The county

distributed 12 flood clean-up kits. With the excessive flooding, there were concerns about the safety of well water for consumption.

Damage was reported across multiple public assets. The City of Burlington Police Department experienced basement flooding that damaged elevator electrical systems. The Village of Elmwood Park's municipal building also sustained flood damage. Disruption of community services was seen primarily in road closures due to flooding, debris, and unsafe conditions.

Roads suffered significant damage, with two major sections sinking or warping from failing culverts. A railroad crossing at Honey Creek Road and Highway 20 was damaged.

Public parks and recreational facilities were considerably flooded, causing damage to sports fields/courts, pavilions, fencing, and walkways. One baseball field had their dugout roof torn off from high winds.

Water treatment plants had to halt normal operations due to flooding. Pumps at these facilities were damaged, resulting in reduced operational capacity.

For the county, the road repairs needed amount to close to a third of the annual allotted road repair budget. This will put considerable strain on the ability of the county to repair the damage in a timely manner, resulting in infrastructure closures, below-normal usage, and delays in normal road repair cycles. One of the failing culverts requires extensive repairs and cannot be completed by county resources; it will need to be contracted out. This adds another layer of difficulty to restoring this section of road to proper working order.



Photo: Road damaged by flooding in Racine County, WI.

There were many power outages over the storm period, peaking around 2,000-3,000 at one time. Falling trees and high winds damaged power lines and poles.

A few businesses suffered minor damage. Others had major damage, including an industrial business which lost the covering of their roof. A campground had many downed trees, damaging campsites and other buildings. One agricultural/greenhouse business was destroyed due to a tornado, and had their greenhouse and all inventory inside destroyed,

with significant damage to other elements of their business. A barn on another farm was destroyed.

Sauk County

Sauk County endured multiple rounds of severe weather between April 13 and April 17, including damaging high winds, flooding, and widespread infrastructure impacts. Sustained winds uprooted trees, snapped utility poles, and caused structural damage across several municipalities. Prolonged high-water washed-out culverts, forced roadway closures, and required targeted evacuations. Several roads remaining closed for over a week due to persistent flooding. Cleanup operations were significantly slowed because many local municipalities rely on parttime staff and small public works crews.

Several communities experienced concentrated damage. Prairie du Sac, North Freedom, Rock Springs, and Merrimac were impacted by downed trees, damaged utility lines, and structural losses. In Prairie du Sac, Milwaukee Valve lost a substantial portion of its metal roof, and an adjacent subdivision suffered extensive residential damage from falling trees. North Freedom lost more than 20 large trees in a cemetery and experienced damage to headstones and multiple homes; two mobile homes also lost their roofs. Long spans of utility poles were snapped in North Freedom and Rock Springs, leaving parts of the county without power for up to 48 hours. Restoration efforts were delayed because utility crews were concurrently responding to outages across multiple counties.

Flooding created additional risks throughout the week. Coordination with Columbia County was required due to concerns that the saturated Caledonia-Lewiston Levee could fail, potentially affecting Interstates 90/94 and 39 and low-lying areas of Sauk County. Rising water along the Wisconsin River prompted the temporary evacuation of five riverside homes.

Sauk County's demographics further limit its ability to recover without federal assistance. More than 21% of residents are 65 years or older, over 8% live below the poverty line, and 14.1% have a disability. Additionally, more than 30% of households are renters, a population that is less able to self-finance repairs and often lacks the savings needed to manage disaster related disruptions.

The combined infrastructure damage, prolonged outages, flooding impacts, limited staffing capacity, and the county's elevated vulnerability indicators create a recovery burden that exceeds the resources of local governments. Federal assistance is essential to support effective and timely restoration of services, infrastructure, and housing stability in Sauk County.

Washington County

The heavy rainfall impacted roadways and increased calls for service for first responders related to flooding emergencies. The repeated rounds of heavy rain impacted sewers and culverts, caused shoulder washouts, and flooded rural roadways leading to greater response challenges. In several cases, first responders faced limited access due to flooded roadways with high levels of standing water.

Heavy rainfall filled existing stormwater drainage areas, lakes, low-lying areas, and farm fields and impacted suburban subdivisions and many homes with stormwater and sewage

backup damages. Numerous homes were damaged in the Village of Germantown and other scattered locations in the county. This increases the strain on households and municipalities that were also severely damaged in flooding from August 2025 still working to address recovery and mitigation strategies from that disaster.

The county was impacted with power outages throughout the week of the storms, preventing sump pumps from working to prevent flooding, which resulted in flooding in homes that did not have backup power sources. Homes where flooding resulted in sewage backups faced challenges with cleaning up raw sewage and disinfecting their living spaces to prevent health impacts.

Severe flooding and copious amounts of rain flooded farm fields throughout the county, likely delaying progress for spring fieldwork and planting in preparation for the short growing season in Wisconsin for the agricultural community.

Waukesha County

Impacted communities across Waukesha County included the cities of Brookfield, Waukesha, New Berlin; the villages of Big Bend, Chenequa, Elm Grove, Hartland, Lannon, Lisbon, Menomonee Falls, Nashotah, Sussex, and Vernon; and the Town of Brookfield. Impacts from severe weather events varied by community, including downed trees and power lines, damage to private residences and businesses, damage to government facilities and infrastructure, and temporary road closures stemming from downed power lines and localized flooding. Flooding caused moderate disruptions to electrical and natural gas services, with power outages affecting over 20,000 customers across Waukesha County.

Tragically, one fatality occurred during storms on April 15 when an individual was struck by lightning. There was also a single report of a swift-water rescue in the Village of Menomonee Falls.

The largest impact in the county occurred from a confirmed EF-2 tornado in the Village of Lisbon, which damaged a business district, a community church, and a nearby neighborhood. The Village of Lisbon initiated a Local Disaster Declaration on April 17.

There was a report received from the Village of Sussex regarding their civic center experiencing damage and loss of power due to approximately 36 inches of flood water impacting mechanicals in the building's basement

Waukesha County and municipal agencies implemented standard emergency response protocols during the incident. Most of the response efforts involved public safety agencies and public works departments managing traffic control, road closures, and debris removal/clearance.

State Agency Response

The following information outlines the state resources that have been used to respond to the flooding, wind, and hail damage from the April 13-23 storms across Wisconsin.

The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) opened at Level 2 – Partial Activation – at 3:00 p.m. on April 14, 2026, for this event. The SEOC remained open at Level 2 to provide resource support and situational awareness to the affected jurisdictions through April 28,

when operations switched to Level 3 – Enhanced Monitoring – to support damage assessment and recovery operations through May 15.

Wisconsin Emergency Management

WEM staff supported the flood / storm response in the SEOC with 42 personnel over 30 operational periods. In addition to staffing the SEOC, Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) deployed personnel directly to the field to support local response and recovery efforts. WEM field staff deployed to the hardest-hit counties to provide technical assistance to county emergency management directors and elected officials and support damage assessments.

WEM staff in the SEOC coordinated 59 resource requests from counties during the incident, include requests for pumps, clean-up kits, sandbags, sandbag machines, communications equipment, traffic barricades, swift water rescue teams, high water vehicles, damage assessment teams, and engineering technical assistance.

WEM provided 284,000 sandbags and over 2.5 miles (134 boxes) of plastic sheeting from its stockpile to affected jurisdictions as well as a sandbag machine to Columbia County and Rock County. WEM's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) staff provided up-to-date road closure maps, flood zone maps, story maps with aerial photos, and just-in-time training for damage assessments. WEM also deployed a member of the Wisconsin All-Hazard Incident Management Team at the request of Rock County to help coordinate damage assessments.

Wisconsin Task Force One (WI-TF1) was deployed to conduct life safety contact operations in the Blackhawk residential area near Portage on April 17 in support of the Columbia County flood response. Flooding had rendered primary road access impassable by conventional vehicles throughout the operational area, necessitating deployment of four watercraft for search and contact operations. WI-TF1 completed wellness checks on 166 residents in 73 homes and identified and documented potential hazards in the area, such as propane tanks and road blockages.



Photo: Members of WI-TF1 assisting with door-to-door canvassing in Columbia County, WI.

WEM's Public Information Officers (PIOs) shared information with counties, municipalities, state agencies, and the 2-1-1 program through a Joint Information System. WEM PIO also monitored media reports, issued regular press releases, posted safety information on social media, and incident reports. On April 17, WEM issued a wireless emergency alert message on behalf of Columbia County to warn residents affected by rising floodwaters and urge them to evacuate.

WEM staff also served as Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (JPDA) team members, accompanying Federal Emergency Management Agency, Small Business Administration, county, and local officials in the field validating initial Individual Assistance and Public Assistance damage assessment reports.

Air Coordination Group

The Wisconsin Air Operations Branch in the 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, and conducted low-level reconnaissance flights to search for liquid natural gas/propane tanks and other hazardous materials washed away during the flooding. This group consists 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, the ACG, and WEM GIS personnel in response to the recent flooding event:

- 202 WEM GIS staff hours
- 2 ACG damage assessment flight maps, image sharing mapping application, 405 geotagged images
- 11 Governor tour maps
- Disaster declaration statewide maps depicting county demographics (median household income, percent population with disability, percent population over 65 years old, percent population rural, latest unemployment rate, and total population)
- WEM damage assessment survey management for 26 counties and 1 tribal nation
- Technical support for 26 counties and one tribal nation for the use of GIS tools for damage assessments
- WEM Damage Assessment Dashboard management for the SEOC and county and tribal partners
- Data management for 3,100 damage assessment surveys and 2gb of damage images
- Batching exports of over 500 Public Assistance damage assessment reports for three counties.
- One web mapping application for Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment planning
- Three maps created for in-person Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment teams.

- Data management and submission of 1,641 damage assessments to FEMA for Virtual Preliminary Damage Assessments
- 15 hours of flight time between DNR and WisDOT/WSP supporting response and recovery operations.

On April 16, WisDOT/WSP assisted a DNR pilot with aerial photography in Columbia County, and on April 18-20 flew fixed-wing missions for flood assessment and storm damage photography across southwestern counties, including Columbia, Rock, and Jefferson.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

The widespread flooding across Wisconsin caused extensive damage to the state highway system. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) responded immediately, deploying resources statewide to protect public safety, restore mobility, and assess infrastructure impacts. Flooding affected all five WisDOT regions—Northwest, North Central, Northeast, Southeast, and Southwest—with at least 81 documented flooding or damage sites and over \$1.08 million in total damages statewide, including \$640,000 in damages eligible for the Federal Highway Administration Emergency Relief program and more than \$1.35 million in FEMA-eligible traffic control and debris removal costs.

Across multiple regions, key state highways experienced shoulder washouts, slope failures, culvert and inlet washouts, widespread debris accumulations, and localized bridge impacts. In the Northwest Region, flooding washed out shoulders along US 10. The North Central Region experienced inundated bridges requiring detours and emergency traffic control. The Southeast Region faced extensive drainage failures, plugged inlets, shoulder erosion, and debris impairing major corridors including IH-94, STH 145, STH 167, and IH-41. The Northeast Region documented slope failures, shoulder undermining, and debris-related closures, including significant damage on STH 187 and Oconto County’s CTH D interchange. The Southwest Region encountered the most severe impacts, including large-scale washouts, mudslides, major debris removal, and extensive emergency traffic control operations, with several sites exceeding \$100,000 in required work.

To maintain safety and mobility, WisDOT undertook immediate emergency protective measures, including road closures, detours, pumping operations, sandbag placement, debris removal, and hazard mitigation at high-risk structures and slopes. Crews conducted round-the-clock response efforts involving labor, equipment, and traffic control operations, supporting statewide emergency management operations.



Photo: Wisconsin Department of Transportation sandbagging efforts along interstate in Columbia County. Courtesy: WisDOT

The Division of State Patrol provided resources across three of their regions in Wisconsin. In the North Central region on April 15–24, four to six officers were deployed during each 10-hour operational period in Waupaca County communities including Clintonville, Fremont, Manawa, Marion, New London, and Waupaca—for road closures, evacuations, and security.

In the Northeast region on April 15–23, officers provided continuous 24/7 staffing in Shiocton, WI, assisting with residential evacuations, security, and traffic direction for closures on WIS 54 and WIS 76.

In the Southwest region on April 15–17, multiple officers supported the National Guard and Columbia County Highway Department during multi-day lane closures for sandbagging operations along I-39 near Portage, and again on April 26 for the sandbag removal.

WisDOT and the Division of State Patrol also provided in-person staffing for the State Emergency Operations Center throughout the Level 2 elevation.

Department of Natural Resources

The DNR activated response and support operations on April 14, mobilizing personnel and resources statewide. DNR activities included staffing the State Emergency Operations Center; conducting search, rescue, and recovery (SRR) operations in support of local law enforcement, fire, and medical responders; monitoring and assessing dam and levee status; deploying subject matter experts for flood impact and damage assessments; and coordinating with federal, state, and local partners throughout the event.

Caledonia-Lewiston Levee

The Caledonia-Lewiston Levee required sustained, intensive coordination given the severity of consequences associated with a potential failure. DNR facilitated coordination calls among federal, state, and local partners and activated 24/7 monitoring once Wisconsin River levels reached 19.4 feet, consistent with the applicable Emergency Action Plan. Personnel safety considerations necessitated support from the Wisconsin Army National Guard and deployment of DNR aircraft. The DNR Floodplain and Dam Safety program provided levee expertise, flood inundation mapping, evacuation planning support, issuance of Flood Watch and Warning products, and SEOC staffing during surge operations.

Division-Level Contributions

The Division of External Services – Floodplain and Dam Safety conducted statewide river gauge monitoring, responded to requests from municipalities and dam owners, and coordinated information-sharing on flood levels, dam statuses, and incident criticality. The Division of Public Safety and Resource Protection had staff fully engaged statewide, with concentrated efforts in Waupaca and Rock counties and along the Caledonia-Lewiston Levee in Columbia and Sauk counties. Four water-rescue teams were dedicated to SRR operations at the levee, with additional teams on regional standby. The Division of Forestry provided Command and Control support to the Columbia County EOC and assisted in levee monitoring alongside the Division of Fish, Wildlife & Parks. The DNR Aeronautics Section deployed multiple aircraft for levee monitoring and aerial damage assessments. Additional DNR support included spill coordinator response to the Janesville train derailment and multiple breach and spill concerns, wastewater treatment consultation, law enforcement support, and 26 damage assessment team personnel

Wisconsin National Guard

The Wisconsin National Guard (WING) provided support to flooding response efforts from April 15 through April 28. On April 15, the Wisconsin National Guard Joint Staff conducted initial planning and coordination with WEM in anticipation of a request for assistance from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for 24-hour sandbag filling support. From 12:00 pm on April 16 through 12:45 pm on April 18, 83 Wisconsin National Guard servicemembers augmented by the National Guard Youth Challenge Academy filled 34,916 sandbags in Columbia County for the Department of Transportation's efforts to keep I-39 open due to the potential failure of the Caledonia-Lewiston Levee.

Upon release from the Columbia County sandbag filling location on April 18, the Wisconsin National Guard subsequently received a request to fill, load, transport, and place sandbags to mitigate flooding along the Rock River. The Wisconsin National Guard provided 80 servicemembers to transport 20,000 palletized filled bags from Columbia County to County, along with sandbag machines. From April 19 through April 21, Wisconsin National Guard soldiers filled an additional 2,720 sandbags and completed 54 missions to distribute over 20,000 bags throughout Rock County. The National Guard task force assisted local placement of these sandbags to vulnerable community members.



Photo: Wisconsin National Guard servicemembers assist sandbagging efforts in Columbia County, WI on April 16, 2026.

Additionally, the Joint Staff of the Wisconsin National Guard coordinated a short-notice response to a request for assistance from Rock County for high-water vehicle support. Two Medium Tactical Vehicles with 3-member crews and one Wrecker recovery vehicle with a two-personnel crew supported local authorities in a standby status to reach communities inaccessible to emergency services due to floods. This initial high-water vehicle mission's duration was 1:30 am-7:56 am on April 18. Rock County submitted a second request for assistance for one high-water vehicle and crew on April 19 to again assist local emergency services in reaching communities otherwise inaccessible due to flood waters. In response, the National Guard provided one Medium Tactical Vehicle and a 7-member crew for 24-hour support and remained on standby until April 28.

Concurrently, the Wisconsin Joint Operations Center (JOC) augmented the SEOC by providing 24/7 situational awareness and execution of emergency activation plans through the Wisconsin Emergency Management Duty Officer. The JOC facilitated two Air Coordination Group calls to fulfill aviation requests for aerial imagery and damage assessment in flooded communities statewide. Additionally, the National Guard provided UH60 Blackhawks for two Governor's overflights of storm- and flood-damaged communities.

Department of Health Services

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (WI DHS) responded to the State Emergency Operations Center as the lead response partner for the mass care, public health and medical Emergency Support Functions. Following the activation, WI DHS communicated the availability of the emPOWER Medicaid and Medicare dataset and fulfilled an emPOWER data request from the De Pere Health Department to support their emergency operations.

The Division of Quality Assurance monitored evacuation efforts and needs of impacted health and residential long-term care facilities. Through webinars and GovDelivery

messages WI DHS communicated with local health departments and health care providers regarding potential contaminant exposure and public health concerns associated with flooding events.

Due to the FoodShare benefits lost during the incident and subsequent power outages, WI DHS extended the deadline for FoodShare benefits. State Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program staff provided guidance and policy reminders to the local WIC staff who provided referrals for affected families to other resources, such as replacement of SNAP benefits, local feeding centers, and water testing.

WI DHS collaborated with the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (WSHL) to authorize fee-exempt post-flood private well testing kits for affected counties. To date, WI DHS and WSLH have received requests for 537 testing kits, distributed 475 kits to eight counties across the state, and provided public outreach on how to test and disinfect private wells impacted by floodwaters.

Wisconsin Department of Tourism

Calls were placed to tourism partners with Rock County, Vernon County, Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission, Juneau County, Marathon County, and Outagamie County to inquire about impacts of the April flooding and storms. Several of the reported impacts that were monitored by the Department of Tourism included:

- In Madison (Dane County), The Cathedral of St. Bernard of Clairvaux was seriously damaged. The cathedral's roof suffered catastrophic damage from baseball-sized hail.
- Due to a tornado that caused significant damage in the villages of Sussex and Lisbon (Waukesha County), a 169-year-old church and a business park were among the structures most heavily impacted.
- Hiking trails and state parks were closed around the state due to flooding and storm damage.

Listings on the Travel Wisconsin website were adjusted to communicate any closures and cancellations.

Voluntary Agency Response

After the incident was stabilized and the situation safe for volunteers and survivors, response and recovery work began. Immediately, 211 Wisconsin began receiving calls from citizens to report damage and seek assistance with cleanup. One trend noticed early on was impacts to homes in Milwaukee were repeated impacts from the flooding in August 2025. Within the first two weeks, 211 received calls from more than 2,000 households reporting damage, approximately half of which were seeking assistance from volunteers with cleanup and muck-out.

Wisconsin Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) began coordination calls to assist in organizing a widespread response to a variety of locations across the State of Wisconsin. Crisis Cleanup activated a hotline to serve as an intake point for survivors who needed assistance. Low volunteer turnout and other technical hurdles created challenges for providing assistance and postponed efforts in some communities. This gap in non-profit assistance is estimated to be as much as \$1 million.

Additional support from the Federal government could assist in filling the gap created by these hurdles. Additional resources to convene partners and assist survivors in navigating recovery efforts would be most beneficial. The biggest gap is providing subject matter expertise to the local governments for supporting the growth and development of a long-term recovery process.

Since the immediate response efforts have concluded and communities are transitioning to recovery, and due to information sharing challenges, many voluntary agencies have withdrawn support from the state. While critical needs exist in other parts of the Midwest and nationwide, Wisconsin is still struggling to fulfill widespread unmet needs throughout the state.

Organizational Report Summaries

- 211 / United Way of Wisconsin
 - As of May 13, 2026, United Way of Wisconsin has collected approximately 3,100 damage assessments. There have been requests from survivors for a variety of different resources, the highest of which were financial assistance, Cleanup Kits, and reporting structural damages to emergency management.
- Crisis Cleanup
 - The Crisis Cleanup hotline closed Friday, May 8. At that point there were over 600 households still in need of cleanup assistance.
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
 - The Just Serve website has been set up to accept donations. People can go to the website to donate or volunteer for the projects set up there.
- Red Cross
 - The Red Cross completed damage assessments in Rock, Marathon, Outagamie, Kenosha, Waupaca, and Winnebago counties. They also supported several Multi-Agency Resource Centers (MARC) for survivor assistance. Financial assistance is available and outreach is being done in Waupaca, Outagamie, and Winnebago counties. Shelters were opened and supported by the Red Cross. One Shelter had more than 10 survivors who were seeking assistance with temporary housing solutions.
- The Salvation Army
 - Salvation Army Emergency Disaster Services provided snacks and hydration, emotional and spiritual care, and distribution of donations to survivors and responders after the Ringle EF-3 tornado. They also provided a sandbagger for flooding prevention, and cleanup kits for flood survivors. The Salvation Army was able to support several MARCs as well.
- Samaritan's Purse
 - Samaritan's Purse sent an assessment team into northern Illinois, working their way up to Wisconsin including Janesville in Rock County.
- Team Rubicon
 - Team Rubicon is already active in MN, MO, IA, IL, and MI. This limits resources until some of those missions start to close out. Teams supported the Outagamie County MARC.
- Wisconsin Civil Air Patrol
 - The Civil Air Patrol contributed volunteers to assist with Crisis Cleanup calls and assistance.
- Wisconsin Council of Churches

- The Wisconsin Council of Churches reported damage to several rural churches across the state. The Council is doing outreach to its member congregations for assessments and reports.
- Wisconsin United Methodist Conference (UMC) Disaster Response & Recovery Service
 - Wisconsin UMC has supported over a dozen homes in response to the flooding effort. In partnership with the United Methodist Committee of Relief (UMCOR) approximately 3,000 flood cleanup kit buckets were brought in and distributed through the VOAD partner network.
- The Y'all Squad Foundation
 - The Y'all Squad Foundation raised \$100,000 on social media to help northern Illinois and Wisconsin. Funds usually go to purchasing items such as chainsaws for non-profit organizations, but direct financial assistance is also available.

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 resources from the State and one or more counties.

Severe storms and flooding in August 2025, in particular, caused impacts from which the state is still recovery. I requested a federal disaster declaration for Individual Assistance and Public Assistance following record-breaking rain from August 9 – 12, 2025. My request included Milwaukee, Washington, and Waukesha counties for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Individual Assistance and Public Assistance; and Door, Grant, and Ozaukee counties for Public Assistance only.

DR-4892 was declared for Individual Assistance on September 11, 2025. As of this writing, more than 46,491 individuals have registered with FEMA, resulting in \$208,766,348 going to residents affected by this disaster. This historic flood was FEMA's most expensive disaster in 2025 in funding paid, exceeding the catastrophic wildfires in southern California.

After conducting joint PDAs for Public Assistance, the state and FEMA were able to validate \$26.5 million in damages. This information was included in my request letter sent to the President for review. Public Assistance was denied under disaster declaration FEMA-4892-DR. A second joint PDA was conducted, validating an additional \$1 million dollars and I appealed the denial decision on November 18, 2025. Unfortunately, my appeal for Public Assistance was denied on February 7, 2026.

In addition, in the past two years, local applicants reached the federal damage indicator on 24 separate occasions (\$4.72 per capita for Federal Fiscal Year 2025 and \$4.86 per capita for Federal Fiscal Year 2026), 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
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
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
8/09 – 8/18/2025	Buffalo, Columbia, Door, Grant, Milwaukee, Outagamie, Ozaukee, Pierce, Sheboygan, Washington, Waukesha	Flooding/Wind
09/22-09/23/2025	Crawford, Iron	Flooding/Storm
11/26 – 11/28/2025	Iron, Vilas, Washburn	Historic Snowfall, Wind
3/14-3/16/2026	Adams, Brown, Buffalo, Calumet, Clark, Dodge, Door, Eau Claire, Florence, Fond du Lac, Forest, Jackson, Kewaunee, Langlade, Lincoln, Manitowoc, Marinette, Marathon, Menominee, Oconto, Outagamie, Pepin, Portage, Shawano, Trempealeau, Washington, Waupaca, Winnebago, Wood; Forest County Potawatomi, Menominee Nation, Oneida Nation, Sokaogon Chippewa	Historic Snowfall

Date	Counties/Tribes	Event Type
4/02- 4/07/2026	Adams, Iron, Marathon, Shawano, Waupaca	Flood/Wind/Winter Storm
4/09- 4/11/2026	Iron	Flooding

Local Demographics

Wisconsin's total taxable resources as reported by the US Department of Treasury for 2022 (most recent available) were \$461.1 billion. Much of this data is presented visually in the supporting maps provided as Enclosure D.

Preliminary Damage Assessment

On April 28, 2026, I requested Joint Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDAs) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the Individual Assistance (IA) and Public Assistance (PA) programs. Virtual PDAs for IA in Bayfield, Brown, Buffalo, Jackson, Jefferson, Juneau, Kenosha, Manitowoc, Marathon, Milwaukee, Outagamie, Racine, Rock, Sauk, Vernon, Washington, Waukesha, Waupaca, Winnebago counties started April 29 with field PDAs starting May 5 and culminating on May 18.

Individual Assistance

Please refer to Enclosure A (Individual Assistance) submitted with FEMA Form 010-0-13 for the complete dataset. For the nineteen counties surveyed, the IA PDA validated a total of 31 destroyed homes, 349 with major damage, 548 with minor damage, and 648 categorized as affected. The following is a breakdown by county.

County	Affected	Minor	Major	Destroyed	Total
Bayfield	1	6	3	0	10
Brown	0	3	5	0	8
Buffalo	1	3	2	0	6
Jackson	2	1	1	0	4
Jefferson	7	6	10	0	23
Juneau	4	11	3	2	20
Kenosha	5	3	0	0	8
Manitowoc	8	2	0	0	10
Marathon	53	55	13	23	144
Milwaukee	18	20	24	0	62
Outagamie	66	30	51	1	148
Racine	15	2	4	0	21
Rock	362	180	69	4	615
Sauk	5	7	8	1	21
Vernon	26	160	48	0	234
Washington	1	1	2	0	4
Waukesha	4	2	4	0	10
Waupaca	50	44	97	0	191
Winnebago	20	12	5	0	37
Total	648	548	349	31	1576

The results revealed that over 1,576 residential structures were destroyed or sustained major damage from the flooding with total damage costs estimated at over \$9.8 million. On average, 4% of people have flood insurance across the entire impacted locations. Therefore, it is expected that most of the private flood damage will not be covered by insurance. As a result of substantial damage findings, it's possible hundreds of homes will not be able to be repaired due to requirements and county ordinances that need to comply with bank loan requirements. These houses will also have to be rebuilt at a higher elevation, if they rebuild at all. This could have a significant impact on the populations of New London, Shiocton, and Fremont.

Public Assistance

On April 28, 2026, I requested Joint Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDAs) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the Individual Assistance (IA) and Public Assistance (PA) programs. Virtual and field PDAs for PA in Bayfield, Iowa, Jackson, Jefferson, Juneau, Manitowoc, Marathon, Outagamie, Racine, Rock, Sauk, Vernon, and Waupaca counties started May 11 and culminated on May 15.



Photo: Bridge damaged by flooding in Rock County, WI.

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 14 counties. Based on this information, the damage per capita for the State of Wisconsin amounts to \$3.10, of which 9 counties met or exceeded the county per capita. This amount of damage per capita exceeds the \$1.94 state threshold.

- **Rock County** – Of the 14 counties, Rock County has reported the highest countywide damage per capita loss at \$67.40. Verified damage in Rock County currently amounts to \$11,033,303. Damages occurred in all categories of work, with more than \$5 million in Category F. It should be noted that during the PDAs, FEMA cost estimated damages to come up with a validated number. FEMA's cost

estimations have historically been low compared to the actual cost to repair or replace a damaged item. Rock County is no different and it is anticipated that the dollar amount of eligible damages is higher than what was validated.

- **Waupaca County** – Verified damages in Waupaca County currently amount to \$1,955,766, resulting in a high damage indicator of \$37.75 per capita. Waupaca County had more than \$800,000 of their damage in category C and had verified damages in all categories of work.
- **Vernon County** – Verified damages in Vernon County currently amount to \$1,117,745, resulting in a high damages per capita amount of \$36.39. More than 90% of the damages occurred in category E due to the excessive hail damage to schools.
- **Kewaunee County** - Verified damages in Kewaunee County currently amount to \$300,860, resulting in a high damage per capita amount of \$14.63. Damages occurred in categories A, B, C, and G, with the majority of damages in category C.
- **Outagamie County** – Verified damages in Outagamie County currently amount to \$1,404,135, resulting in a damage per capita amount of \$7.36. Damages occurred in all categories of work, except category E.
- **Jackson County** – Verified damages in Jackson County currently amount to \$155,340, resulting in a damage per capita amount of \$7.35. Damages occurred in categories A and F.
- **Juneau County** – Verified damages in Juneau County currently amount to \$170,354, resulting in a damage per capita amount of \$6.38. Validated damages occurred in categories A, B, and C.
- **Iowa County** - Verified damages in Iowa County currently amount to \$138,438, resulting in a damage per capita amount of \$5.84. Validated damages occurred in categories A, C, and E, with more than 75% of the damages coming in category C.
- **Jefferson County** – Verified damages in Jefferson County currently amount to \$456,805, resulting in a damage per capita amount of \$5.38. Validated damages occurred in categories A, B, C, E, and F, with the majority of damages coming in categories A and C.

Racine and Bayfield Counties exceeded 50% of their county per capita indicator, therefore PDA assessments completed in these counties can be counted in the per capita impact calculation.

Manitowoc, Marathon, and Sauk PDA assessments were less than 50% of their county per capita indicator, therefore these counties cannot be included in the per capita impact calculation.

In addition, the State Department of Administration reports approximately \$2,000,000 in damages to state-owned property resulting from the April storm event. This total reflects updated claim information, including an additional \$10,000 in vehicle damage previously attributed to another agency but now confirmed under DOA. Claims associated with this event have been consolidated under a single storm-related claim number, with individual incidents tracked by sub-identifiers.

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Justification

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) can provide federal funds for long-term disaster mitigation in recently disaster

impacted communities. The State of Wisconsin is requesting that the President authorize HMGP statewide for the April 13-23, 2026, severe storms and flooding disaster.

The National Institute of Building Sciences publication Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves: 2019 Report shows that for every federal dollar spent on riverine flood mitigation seven dollars are saved in future flood damages. Capitalizing on riverine flood mitigation is an unequivocally sensible investment.

Over 3,261 residential and commercial properties were impacted during this severe storms and flooding disaster. For homes and structures that are destroyed or have major damage, meaning the structure is uninhabitable or unusable, housing assistance through FEMA's Individual Assistance (IA) program is capped at \$42,500 per household and will not come close to meeting the needs of the survivors. Investing in flood, high wind, and tornado mitigation measures, such as structure acquisition/demolition, structure elevation, storm sewer upgrades, power line burial, community and residential tornado safe rooms, and backup power generators, provides an opportunity to avoid future loss of life, eliminate repetitive, expensive damages, and ensure continuity of operations for critical facilities which is essential for local disaster response.

- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Municipal Flood Control Grant Program – Funds flood mitigation projects with acquisition/demolition of flood-prone properties as the top priority.
- DNR Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program – Can be used to acquire and demolish flood-prone properties.
- Community Development Block Grants:
 - o Emergency Assistance Program – Available for mitigation projects following a disaster in non-entitlement communities.
 - o Entitlement Communities – These communities receive funding directly to administer Community Development Block Grants and can opt to direct some funding to disaster survivor housing needs: cities with populations over 50,000 and counties with populations over 200,000.
- WEM Pre-Disaster Flood Resilience Grant – Funds hydrologic restoration projects in flood-prone areas to increase natural flood storage.

For properties that are destroyed, have major damage, or have repeated damage from flooding, one of the most effective mitigation measures is acquisition/demolition. A local government unit such as the county or municipality where the property is located will purchase and demolish the structures and restrict the property to open space in perpetuity. The owners receive fair market value for their property, which enables them to move to a location outside the flood hazard area in the same community. This eliminates risk to the residents' lives, structures, and the lives of first responders who no longer have to rescue residents from flooded areas. 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(s) may be most appropriate to avoid future damage.

For high wind events and tornados, safe rooms provide near to absolute lifesaving protection. In Wisconsin, 49 tornado safe rooms have been installed or constructed across the state, with several more underway. Wisconsin developed a Residential Safe Room Rebate program in 2022 and it kicked off with the pilot in 2024. With the initial round,

three residential safe rooms were installed with a combination of grant funding and out-of-pocket funding from residents. Currently, we have 26 households on the waiting list for the program. The April 2026 disaster included one of the most damaging tornado outbreaks the state has seen. HMGP funding will allow WEM to continue this lifesaving rebate program.

Wisconsin has four open disaster grants under the HMGP, none of which have open application periods. The table below shows the percentage of subgrants that are in closeout process and the percentage of federal funds that have been expended to date for each open disaster.

Open Disaster	Year Declared	Percentage of Subgrants in Closeout	Percentage of Federal Funds Expended
FEMA-4402-DR-WI	2018	96%	87%
FEMA-4459-DR-WI	2019	92%	91%
FEMA-4477-DR-WI	2020	87%	100%
FEMA-4520-DR-WI (COVID)	2021	35%	54%

Percentage of disaster subgrants in closeout and percentage of expended federal funds for all of Wisconsin’s open disaster grants.

The impacted counties together have 676 repetitive loss properties and 22 severe repetitive loss properties. That means that floods have damaged these properties on multiple occasions, and they have received multiple paid flood claims through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) exceeding a threshold dollar amount. This program is heavily subsidized by taxpayer dollars. These properties are costly to the NFIP and the public and a high priority for Wisconsin’s hazard mitigation program.

The communities affected by this series of severe storms and flooding have experienced severe storms and floods in the past and have effectively used federal funds to implement hazard mitigation measures as listed in the table below.

County	Municipality	Mitigation Project	Protected	Federal Funding Source
Bayfield	Bayfield County	Community safe room	271 occupants	HMGP
Bayfield	Bayfield Electric Cooperative	Powerline burial	2,345 electricity customers	HMGP
Brown	V. Pulaski	Backup power generator	Police department & village hall	HMGP
Brown	V. Wrightstown	Backup power generator	Police department & village hall	HMGP
Buffalo	Buffalo County	Acquisition/demolition	2 properties	HMGP
Jackson	Jackson County	Riverbank stabilization	2 properties; electric utility	HMGP
Jackson	Jackson County	Weather radios	134 individuals	HMGP
Jefferson	C. Jefferson	Acquisition/demolition	3 properties	HMGP

Jefferson	Jefferson County	Acquisition/demolition	95 properties	HMGP, FMA, PDM
Jefferson	V. Cambridge	Backup power generator	Drinking water well for village	HMGP
Juneau	C. Elroy	Acquisition/demolition	18 properties	HMGP
Juneau	Juneau County	Weather radios	14 facilities; 6 individuals	HMGP
Juneau	V. Wonewoc	Acquisition/demolition	11 properties	HMGP, FMA
Kenosha	Kenosha County	Acquisition/demolition	82 properties	HMGP, FMA, PDM
Marathon	C. Marathon City	Acquisition/demolition	1 property	HMGP
Marathon	Marathon County	Acquisition/demolition	7 properties	HMGP
Marathon	V. Spencer	Community safe room	1,652 individuals	PDM
Milwaukee	C. Glendale	Acquisition/demolition	9 properties	HMGP
Milwaukee	C. Wauwatosa	Acquisition/demolition	23 properties	HMGP
Milwaukee	V. Whitefish Bay	Flood Risk Reduction: storm sewers, detention basin, bioswales	70 for a 50-year storm; 97 for a 100-year storm	HMGP
Oconto	Oconto County	Acquisition/demolition	1 property	HMGP
Racine	V. Mount Pleasant	Shoreline revetment	Roads and utilities	LPDM
Rock	C. Janesville	Acquisition/demolition	8 properties	HMGP
Rock	Rock County	Acquisition/demolition	6 properties	HMGP
Sauk	C. Reedsburg	Acquisition/demolition	34 properties	HMGP
Sauk	T. Excelsior	Acquisition/demolition	1 property	HMGP
Sauk	T. Spring Green	Acquisition/demolition	28 properties	HMGP
Sauk	V. La Valle	Acquisition/demolition	13 properties	HMGP
Sauk	V. North Freedom	Acquisition/demolition	2 properties	HMGP
Sauk	V. Rock Springs	Acquisition/demolition	26 properties	HMGP
Vernon	C. Viroqua	Community safe room	397 occupants	HMGP
Vernon	V. Chaseburg	Acquisition/demolition	13 properties	HMGP
Vernon	V. La Farge	Acquisition/demolition	20 properties	HMGP
Vernon	V. Ontario	Acquisition/demolition	9 properties	HMGP
Vernon	V. Readstown	Acquisition/demolition	2 properties	HMGP
Vernon	V. Viola	Acquisition/demolition	10 properties	HMGP
Vernon	Vernon County	Acquisition/demolition	4 properties	HMGP
Vernon	Vernon County	Weather radios	29 facilities; 240 residents	HMGP
Vernon	Vernon County	Backup power generator	2 assisted living facilities; 2 critical gov't buildings	HMGP
Walworth	T. Lyons	Community safe room	527 occupants	HMGP
Walworth	T. Richmond	Weather Radios	75 residents	HMGP
Walworth	T. Sugar Creek	Acquisition/demolition	5 properties	HMGP

Waukesha	C. Brookfield	Acquisition/demolition	3 properties	HMGP
Waukesha	V. Lisbon	Acquisition/demolition	2 properties	HMGP
Waupaca	T. Scandinavia	Backup power generator	Fire department; municipal building	HMGP
Winnebago	C. Oshkosh	Detention pond	78 properties	HMGP

Communities impacted by this severe storms and flood disaster have previously utilized FEMA mitigation funding under Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA), Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM), and Legislative Pre-Disaster Mitigation (LPDM) to mitigate severe storm and flood hazards.

The effectiveness of many of these projects was demonstrated in this event. Below are two examples.

Bayfield Electric Cooperative

Since record keeping began on the current electrical system, in 2014, customers of Bayfield Electric Cooperative (BEC) had seen hours to days of outages every year due to natural hazards including tornadoes, high winds, flooding (compromising power poles), heavy snow, and ice storms. There were also numerous outages due to animal interference with the lines and natural decay of trees. In 2018, BEC received Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding to bury three stretches of the most vulnerable power lines in the county. Since then, power outages in those areas have been minimal. In this event two of the communities previously impacted, Cable and Pilsen, again experienced high wind events. Exposed stretches of power line still led to power outages, but the stretches of power line that were buried incurred no damages.

City of Janesville

After catastrophic flooding statewide in 2008, the City of Janesville used HMGP funds to implement an acquisition/demolition project for eight properties along the Rock River. The properties were purchased at pre-flood fair market value, the structures removed, and the land restored to open space in perpetuity. This project permanently took people and property out of harm’s way and reduced the risk to first responders. The area now serves as flood storage during similar events and runs along part of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. With nearly 4 inches of rain falling on Janesville in one night, the April storms would certainly have inundated these properties. Instead, no lives or property were put at risk and the area served as floodplain, decreasing the lateral spread of the water in other areas.

Federal funding for mitigation would help communities affected by this disaster implement measures to reduce their long-term vulnerabilities to flooding and severe weather and protect Wisconsin residents from future disasters. Two examples of potential projects include:

- Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District has proposed a flood mitigation project along the Kinnickinnic River at Jackson Park. The project proposes to reduce the flood risk for more than 300 structures by replacing approximately 2,200 feet of concrete channel and 700 feet of enclosed channel with a naturalized channel and increased flood storage capacity of the Jackson Park lagoon.
- A project in Brown County along the west shore of Green Bay proposes the installation of structures control water flow between the Suamico River and the Sensiba State Wildlife area, protecting nearby homes and businesses.

Wisconsin's Hazard Mitigation Program

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. 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.

Wisconsin has a strong statewide mitigation program that is well run and leverages all available funding and other resources to ensure benefits are maximized. Previous projects undertaken with federal funding have proven to be effective. The communities affected by the recent severe storms and floods desperately need additional federal assistance to have any hope of a full recovery and to reduce future risk from similar events. We are requesting the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for the entire state of Wisconsin.

Conclusion

The devastation caused by these severe storms and flooding in April is more than just what is measured in dollars. It destroyed homes, shattered livelihoods, damaged schools and public infrastructure, impacted businesses and regional economies, and families struggling to rebuild their lives on a long road to recovery. These series of natural disasters overwhelmed local and state resources, leaving communities in urgent need for federal assistance.

I request that the Individual Assistance program be made available in Bayfield, Brown, Buffalo, Jackson, Jefferson, Juneau, Kenosha, Manitowoc, Marathon, Milwaukee, Outagamie, Racine, Rock, Sauk, Vernon, Washington, Waukesha, Waupaca, and Winnebago Counties. The Oneida Nation is also included in this request.

I also request that the Public Assistance program be made available in Bayfield, Iowa, Jackson, Jefferson, Juneau, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marathon, Outagamie, Racine, Rock, Sauk, Vernon, and Waupaca Counties, as well as the Oneida Nation.

My final request is for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to be made available statewide. The state has an approved Enhanced State Hazard Mitigation Plan.

I certify that for this major disaster, the state and local governments will assume all applicable non-federal shares of costs required by the Stafford Act.

I have designated Greg Engle as the State Coordinating Officer for this request.

In closing, I want to reaffirm the urgency of this request and emphasize the need to assist the survivors and communities as quickly as possible so critical infrastructure can be restored, emergency services to continue operating, and give families hope through this recovery process. By approving and granting federal assistance, the government will not

only help rebuild communities and lives but also support states as a united front so they do not face catastrophic disasters alone. I therefore respectfully request that you review this documentation and act quickly to declare a major disaster for the State of Wisconsin so these communities can rebuild and recover.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Evers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tony Evers
Governor

Enclosures

OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13

Enclosure A: Individual Assistance

Enclosure B: Public Assistance

Enclosure C: Requirements for Other Federal Agency Programs

Enclosure E: Supporting Maps