

Immediate Needs Funding Fact Sheet

Immediate Needs Funding Overview

The Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) is an appropriation against which FEMA funds disaster response and recovery efforts for Presidentially declared disasters. When DRF funding requirements threaten to exceed available resources, FEMA takes proactive steps to prioritize limited funding to essential functions. Essential functions are those which provide for lifesaving, life-sustaining, and critical ongoing disaster operations. DRF levels must also be sufficient to respond immediately to a new catastrophic event.

To ensure available funding for these critical requirements, FEMA's Chief Financial Officer can implement Immediate Needs Funding (INF) guidance. When operating under INF, FEMA prioritizes response and immediate recovery effort funds by deprioritizing obligations to other activities. For example, under INF, FEMA will pause all new obligations related to Public Assistance, such as reimbursement for disaster activity that has already been completed and permanent work, as well as Hazard Mitigation and DRF-funded BRIC grants, that are not essential for lifesaving and life-sustaining activities.

Once DRF funds are sufficiently replenished the paused obligations will be processed.

INF Implications

- Under INF, FEMA continues funding lifesaving and life-sustaining efforts including:
 - Individual Assistance payments directly to survivors for critical needs and housing,
 - Public Assistance for states, tribes, and territories essential for lifesaving and life-sustaining activities,
 - Mission assignments of Federal partners for critical response activities,
 - Fire Management Assistance grants, and
 - Essential ongoing disaster operations, including salaries of FEMA field staff (Stafford Act employees).
- Under INF, FEMA pauses new Public Assistance, Hazard Mitigation, and DRF-funded BRIC obligations that are not essential for lifesaving and life-sustaining activities.
- FEMA will continue to accept and process Public Assistance, Hazard Mitigation, and DRF-funded BRIC applications even in categories where the obligations are paused.
- When the DRF has sufficient funding, FEMA will resume making obligations in categories that were paused.
- FEMA will continue to fund ongoing disaster operations, including the salaries of Stafford Act employees.

Context

- Since 2001, FEMA has implemented Immediate Needs Funding nine times: 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2017, and 2023.



FEMA

- In 2023, INF was implemented on August 29th in the wake of Hurricane Idalia and lifted on October 2, 2023, with the passage of the FY 2024 short-term continuing resolution.
- Large disaster responses rapidly deplete DRF funding, for example:
 - During the first 30 days of response to Hurricane Ian in 2022, FEMA obligated approximately \$2.6 billion or nearly \$86 million a day in lifesaving and life-sustaining operations.
 - Similarly, in 2022 FEMA obligated \$987 million during the first 30 days responding to Hurricane Fiona.
- Disasters can happen at any time. FEMA must be prepared not only for high-risk times such as hurricane season, but also for new catastrophic events.