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SCEMD

Public Assistance Program Fact Sheet

The federal Public Assistance (PA) program provides grants to state, local, and federally recognized tribal governments and certain private non-profit entities to assist with the response to and recovery from disasters. The program can provide reimbursement for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and permanent restoration of infrastructure. The federal share of assistance is at least 75 percent of eligible costs.

Eligible Applicants:

- State and local government entities
- Federally recognized tribal governments
- Certain private non-profit (PNP) organizations that own or operate facilities that provide educational, utility, emergency, medical, or non-critical but essential social services and provide those services to the general public.

Public Assistance Process:

- As soon as practicable following a hazard occurrence, county and local governments and state agencies conduct initial damage assessments. South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD) recovery staff will work with organizations to compile damage assessment information to determine if a request for federal assistance may be needed.
- If indicated, SCEMD will request a Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (JPDA) with FEMA.
- FEMA, SCEMD, and county/municipal representatives participate in a JPDA. The findings are provided to the Governor and included with the Governor's request for federal assistance, if warranted.
 - The State must reach a threshold based on a per capita damage indicator for a major disaster declaration. For FY 2024, the threshold is \$9,417,902.00 for South Carolina and is adjusted annually for inflation.
 - For a county to be eligible for Public Assistance, it must also meet its county threshold. County thresholds for FY 2024 can be found on the SCEMD web site [here](#).
- If a major disaster declaration is approved by the President, SCEMD will conduct applicant briefings for state, territorial, local, tribal, and PNP representatives to inform them of the assistance available and how to apply.
- A Request for Public Assistance must be filed by the potential applicant (e.g., county) within 30 days after the area is designated eligible for assistance. This can be completed by going to <https://grantee.fema.gov/>.
- Following the Applicant Briefing, an Exploratory Call and a Recovery Scoping Meeting are conducted to discuss damages.
- A combined federal, state, and local team proceeds with project formulation, which is the process of documenting the eligible facility, eligible work, and eligible cost associated with the disaster-related damages to each eligible facility identified or with disaster-related response and debris costs.



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Public Assistance Categories of Work:

| Emergency Work | Permanent Work |
|---|---|
| Category A: Debris removal | Category C: Roads and bridges |
| Category B: Emergency protective measures | Category D: Water control facilities |
| | Category E: Public buildings and equipment |
| | Category F: Public utilities |
| | Category G: Parks, recreational, and other facilities |
| Management Costs | |
| Category Z: Management costs | |

Small Projects:

- Projects falling below a certain threshold are considered small. For this year, small projects are those with eligible costs of more than \$3,900 but less than \$1,037,000.
- For small projects, payment of the federal share is generally made upon approval of the project, and the subrecipient notifies SCEMD when work is completed. Documentation may be required.
- For small projects that are \$600,000 or more (or \$250,000 or more for moderate- and high-risk applicants), SCEMD will pay 75% of the funds due to the subrecipient upon obligation and the remaining 25% upon submission of a request for reimbursement with required documentation.

Large Projects:

- FEMA currently defines a large project as a project of \$1,037,000 or more.
- Payment for large projects is based on actual costs determined after the project is completed.
- Once a project is obligated and work is conducted, the subrecipient (state or local government or eligible PNP) submits one or more request for reimbursement (RFR) in www.screcoverygrants.org. The RFR must include documentation of costs related to eligible work and other supporting documentation, e.g., payroll policy or procurement documents.
- SCEMD reimburses amounts expended on the approved scope of work and documented in accordance with federal regulations and PA policy.

Project Periods of Performance:

From date of disaster declaration:

- Emergency Work - 6 months
- Permanent Work - 18 months
- Based on extenuating circumstances, the state may provide extensions:
 - Up to 6 additional months for emergency work (12 months maximum)
 - Up to 30 additional months for permanent work (48 months maximum)
- Extensions beyond the state’s authority may be granted by the FEMA Regional Administrator.

Debris:

- Permitting for final disposal sites and staging areas must be approved annually and prior to the event with SC DHEC. Applicants can register at <https://des.sc.gov/permits-regulations/permit-central/epermitting>.
- For more information, contact Justin Koon (803-898-1339 or justin.koon@des.sc.gov) or contact debrismgmt@des.sc.gov.