

# Progress After Six Months From the March Winter Storm, Straight-line Winds and Flooding

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LINCOLN, Neb— Nebraska continues to work hard through the long road of recovery after the severe winter storm, straight-line winds and flooding that occurred in March along with the additional flooding throughout the summer.

The March floods impacted communities that had never experienced a flooding disaster of this magnitude. Flooding was particularly intense along the Missouri, Platte and Niobrara River, breaching levees, destroying homes and infrastructure. Common issues continue to provide recovery challenges including erosion, crop loss, damage to roads and bridges, business loss, lack of flood insurance, and saturated aquifers, among others.

Communities living near waterways continue to identify strategies to mitigate future impacts in flood-prone areas. Survivors are repairing and rebuilding stronger and safer with the help of neighbors, families, voluntary groups, faith- and community-based organizations and local, county, state and federal governments.

The following highlights recovery progress made in the six months since the major disaster declaration issued March 21 and shows how disaster survivors and impacted communities are overcoming challenges.



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- Initially 65 counties were designated as eligible for federal assistance. Since then, the major disaster declaration has been amended 10 times, making survivors in 80 counties and 5 Tribal Nations eligible to apply for help under FEMA's Individual Assistance (IA) and Public Assistance (PA) Program.
- FEMA's extension of the incident period to cover uninsured damage sustained through July 14 allowed more survivors to register for FEMA assistance and U.S. Small Business Administration low-interest loans. As of Sept. 16, 6,999 applicants have applied for FEMA Individual Assistance. FEMA has approved \$26.3 million in Individual Assistance for households including \$23.4 million for housing assistance and \$ 2.85 million for other disaster-related needs. Additionally, six displaced households have been successfully rehoused by the Department of Housing and Urban Development has (HUD).
- HUD's Housing Impact Assessment was completed. It can be used as an additional resource by state and local leaders in addressing housing as part of long term recovery strategies and efforts. HUD also approved the State of Nebraska's waiver request to reallocate CDBG funds for impacted areas. Additionally, HUD continues its involvement with long term recovery efforts through participation and engagement with local leaders of Housing Task Forces and Long Term Recovery Groups.
- To date, U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has approved over \$45.9 million in low-interest recovery loans for Nebraskans. \$38 million for homeowners and renters and \$7.2 million for businesses and private nonprofits.
- As of Sept. 19, local, county and state government infrastructure and certain private nonprofit organizations in 85 counties became eligible to receive funding through FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) program to repair and rebuild certain eligible disaster-damaged facilities. Local, county and state government expenses related to debris removal, saving lives, providing security, and managing the immediate response also became eligible for reimbursement. PA has approved a federal share of more than \$3.4 million and received 510 Requests for PA. FEMA has obligated more than \$108,211 for debris removal, more than \$1.5 million for emergency protective measures, and \$97,357 for roads and bridges.



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- The current Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) Regular Funding is more than \$48.8 million. In the last couple of months, Mitigation's Community Education Outreach (CEO) teams has provided free consultation to more than 8,000 survivors on building hazard-resistant homes mostly in home improvement stores, county fairs, farmer's markets and other events.
- As of Sept. 14, National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) has received 1,144 flood insurance claims in Nebraska and nearly \$46.3 million total paid to policyholders. The NFIP provides information on flood insurance, preparedness, and mitigation techniques that can minimize or eliminate future damage from hazards and risks. They also conducted insurance agency office visits to promote NFIP policy coverage and assist with insurance related issues in Douglas and Sarpy.
- Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRG) with the help of the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOADS) provided resources to communities dealing with mold, providing volunteers and donations, case management for those who needed additional construction, transitional housing and other unmet needs. Through the LTRGs, volunteers have provided spiritual care to more than 4,500 survivors. They have helped muck out over 700 flooded homes. VOAD teams have clocked more than 20,000 volunteer hours. Some of the nonprofit groups supporting long term recovery are the American Red Cross, United Way, AmeriCorps, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief and the United Methodist Committee on Relief. Housing and homeless organizations, foundations and food banks also assisted in long term recovery efforts.
- The LTRGs are located in Cass, Dodge, Douglas, Sarpy, Saunders and Washington and three regions (Platte Regional LTRG, Heartland Disaster Recovery Group, and Tri-County LTRG). The Heartland group includes representatives from the counties of Hall, Hamilton, Howard and Merrick. The Platte group includes those from Boone, Butler, Colfax, Nance and Platte counties. The Tri-County LTRG includes Holt, Knox and Boyd. Additionally, there is an emerging LTRG in Buffalo County, which is also mentoring Dawson County to create their own.



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- In accordance with the National Disaster Recovery Framework, The Interagency Recovery Coordination (IRC) activated Recovery Support Functions (RSF) to address long-term recovery impacts in the Agriculture, Community Planning and Capacity Building, Economic, Housing and Infrastructure Sectors to develop strategies for addressing recovery and resiliency gaps. Each RSF is represented by a federal agency that provides support and expertise outside the scope of FEMA's authority. The RSFs built partnerships and maximized existing ones at the state and local level to identify and support their long-term recovery efforts. Additionally, Recovery Support Strategy (RSS) was created, detailing issues, goals, objectives, and strategies that can be implemented by the state.
  
- In response to the March floods, Governor Pete Ricketts directed State departments to strategize for the deployment of resources and programs to assist affected areas. The Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) identified housing as a main priority area for the state's economic and physical recovery. Most recently, DED announced the recipients of \$3 million in funding under a special disaster recovery allocation of the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund (NAHTF).
  
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) removed nearly 1,223 carcasses at 109 sites. They also provided statewide aerial agriculture and livestock surveillance conducting 54 flights covering 25,716 miles and identifying over 100 sites to be assessed on the ground.  
 So far, 2,709 approved Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) applications with \$13.7 million estimated to be paid out. The agency has also approved 933 Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) applications, and they have 184 pending applications and 3,290 initiated applications for \$5.9 million. Additionally, 80 counties provided the USDA disaster team with critical information regarding flooding with issues totaling 584.
  
- During July, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offered more than \$200 Million in Emergency Funding to Restore Flood-Prone Lands/ USDA NRCS /Emergency Watershed Protection. As well as Floodplain Easement (EWPP-FPE)/Voluntary program and outreach and assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers, Ranchers and Veteran Farmers and



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Ranchers with an award ceiling of \$750,000. The USDA recently announced Platte County is one of the many rural communities eligible for some of the \$150 million now available across the U.S. through its Community Facilities Program for rural communities impacted by natural disasters, including this year's severe flooding.

- Under a FEMA mission assignment and with the Nebraska Civil Air Patrol support, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) staff and contractors provided technical support while also conducting aerial and land-based reconnaissance of flooded areas, including surveying 800 miles of the Missouri, Platte, Niobrara, Elkhorn and Loup rivers. They marked displaced container locations and entered the data into a Geographic Information System app for future collection. Since operations began March 27, the EPA has recovered over 2,250 containers, which include drums, tanks and canisters, dislodged by floods and the contents were disposed or recycled, as appropriate. The tanks contain mostly oil, fertilizer, chemicals, liquefied petroleum gas and other hazardous materials.
- The Federal Department of Transportation announced more than \$870 million in emergency grants are going out nationwide to repair roads and bridges damaged by disasters. Nebraska is getting \$68 million of that for damage done in March, plus another \$1 million for damage from June storms, and \$234,000 for damage on Federal lands.
- Disaster recovery experts from the Public Policy Center, in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services and six state behavioral health regions, were successful in securing a first wave of grant funding in May to establish the Nebraska Strong Recovery Project. The initial funding supported the training of community outreach workers and development of informational materials and resources. A new grant of \$2.2 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, in partnership with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, has been awarded to continue this recovery assistance through May 2020.



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FEMA's mission is helping people before, during and after disasters.

For disaster updates from the State of Nebraska, visit Nebraska's website at [NEMA.Nebraska.gov](http://NEMA.Nebraska.gov).

You can also follow [@NEMAtweets](https://twitter.com/NEMAtweets) on Twitter, and <https://www.facebook.com/nema.page> on Facebook.

Follow FEMA online at <https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4420>

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex,

age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has faced

discrimination call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-3362, voice/VP/711. Multilingual operators are

available. TTY users may call 800-462-7585.

The U.S. Small Business Administration is the federal government's primary source of money for

the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps businesses of all sizes,



private nonprofit organizations, homeowners and renters fund repairs or rebuilding efforts and

cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. For more information,

applicants may contact SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955. TTY

users may also call 800-877-8339. Applicants may also email [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov) or

visit SBA at [www.SBA.gov/disaster](http://www.SBA.gov/disaster).



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