

# Preliminary Damage Assessment Report

## **American Samoa – Tropical Storm Gita FEMA-4357-DR**

### *Declared March 2, 2018*

On February 25, 2018, Governor Lolo M. Moliga requested a major disaster declaration due to Tropical Storm Gita during the period of February 7-12, 2018. The Governor requested a declaration for Individual Assistance; Public Assistance, including direct Federal assistance; and Hazard Mitigation for the territory of American Samoa. During the period of February 14-24, 2018, joint federal, territory, and local government Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDAs) were conducted in the requested areas and are summarized below. PDAs estimate damages immediately after an event and are considered, along with several other factors, in determining whether a disaster is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the territory and the affected local governments, and that Federal assistance is necessary.<sup>1</sup>

On March 2, 2018, President Trump declared that a major disaster exists in the territory of American Samoa. This declaration made Individual Assistance requested by the Governor available to affected individuals and households in the territory of American Samoa. This declaration also made Public Assistance, including direct Federal assistance requested by the Governor available to the territory and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by Tropical Storm Gita in the territory of American Samoa. Finally, this declaration made Hazard Mitigation Grant Program assistance requested by the Governor available for hazard mitigation measures for the territory of American Samoa.<sup>2</sup>

### **Summary of Damage Assessment Information Used in Determining Whether to Declare a Major Disaster**

#### **Individual Assistance**

- Total Number of Residences Impacted:<sup>3</sup>

Destroyed -	56
Major Damage -	180
Minor Damage -	632
Affected -	82

- Percentage of insured residences:<sup>4</sup> 9.0%
- Percentage of low income households:<sup>5</sup> 38.0%
- Percentage of ownership households:<sup>6</sup> 90.0%
- Total Individual Assistance cost estimate: \$9,718,485

## Public Assistance

• Primary Impact:	Damage to utilities
• Total Public Assistance cost estimate:	\$6,425,633
• Territory per capita impact: <sup>7</sup>	\$115.74
• Statewide per capita impact indicator: <sup>8</sup>	\$1.46

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<sup>1</sup> The Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) process is a mechanism used to determine the impact and magnitude of damage and resulting needs of individuals, businesses, public sector, and community as a whole. Information collected is used by the State as a basis for the Governor's request for a major disaster or emergency declaration, and by the President in determining a response to the Governor's request (44 CFR § 206.33).

<sup>2</sup> When a Governor's request for major disaster assistance under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended (Stafford Act) is under review, a number of primary factors are considered to determine whether assistance is warranted. These factors are outlined in FEMA's regulations (44 CFR § 206.48). The President has ultimate discretion and decision making authority to declare major disasters and emergencies under the Stafford Act (42 U.S.C. § 5170 and § 5191).

<sup>3</sup> Degree of damage to impacted residences:

- Destroyed – total loss of structure, structure is not economically feasible to repair, or complete failure to major structural components (e.g., collapse of basement walls/foundation, walls or roof);
- Major Damage – substantial failure to structural elements of residence (e.g., walls, floors, foundation), or damage that will take more than 30 days to repair;
- Minor Damage – home is damaged and uninhabitable, but may be made habitable in short period of time with repairs; and
- Affected – some damage to the structure and contents, but still habitable.

<sup>4</sup> By law, Federal disaster assistance cannot duplicate insurance coverage. 42 U.S.C. § 5155 and 44 C.F.R. § 206.48(b)(5).

<sup>5</sup> Special populations, such as low-income, the elderly, or the unemployed may indicate a greater need for assistance. 44 C.F.R. § 206.48(b)(3).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 44 C.F.R. § 206.48(b)(3).

<sup>7</sup> Based on State population in the 2010 Census.

<sup>8</sup> Statewide Per Capita Impact Indicator for FY18, *Federal Register*, October 1, 2017.