

# Immediate Needs Funding Frequently Asked Questions

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## What is the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF)?

The Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) is an appropriation against which FEMA can direct, coordinate, manage and fund eligible response and recovery efforts associated with domestic major disasters and emergencies pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act.

Through the DRF, FEMA can fund authorized federal disaster support activities as well as eligible state, territorial, tribal, and local actions such as providing emergency protection and debris removal.

The DRF also funds:

- The repair and restoration of qualifying disaster-damaged public infrastructure,
- Hazard mitigation initiatives,
- Financial assistance to eligible disaster survivors,
- Fire Management Assistance Grants for qualifying large forest or grassland wildfires.

## What does it mean for FEMA to implement Immediate Needs Funding (INF) guidance?

When the DRF is projected to be insufficient to meet all Stafford Act requirements, FEMA must prioritize lifesaving and life-sustaining activities. Under INF, FEMA prioritizes response and urgent recovery efforts without any interruption. However, new obligations not necessary for lifesaving and life-sustaining activities will be paused.

## Did FEMA ask for more funding through the regular appropriations process once it projected a shortfall in FY23?

In November 2022, FEMA and the Administration submitted a supplemental request of \$11 billion for the DRF. The Fiscal Year 2023 Omnibus funded \$5 billion of that request. In August 2023, an additional \$12 billion was included for the DRF as part of the Administration's \$40 billion supplemental request to Congress.

## Has FEMA operated under an INF in the past?

Since 2001, FEMA has implemented Immediate Needs Funding eight times, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2017. In 2017, the INF was implemented on August 28<sup>th</sup> in the wake of Hurricane Harvey and lifted on October 2, 2017, with the passage of the FY 2018 short-term continuing resolution.



# FEMA

## **What actions has FEMA been taking to try to mitigate the shortfall?**

As always, FEMA continues to work with both the Administration and Congress to ensure the DRF has the resources available to support survivors and communities in their time of need.

Since the beginning of 2023, FEMA has projected that DRF balances are insufficient to meet requirements. To mitigate this risk, FEMA has prioritized an effort to identify and recover excess funds from previously obligated contracts, grants, and mission assignments. Through these efforts, FEMA has recovered over \$6 billion. FEMA will continue to recover unneeded funds, however, recoveries will not be sufficient to prevent the DRF from running out of money.

## **How has FEMA communicated INF caused funding delays to grant recipients?**

FEMA is in regular contact with the states, tribes and territories we serve. Grant recipients will be notified if their obligations will be delayed due to the INF.

## **Will INF stop rebuilding projects from being obligated?**

If INF is in effect, FEMA will only be able to fund lifesaving and life-sustaining projects. FEMA will work directly with grant recipients to communicate how their specific projects may be affected.

## **How does INF affect [Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities \(BRIC\)](#) funding?**

INF will delay the Fiscal Year 2023 BRIC Notice of Funding Opportunity as well as new DRF funded BRIC obligations regardless of the Notice of Funding year.

## **How does INF affect FEMA staff paid by the DRF?**

FEMA will continue to fund ongoing disaster operations, including the salaries of Stafford Act employees.