



MARCH 2023 STORMS DISASTER ASSISTANCE FOR BUSINESSES

6/6/2023

BACKGROUND

On March 9, 2023, the County Director of Emergency Services proclaimed a local emergency prompted by three months of severe atmospheric rivers that resulted in sudden and extraordinary flooding throughout the County. Many residents and commercial operations were required to evacuate areas in and around the natural tributaries of the Tulare Lake and suffered material losses to land, buildings, and personal property related to flooding.

The County estimates that more than 178 people were displaced during the peak of the emergency and as of May 2023, has received over 2,700 flood-related damage assessment reports. It is anticipated that a portion of these damages will qualify for reimbursement through the Federal Emergency Management Agency Individual Assistance Program, the U.S. Small Business Administration, or private insurance claims. However, the County acknowledges that for certain storm damage and mitigation efforts performed by local businesses, ranchers, and farmers, there may be no funding available through traditional channels. In an effort to close this funding gap and support local businesses, the County has established a Disaster Assistance Fund.

DISASTER ASSISTANCE FUND

The Disaster Assistance Fund will be established with \$2 million of General Fund appropriations for the purpose of providing support to local county businesses who have sustained damages to land and property or incurred unanticipated expenses related to the March 2023 storms, and who have no alternative means for recovering their loss.

MARCH 2023 STORMS DISASTER ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM

The County intends to distribute these funds to qualifying businesses through the March 2023 Storms Disaster Assistance Grant Program. Grant award amounts will be a maximum of \$50,000 per business.

Qualifying Loss

1. **Land and/or Property Damage:** physical damage, caused by the disaster, to property owned by the business when the damage is not covered by insurance. Loss(es) resulting from physical damage to property, such as loss of business earnings and income, are not qualifying losses; and/or
2. **Unanticipated Expense:** This category includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Costs incurred in an effort to mitigate the effects of the disaster, including reinforcing berms, removing debris from waterways, or relocating assets to avoid flood damage. Mitigation refers to the prevention of flooding or damage to land or property caused by flooding, whether directly or indirectly
 - b. Costs incurred in the preservation of private existing essential infrastructure such as bridges, roads, or buildings due to the March 2023 storms

Eligibility Requirements

1. **Eligible applicants:**
 - a. Shall be a for-profit business, which includes legally formed corporations, S-corporations, partnerships, and sole proprietorships.



MARCH 2023 STORMS DISASTER ASSISTANCE FOR BUSINESSES

6/6/2023

- b. Shall be physically located and operating in the unincorporated areas of Tulare County that experienced physical damage during the March 2023 Storms.
 - c. Shall not be a short-term vacation rental, Airbnb, VRBO, etc.
 - d. Shall not be a business with the primary business function of general retail.
 - e. May be a specialty retail business that sells a specialized line of merchandise related to specific category of products.
 - f. Shall not be a franchise or a publicly traded business.
2. **For claims of land and/or property damage:**
- a. demonstrate that the damages were reported to the County via the [Property Damage Form](#) or [Agricultural Damage Reporting Form](#) and attest to said damage; or
 - b. Provide other supporting evidence of damage and attest to said damage.
3. **For claims of unanticipated expenses:**
- a. produce invoices for costs incurred between March 1, 2023, and March 31, 2023, for qualifying unanticipated expenses and attest to said expenses; or
 - b. provide other supporting evidence of unanticipated expenses and attest to said expenses.
4. Applicants cannot have unpaid or delinquent property taxes. Applicants with existing payment plans in good standing are eligible.
5. Business applicant will not be eligible to apply if business has been approved or has received disaster-related reimbursement from a federal or state program, such as the U.S. Small Business Administration Disaster Loan Assistance program, through a private insurance claim, or any other funding source. If Business applicant applied for but was denied said reimbursement, proof of denial is required. Business applicant is not eligible if it did not apply for, but is otherwise eligible to apply for, reimbursement from a federal or state program, such as the U.S. Small Business Administration Disaster Loan Assistance program.
6. Applicants must provide proof of business, as specified in the application.

Grant Award and Administration

1. The grant program will be administered by the Tulare County Resource Management Agency in coordination with the County Administrative Office and County Treasurer-Tax Collector/Auditor-Controller.
2. Grants will be limited to one (1) award per business. However, a grant application shall be denied if it is determined that applications from two or more businesses share the same majority owner or share common ownership such that the business interests and/or alleged damages suffered are deemed inseparable.
3. Grants will be awarded on a first-come-first-served basis until funds are exhausted.
4. The administrator's decision to approve or deny grant funding cannot be appealed.

Reporting Requirements

1. The Tulare County Resource Management Agency will prepare and present a report of grant recipients to the Board of Supervisors by December 31, 2023.