

# Disaster Financial Assistance Program Frequently Asked Questions Spring Flood 2018

## **What is Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA)?**

The Disaster Financial Assistance program helps people and communities get back on their feet after a disaster. This program provides **assistance** for eligible damages and losses that threaten the health and safety of individuals and communities.

Assistance, when provided, is only available after all other forms of disaster aid have been received and only covers uninsurable loss.

We all have a duty to safeguard ourselves and our property from damage. Therefore, the Disaster Financial Assistance program does not pay for any damage or loss that is covered by an insurance policy. If affordable coverage was available and you chose not to purchase insurance, your Disaster Financial Assistance claim cannot be approved to cover your loss or damage.

You should contact your insurance company immediately to find out if the damage you suffered is covered by your policy.

## **Who is eligible to apply for DFA?**

Residents, small business owners (including agriculture and aquaculture) and not-for-profit organizations are eligible.

## **Are Farms included in the DFA program?**

Farms are included in the Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) Program, and claims are reviewed on a case by case basis. Eligible claims are subject to a deductible of \$5,000 and farms can receive assistance up to \$500,000. For the purpose of the DFA program, farms fall under small business criteria. In order to qualify they must:

- have yearly gross revenues of at least \$4,800, but no more than \$2-million;
- employ not more than the equivalent of 20 full-time workers; and
- be an owner-operated enterprise where the individual owner-operator is acting as a day-to-day manager and owns at least 50% of the business.

The following are a few examples of damages that may qualify for financial assistance. Each claim is reviewed on a case by case basis:

- outlying farm buildings in use on a working farm;
- repairs to or replacement of farm machinery;
- uninsurable fences;
- restoring farmland to workable condition;
- harvested crops, feed, seed or fertilizer being held in storage .

## **Disaster Financial Assistance for Home Owners**

Homeowners are now eligible to receive up to \$6,100 to remove flood debris from their property. This figure is based on an estimate of about 540 hours of labour at minimum wage, or the equivalent of costs for a contractor to remove the debris.

## **Disaster Financial Assistance for Recreational Properties**

Cottage owners are now eligible to receive up to \$6,100 to remove flood debris from their property. This figure is based on an estimate of about 540 hours of labour at minimum wage, or the equivalent of costs for a contractor to remove the debris.

## **Are First Nations Communities eligible for DFA?**

Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) supports and funds emergency management activities on reserve for individual and whole community relief.

Bands gather individual claims and bundle them together under a community submission to ISC EMAP.

If First Nations members need assistance they can talk to their Band Office.

Off-reserve claims must go through the provincial disaster financial assistance program to access provincial resources and assistance navigating the DFA application.

## **Do I have to pay a deductible?**

The provincial government is also waiving the deductible on debris cleanup claims for homeowners and recreational property owners. This represents a savings of \$1,000.

Other claims under the Disaster Financial Assistance Program unrelated to debris clean up, for activities like structure restoration, will still be subject to a deductible.

## **Is there a limit on the amount of assistance available?**

Yes. Assistance for a homeowner's structural damages is capped at \$ 160,000. There is also an additional allowance for some personal property items such as appliances, furniture and clothing.

Assistance for a small business's structural damages is capped at \$ 500,000. There is also an additional allowance for some inventory and labour associated with clean up. The program **DOES NOT** cover the loss of income, wages or revenue.

## **Can I get money to help with emergency repairs?**

Yes. Advance payments will be offered to assist home and business owners. Immediately funds can pay for urgent work that will enable them to re-occupy their property as quickly as possible, for example to repair electrical and heating sources damaged by flooding. Health and Safety Inspectors will provide the application form if emergency repairs are identified.

In limited circumstances, where it can be demonstrated that there is an urgent need by a resident or tenant to replace personal property such as a wheel chair or medical equipment, an advance payment may also be granted.

Advance payments can be issued within 24-48 hours and picked up at your local Service New Brunswick office.

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Advance payments will normally be for claims in excess of \$10,000. Advance payments will not exceed the total payable value of the claim and will not exceed \$4,000.

If a claim is found ineligible for DFA, or damages were found to be below the amount of the advance payment, the full amount, or the ineligible portion, must be returned to the Minister of Finance.

## **What is a Health and safety inspection?**

Health and safety inspectors will assess damage and determine what repairs are required for residents to return to their homes.

Health and safety inspection teams will come to your home and assess the damage to determine whether a home or place of business is safe enough for residents or owners to stay or to return. The specialization of these teams will allow them to effectively determine if repairs are needed. They will also inspect your electrical power to ensure that it is safe for you to have NB Power to turn it back on.

**Note:** Homeowners can get a licensed electrical contractor to inspect your electrical power to have your power re-connected included the invoice on their claim if they do not want to wait for a Health and Safety Team.

## ***How do I get one of those inspections?***

Register for the Program by calling 1-888-298-8555. You will be asked questions about your circumstances. If an inspection is required, it will be arranged for you at that time.

## **When will I see an assessor?**

An independent Assessor has been engaged to assist in assessing eligible damages and final claim amounts under the Disaster Financial Assistance program.

Assessors are visiting properties as quickly as they can. Priority is being given to the most severe cases to ensure that assistance goes most quickly to those who need it most.

Past experience suggests that it can take up to three or four months for assessors to finish their work. Please be patient and begin clean up and repair work as soon as it is safe to do so.

## **What does the program cover?**

Disaster Financial Assistance will help cover the costs of basic needs items. For example, it will help pay for basic repairs of structural damage to a family home or small business. It will also cover costs (to a Provincial Maximum) for essential items such as:

- damages to principal/primary residence, small businesses and not-for-profit;
- appliances that could not be removed from flood danger such as a refrigerator, stove, washer or dryer;
- driveway repairs; and
- retaining wall repairs.

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Also provided is financial assistance at the current provincial minimum wage, to a maximum of 540 hours, for property clean-up by the owners of the principal/primary residence.

Some organizations not covered by an insurance policy may be covered by DFA. These cases are reviewed on case-by-case basis.

## What is NOT covered under the program?

The program only covers the essentials. It does NOT cover items such as:

- recreational equipment such as boats, all-terrain vehicles or travel trailers;
- outbuildings such as sheds, barns or detached garages;
- decks;
- erosion or landscaping; or
- luxury items such as jewellery.

## What is an insurable loss?

Insurable means that insurance coverage for a specific hazard for the individual, family, small business owner or farmer was available in the area. Your damages would be considered an insurable loss if coverage was available (whether or not you chose to purchase it).

A few examples of an insurable loss would be:

- water escape / backup extension endorsement (sewer back-up). *“The backing up or escape of water from a sewer, storm drain, drain, sump or septic tank.”*
- overland flooding - this is new - please check with your insurance provider to see if it is provided in your area.
- roof or water damage caused by strong rain and wind.

## Can I request a review of my claim?

Yes. Program officials will take a second look at a claim, if additional evidence is brought forward.

## What if I have questions or need more information?

Please contact the NB EMO Disaster Financial Assistance Office.

65 Brunswick Street,  
Fredericton, New Brunswick  
E3B 1G5

Toll Free No: 1-888-553-8558, or  
Email: [emo.recovery@qnb.ca](mailto:emo.recovery@qnb.ca)