

Requesting Federal Assistance Under the Stafford Act

When a disaster happens it may escalate in its need for support. The steps for requesting assistance under the Stafford Act are summarized below.

Step 1	FEMA/Federal and State representatives complete a Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA). The PDA: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Documents the impact of the event and estimates initial damage.• Establishes a foundation for the Governor to request assistance.• Provides background for FEMA's analysis of the request.
Step 2	The Governor requests assistance. The Governor's request, by law, must: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• State that the Governor has taken appropriate action and directed execution of the State emergency operations plan.• Certify that the incident is of such severity and magnitude that State and local resources are inadequate.• Include a damage estimate.• Describe the State and local resources committed to response and recovery.• Describe the assistance being requested and agree to cost-sharing provisions.
Step 3	FEMA reviews the request and makes a recommendation. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Governor's request is addressed to the President through the FEMA Regional Administrator.• The FEMA regional office completes its analysis and recommendation.• FEMA Headquarters reviews to ensure the request meets Stafford Act requirements.• The FEMA Administrator then recommends a course of action to the President.
Step 4	The President makes a major disaster declaration, if warranted. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The President decides whether to declare that a major disaster exists.• If a declaration is issued, assistance is made available under the Stafford Act.