

Changes to Manitoba's Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) Program FAQs for Farms, Businesses and Non-Profits

What Are the Core Changes to the DFA Program?

- Manitoba is changing its Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) program to help people, organizations and communities build back better.
- Manitoba's new DFA program recognizes fixing the same damages over again isn't effective or sustainable. It's a lot smarter to invest in risk mitigation and protective improvements.
- The new DFA program also recognizes that people and communities need more holistic recovery support after disasters.
- Manitobans will see an immediate increase in support through the new program.
 - We are cutting red tape to provide assistance more quickly.
 - We are expanding the program to cover more farms, businesses and non-profits.
 - The amount of support we can provide is increasing, and new types of support – such as upgrades to help prevent future damage and mental health counselling – will be available.
- Manitoba will be implementing additional supports incrementally as we develop agreements, policies, and tools for new programming:
 - Targeted support for vulnerable people.
 - Additional disaster mitigation funding to address vulnerabilities across Manitoba.
 - Supports for recovery and resiliency planning.

What Is Not Changing?

- Manitoba's DFA Program will continue to be a program that provides financial assistance for the recovery needs of Manitobans following an acute natural disaster.
- DFA remains a post-disaster program.
- Expenses are eligible only if adequate insurance is not available.

This information is based on draft regulation. Feedback from online consultations will be shared with government and may result in changes to the regulation before it becomes final.

How Can I Share Feedback?

- The draft regulation will be open for public comment until **April 27, 2025** on the EngageMB website: <https://engagemb.ca/disaster-financial-assistance-regulation>
- Manitoba EMO welcomes feedback at any time and may be contacted at dfa@gov.mb.ca

Where Can I Learn More?

- The draft regulation is available for review on the EngageMB website: <https://engagemb.ca/disaster-financial-assistance-regulation>
- Manitoba EMO will be hosting a series of targeted webinars in April 2025 for: local authorities and watershed districts; individuals, homeowners and tenants; and small businesses, farms and non-profit organizations.
 - Links for public webinars are on the EMO website: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/emo/dfa/webinar.html>
- Manitoba EMO will continue to engage with stakeholders in the coming months.

What Happens if There is an Event This Spring?

- Manitoba will be ready to manage a DFA program under the new rules if a major disaster strikes this spring.
- Manitoba EMO will provide training and support to help local authorities, organizations, and households navigate the new program.

How Will Manitoba EMO Help Organizations Manage These Changes?

- Manitoba EMO is working to simplify processes and provide more support.
 - A dedicated liaison will answer claim questions and ensure all required documentation is submitted.
 - Manitoba EMO is developing tools, templates and guidance documents to help organizations manage their DFA claims.
 - Manitoba EMO is working to better serve agricultural producers and their unique needs. On our radar: inspectors and evaluators with an agricultural background.

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How Does Build Back Better (BBB) Funding Work?

- The new DFA program allows organizations to build back better, unlike the previous program which would only cover the cost of repairs to pre-disaster conditions.
- All damaged assets can receive the equivalent of 15% of the cost of standard replacement value – which is the cost to repair the asset to pre-disaster conditions – to undertake disaster-resilient enhancements.
 - These enhancements must align with published disaster resilience guidelines.
 - Manitoba EMO is developing a Manitoba-based Disaster Resilience Enhancement Guide that outlines eligible activities.
- Upgrades required to meet building codes and standards will continue to be considered standard recovery costs.

Why is the Deductible Changing for Individuals and Organizations?

- Manitobans are expected to share in the cost of their recovery.
- The previous program applied a 20% deductible to all private sector claims.
- The new program applies a minimum deductible of \$2,500 or 20%, whichever is greater.
- The new minimum deductible ensures that assistance is focused on those that who cannot recover without government assistance.
- DFA is a program of last resort and is not a substitute for insurance.
- Expenses are eligible only if adequate insurance is not available.

What Triggered These Changes?

- Canada released new Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA) that set the rules for providing disaster assistance to provinces and territories.
- The new rules took effect on April 1, 2025. More information is on the [Public Safety Canada website](#).

Why is Canada Changing Its Program?

- The previous program expired on March 31, 2025.
- The rising frequency, impacts, and costs related to disasters drove Canada to initiate a review of its Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements.
- The previous program would only pay to rebuild to pre-disaster conditions. Canada recognized the need to build back better and invest in disaster risk reduction.

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Does Manitoba Have to Follow Canada's Rules?

- No – provinces and territories set their own rules for financial assistance.
- Manitoba has historically aligned its DFA program with Canada's DFAA to maximize cost-sharing with Canada for disasters.
- Manitoba is not required to expand the program to receive federal support for other eligible costs – it is choosing to invest in improving recovery outcomes and building more resilient communities.

Why is Manitoba Investing in a More Costly DFA Program?

- Changes to Canada's DFAA will download a greater share of costs to provinces and territories while also expanding coverage.
- Manitoba is choosing to leverage Canada's new DFAA to expand recovery supports and build back better following a disaster.

When Will These Changes be Complete?

- Canada's new DFAA were only recently finalized and represent a foundational shift in disaster recovery.
- Manitoba will be implementing DFA program changes incrementally as we develop agreements, policies, and tools for new programming.
- Manitoba EMO is also working to make the process simpler and faster for claimants and to improve program outcomes.
- We will provide regular updates about the rollout of new programs, policies and tools.

How are Things Changing in High-Risk Areas?

- Canada has changed the way it assesses risk – it is now using a 1-in-200 year flood protection level (1:200 FPL) instead of the previous standard of 1:100 FPL.
- That means more areas in Manitoba may be designated as high risk.
- New construction in high-risk areas must be appropriately mitigated to 1:200 to qualify for future disaster financial assistance.
- Existing assets in high-risk areas will initially remain eligible for DFA. If they experience major damage, they must be appropriately mitigated to 1:200 to retain future eligibility for DFA.
- Assets that are in high-risk areas and require additional mitigation work will be identified in the inspection process. Claimants can use their build-back-better amounts toward mitigation.

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What Is Major Damage?

- Major damage means significant impact to the safety, structural integrity or critical function of an asset where the asset is unable to function as intended and requires significant repairs or total reconstruction.

What Does Appropriate Mitigation Mean?

- Appropriate mitigation means an asset is not expected to experience major damage in an event at or below the 1:200 FPL.
- These assets will likely experience minor damage, and they would still be eligible for support if they suffer major damage in a flood which exceeds the 1:200 FPL.
- Mitigation can be site-specific or community-level protection.
- Assets that are in high-risk areas and require additional mitigation work will be identified in the inspection process. Claimants can use their build-back-better amounts toward mitigation.

General Questions About the DFA Program

What is Manitoba's DFA Program?

- Manitoba's DFA program provides financial assistance for uninsurable losses to essential property damaged by a natural disaster. It also provides assistance for disaster-related response.
- Manitoba's DFA is a program of last resort and is meant to re-establish a basic standard of living and function.
- DFA is not a substitute for private insurance and does not compensate applicants for lost revenue, inconvenience, non-essential damages, injuries, or lost wages.

When is a DFA Program Established?

Not all natural disasters will result in a DFA program being established. DFA programs may be established when these criteria are met:

- The disaster occurs as a result of a natural hazard;
- Has a determinable beginning date and has or will have a determinable end date;
- Occurs in a geographic area that can be specified;
- Causes widespread damage and disruption to essential assets or essential services in the geographic area that result in a significant financial burden on Manitobans.

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Is Drought Eligible for DFA?

- No. Long-term environmental conditions, such as droughts, do not meet the requirement for a disaster to have a definable start and end date. This is also the case for other prolonged and underlying weather conditions such as El Niño or La Niña cycles or climate change. While these may contribute to the frequency of storms, they are not in and of themselves distinct disasters.

Can DFA Help Producers in an Agricultural Health Emergency?

No. DFA programs are only established in response to distinct natural disasters.

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