

2025

Increase Funding for Local Emergency Management Readiness



State, local and tribal governments need additional resources to sustain and enhance emergency management capabilities.

Natural, technological, and human-influenced disasters are increasing. There is a lack of stable and sustainable funding for state and local emergency management planning and operations. The Minnesota Legislature does not appropriate sufficient state general funds to local emergency managers to help pay for daily operations such as rent, utilities, staffing. State and local governments are heavily dependent on federal grants—which are not granted directly to local governments, but are instead awarded through the state’s Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) Division—and we are keenly aware that the federal grants are expected to be less reliable in the future.



What are the state and local government plans to deal with the potential significant loss of federal grants in the next year or two?

Minnesota’s State Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division (HSEM) must become **more sustainable and less reliant on federal grants.** HSEM state appropriation is just under \$2.7 million for 2024. This is merely 25% of the funds needed to maintain the staff and operations of our state agency. The other 75% of the funds comes from federal funds. This limits the amount of federal funds that can be passed through to the counties. Local governments need to be less reliant on federal funds, but that can only be achieved with increased state funding.

Consequences of inadequate funding

While Minnesota has been able to rely on the federal government in the past, this is no longer the case. Federal emergency management grant funding is totally discretionary from year to year, has been flat for the past several years, and isn’t keeping pace with inflation and other cost increases.

- Because of federal continuing budget resolutions, the state and counties do not have a commitment on the level of grant funding until about halfway through the local fiscal year, making budgeting and other financial planning difficult.

Do local governments currently have the resources needed to prepare for and respond to local disaster incidents?

Current trends indicate a lack of financial resources which could result in:

- More part time emergency managers, many with other significant management duties.
- Counties merging emergency management duties without any clarification of priorities when there are two or three counties sharing an emergency manager with simultaneous disasters.

One of the core tenets of modern emergency management is a commitment to all-hazards planning. While it is impossible to plan for all of the 45 separate categories of potential hazards with equal degrees, the local emergency manager must have sufficient resources to perform risk analysis in order to focus on community vulnerability, and assign priorities and designate resources for core functions such as warning, evacuation and sheltering.

Potential Solutions

- Appropriate \$12 million in state funds to the 87 counties, 11 tribal nations and 4 cities of the first class. The funds will be distributed equally – \$117,000 per eligible entity. Include the same non-supplanting requirement as federal emergency preparedness grants.
- Increase the funding to HSEM to a sustainable level.
- Do nothing and continue to watch our state and local response capabilities deteriorate.

For more information, please contact:

Garry Johanson, Norman County ESO
AMEM Government Affairs Chair
garry.johanson@co.norman.mn.us

Emilio Lamba, Public Safety Policy Analyst
Association of Minnesota Counties
elamba@mncounties.org

