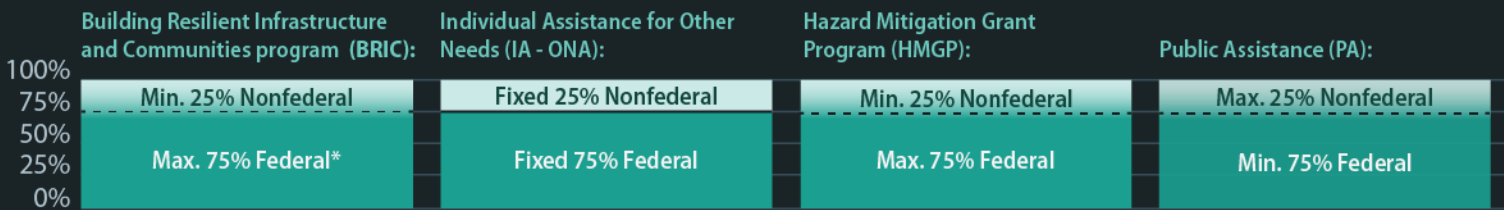# Emergency Management in the U.S.
Sharing the Costs

After a hazard strikes, the President may authorize different forms of assistance by issuing a declaration of emergency or major disaster under the **Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act** (Stafford Act; P.L. 93-288, as amended). The Stafford Act also authorizes mitigation assistance available before a specific disaster. These forms of Stafford Act assistance are subject to a **"cost share"**—an arrangement that divides the costs of response, recovery, and mitigation between the federal government and affected entities.

PRESIDENTIAL DECLARATION

Program Cost Shares

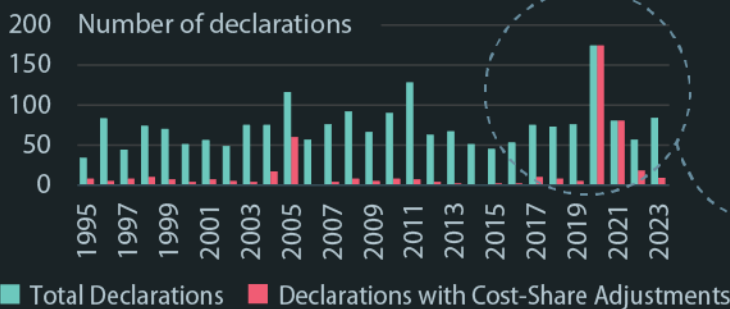|	Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities program (BRIC):	Individual Assistance for Other Needs (IA - ONA):	Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP):	Public Assistance (PA):
100% / 75%	Min. 25% Nonfederal	Fixed 25% Nonfederal	Min. 25% Nonfederal	Max. 25% Nonfederal
50% / 25% / 0%	Max. 75% Federal*	Fixed 75% Federal	Max. 75% Federal	Min. 75% Federal

Assistance to communities for projects to reduce future disaster-related losses. BRIC is available to states, tribes, and territories that received a major disaster declaration in the seven years prior to application.

Assistance to individuals for critical disaster-related costs (e.g., damaged vehicles). Other IA programs fund 100% of eligible costs.
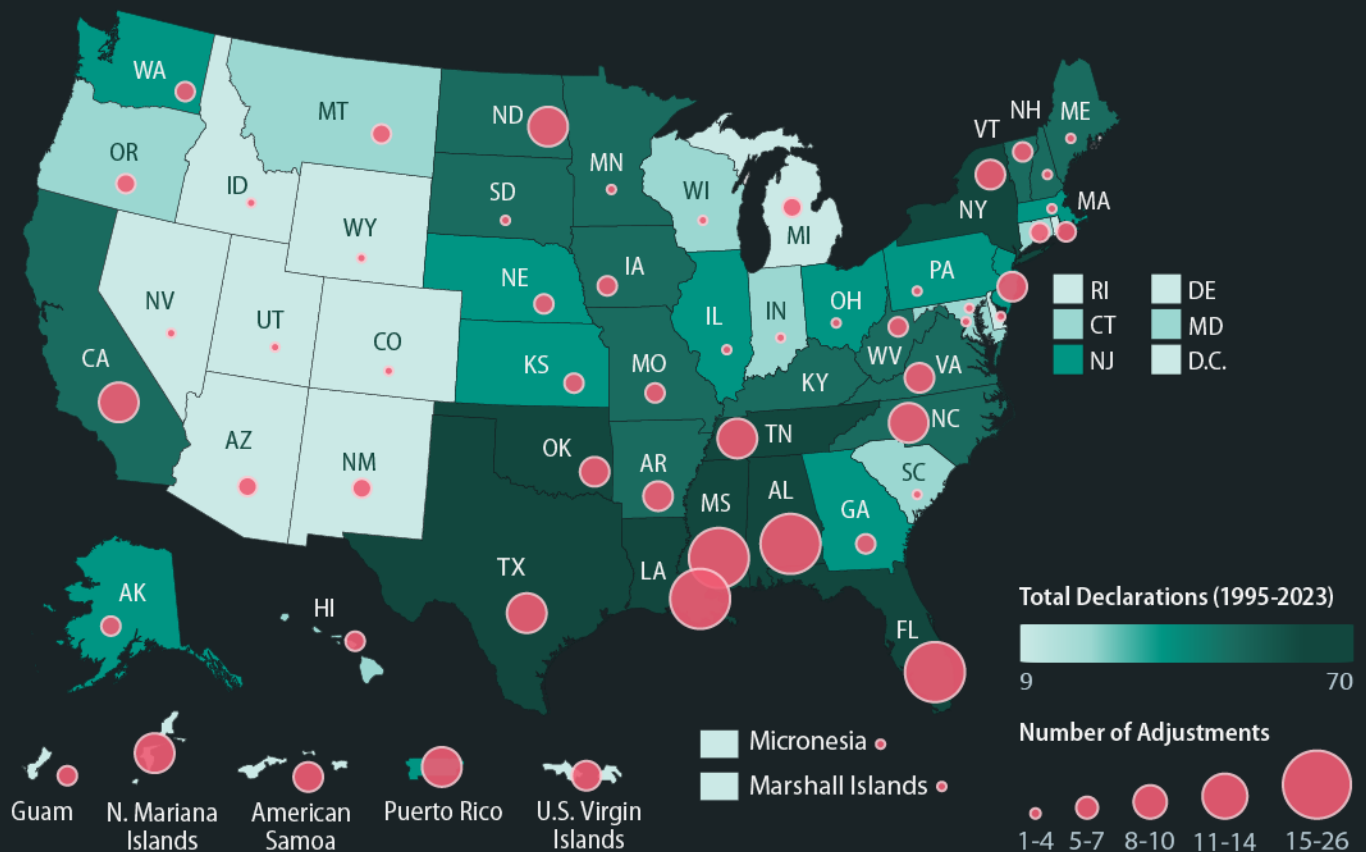
Assistance for disaster-affected states, tribes, and territories for projects to reduce future disaster-related losses.

Assistance for state, local, tribal, and territorial governments and eligible nonprofits for debris removal, emergency response, and rebuilding eligible facilities.

Public Assistance is the only Stafford Act grant program without a fixed or maximum federal cost share set in statute, allowing the President to increase the federal share. Other programs include award limits and require Congress to increase the federal share.

In recent years, both Congress and the President have increased federal cost shares with greater frequency—particularly during the years of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Number of declarations

(Bar chart, 1995–2023, y-axis 0 to 200)

- ■ Total Declarations
- ■ Declarations with Cost-Share Adjustments

RI | DE
CT | MD
NJ | D.C.

Total Declarations (1995-2023)
9 — 70

Number of Adjustments
1-4 5-7 8-10 11-14 15-26

Micronesia ·
Marshall Islands ·

Guam N. Mariana Islands American Samoa Puerto Rico U.S. Virgin Islands

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* The maximum BRIC cost share is 90% for small, impoverished communities of under 3,000 people and designated community disaster resilience zones.

** Data reflects final cost-share adjustments specific to each form of assistance and type of eligible work (e.g., a cost-share waiver for PA for debris removal) and emergency protective measures appears as two adjustments. Analysis based on cost-share adjustments announced in federalregister.gov, with reference to OpenFEMA declarations data and Congress.gov. Declarations data include emergency and major disaster declarations between 1995 and 2023 (inclusive); emergency declarations superseded by major disasters for the COVID-19 pandemic are not included.

For more information, see CRS Report R47646 (*Stafford Act Cost Shares: History, Trends, Analysis*). Data on cost-share adjustments for declarations for federally-declared tribes is not included due to changes in relevant authorities during the study period.

CRS

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Disclaimer