

DFA Eligible Wildland Urban Interface Fire Costs (for local authorities)

How is a DFA program established?

Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) programs are established on a case-by-case basis when the Manitoba government determines that a disaster:

- Caused widespread damage and disruption to essential assets or essential services in a defined geographic area.
- Imposes a significant financial burden on individuals, organizations or local authorities.
- Is the result of a natural hazard and has a determinable start and end date.

Are there any additional considerations for wildland fires?

Manitoba's DFA Regulation sets out that general wildfire firefighting costs are ineligible, unless the wildfire is a wildland urban interface (WUI) fire, which is defined as a wildfire that:

1. Poses an imminent threat to community or essential public infrastructure, including, but not limited to, single-access routes to remote communities, bridges or rural airports; and
2. results in a direct disaster impact to the community, including, but not limited to, damage to property, evacuation or loss of essential services.

What about seasonal properties or property owners that do not have insurance?

Cottages or secondary properties are never eligible for DFA.

Insurable losses are never eligible for DFA, whether insurance was purchased or not. If a municipality could have purchased insurance for an asset (for example, a recreational building) but decided not to buy insurance or self-insure, the asset is not eligible for DFA.

Are wages for municipal employees eligible for assistance?

Municipal staff hours for response and recovery related activities are only eligible if they are overtime for regular staff or for temporary staff hired for the event. In the case of temporary staff, DFA is provided for wages as well as benefits, travel and overtime costs.

Does DFA provide assistance for the use of municipal equipment in response and recovery?

The use of municipal equipment, such as backhoes is eligible. The hours the equipment is being used for response and recovery must be tracked as well as any additional costs for fuel/maintenance while the equipment is being used for response and recovery. If a municipality rents additional equipment, the rental costs are eligible.

What are some examples of eligible costs for WUI fires?

Below are costs typically eligible for a municipal claim in the case of a WUI fire. Should more detail be required, please email dfa@gov.mb.ca.

Pre-emptive preparation costs:¹

- Actions taken to increase the defensible space between public or private property and the WUI fire. For example, if a fire break is created to slow the advance of a WUI fire threatening a community, this would be eligible as a pre-impact preparation activity.
- Activities to temporarily increase the resiliency of structures (moving essential assets, deploying sprinklers, etc).
- Evacuation planning activities.

Note: Routine activities taken as part of regular wildfire season preparedness are not eligible. Pre-emptive costs must be in response to the specific wildfire threat to be eligible.

Response costs:

- Establishing situational awareness and deploying and coordinating the resources needed to respond to the disaster.
 - Expenses of this type may include, but are not limited to, expenses incurred to activate and operate incident command posts, emergency operations centres and emergency coordination centres.
- Actions to protect life safety, clearing and re-establishing safe access routes to re-establish movement of first responders, hazard containment and incident stabilization, actions to protect livestock and animals, and temporary operation of essential infrastructure.
- Initial damage and impact assessments. For example, activities conducted during response for initial scope of impacts for early estimates, such as rapid damage assessments, surveillance flights, imagery.

¹ Routine activities taken as part of regular wildfire season preparedness are not eligible. Pre-emptive costs are eligible based on a warning or forecast issued by the Government of Canada or Manitoba.

- Evacuation costs, such as setting up reception centres and check points or notifying residents of an evacuation.
- Emergency shelter/food/clothing/medical supplies, registration and inquiry, short-term rental etc. provided by host jurisdictions.
- Emergency medical assistance including medical evacuation and transportation.
- Volunteer coordination and deployment (Ex: activities to deploy, manage, support volunteers.)
- Response coordination to activate emergency coordination centres and incident command centres.
- Providing temporary housing and financial supports to people whose primary residence is under an evacuation order².

Recovery and repair/restoration costs:

- Debris removal and disaster waste management to remove and safely dispose of disaster debris and hazardous waste from public spaces and infrastructure
 - Compromised trees that pose a safety hazard are eligible for removal. Tree stumps are not eligible for removal.
 - Forested or wilderness areas may be eligible for debris removal and restoration if they are actively managed public spaces such as a maintained trail.
- Repair of damage to private property caused by public sector response.
- Repair or replacement of damaged assets and essential equipment.
- Restoration of public spaces and infrastructure. This includes:
 - Roads, bridges, public parks and protective infrastructure such as permanent firebreaks.
 - Decorative landscaping is not eligible unless it is essential to the function (eg: flowerbeds in a botanical garden.)
- Claim administration and claim management (including DFA claim submissions.)
- Recovery coordination including contracting, communications, monitoring recovery.

Relief and recovery support costs:

- Mental health counselling and psychosocial services and supports (Ex: critical incident stress management, counselling services, psychosocial first aid, community support groups, phone lines, outreach, emotional and spiritual services.)
- Financial counselling.
- Reducing barriers to accessing relief and recovery services (Ex: increasing services in remote areas, extending hour/childcare at disaster centers and community meetings, interpretation/translation, dedicated transport, community recovery staff to support navigating recovery for seniors/or those experiencing disproportionately negative recovery outcomes.)

² Local authorities are responsible for the first 72 hours of an evacuation. Emergency Social Services are responsible for the next 30 days.

- Temporary targeted highly specific disaster relief supports (Ex: intentionally designed and developed activities to provide resources and opportunities to those experiencing disproportionate negative recovery outcomes such as vouchers for low-income households)
- Transition planning (Ex: client outreach, referrals to prepare for end of enhanced disaster relief.)
- Community recovery and resilience planning (Ex: impact and needs assessments, community engagement, recovery plan development, development of data strategies for monitoring outcomes, surveys, mapping, town hall sessions.)
- Post disaster lessons learned report.

A recovery advisor will be assigned to each local authority to answer claim questions and respond to local needs.