



# Disaster Financial Assistance Program Review

FINAL REPORT

**EMO**  **MANITOBA  
EMERGENCY  
MEASURES  
ORGANIZATION**

**Manitoba** 



## Executive Summary

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In 2018, Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) committed to undertaking a review of the Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) program. The objectives of the review were to:

- modernize the DFA program;
- reduce red tape and administrative burdens; and
- minimize financial risk to the province and municipalities while maximizing recovery of funds through the federal Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA).

The review is being led by a Steering Committee and Working Group consisting of Manitoba EMO staff, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities and the Manitoba Municipal Administrators Association.

The review involved comprehensive stakeholder consultation with many groups that have experience working with the DFA program. Although stakeholders raised a number of issues during the consultations, the working group identified four high priority areas for changes to the DFA program that will meet the most pressing needs of stakeholders. They are:

- **Training and information for DFA clients**

DFA clients are seeking training from Manitoba EMO in a variety of formats that will provide a better understanding of the DFA program, such as eligible/ineligible expenses and required documentation. It was understood that DFA clients are diverse, and a different level of detail is required for municipalities versus the public.

- **Online access to claim information for DFA clients**

Stakeholders recommend an online platform to check on the status of a DFA claim and digital methods for submitting documentation.

- **Improve the timeliness of municipal inspections**

Stakeholders have underscored the need to improve the timeliness of municipal inspections after a disaster occurs.

- **Introduce clear criteria for when a DFA program is established**

Stakeholders have recommended more transparency in determining the criteria required to establish a DFA program. Stakeholders have noted that the uncertainty lies mainly when small-scale disasters occur and federal cost-sharing is unlikely.

Other recommendations made by stakeholders include: reviewing DFA assistance rates; enabling the sharing of information about DFA claims, where permitted; advocating for changes to the DFAA; and improving the DFA appeal process.

## Acronyms

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<b>AMM</b>	Association of Manitoba Municipalities
<b>CIA</b>	Community Impact Assessment
<b>DFA</b>	Disaster Financial Assistance
<b>DFAA</b>	Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements
<b>EMO</b>	Emergency Measures Organization
<b>EMPS</b>	Emergency Management and Public Safety
<b>MDAAB</b>	Municipal Disaster Assistance Appeal Board
<b>MMAA</b>	Manitoba Municipal Administrators Association
<b>PS</b>	Public Safety Canada
<b>RA</b>	Recovery Advisor

### 1.0 Background on the Disaster Financial Assistance Program

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The Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) is responsible for administering the Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) program on behalf of the Manitoba government. The DFA program provides the basic and essential needs of those affected by a natural disaster. It also aims and is intended to return property to its immediate predisaster condition. The Manitoba government may establish DFA programs to help homeowners, small businesses, farms, non-profit organizations, municipalities and provincial departments to recover from disasters.

The DFA program has helped Manitobans recover from more than \$1 billion in damage since its inception in 1970.

DFA programs may be cost shared with the federal government in cases where eligible provincial expenditures meet the federal cost-sharing formula. As a result, while Manitoba is responsible for the design, development and administration of the program, provincial guidelines must follow federal Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA) to maximize the opportunity for federal cost sharing. DFA programs that do not meet the federal cost-sharing threshold under the DFAA must be paid for entirely by the Manitoba government.

## 2.0 The DFA Program Review

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The Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) Program is undergoing a review. The main objectives are to modernize the DFA program, reduce red-tape/administrative burdens and minimize financial risk to the province and municipalities while maximizing recovery through the federal DFAA. The review is being coordinated by Manitoba EMO Recovery and Mitigation Branch and is led by:

- A Steering Committee co-chaired by the provincial Acting Assistant Deputy Minister of Emergency Management and Public Safety and the Vice President of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM).
- A Working Group consisting of representatives from Manitoba EMO, AMM and the Manitoba Municipal Administrators Association (MMAA) has also been established to guide the DFA program review and stakeholder consultations.

## 3.0 What We Heard

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In early 2018, DFA program staff consulted with stakeholders that have significant levels of experience with the DFA program during a series of consultation sessions and focused interviews. During consultations, several themes emerged related to the DFA program. Appendix A provides a detailed account of stakeholder feedback from the consultation sessions; however, the themes that emerged during consultations included:

- Additional training and information is needed on the DFA program, including tools or templates to make it easier to submit information to Manitoba EMO.
- Municipalities need public information and media awareness training.
- Requirements to establish a DFA program should be transparent.
- A central location for media information should be available during an event.
- Municipalities would like to be able to request DFA staff set up in the community after a disaster strikes.
- An online portal would be helpful for municipalities when managing a DFA claim.
- Improve and streamline the timeliness of municipal site inspections after an event occurs.
- Information on typical machinery rates and contracting fees would help municipalities when hiring contractors.
- A review is needed on municipal costs for operating municipally-owned equipment.
- Municipalities would like to receive general information on the number of private sector claims in their municipality to understand impacts on the tax base.
- Examine and extend the one-year DFA program deadline.
- Work with the federal government to make changes to the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements that benefit Manitoba municipalities.
- Expedite hydrologic or other provincial studies required as part of repair work after a disaster.
- Examine the DFA appeal process with a view to increasing timeliness and flexibility for clients.

## 4.0 Moving Issues and Ideas Forward

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After the consultation sessions, Manitoba EMO worked internally to group stakeholder recommendations into three categories:



Ideas and recommendations that can be actioned without further study and will have an immediate impact for stakeholders and clients. These are ideas where solutions have already been identified and that can be implemented internally by Manitoba EMO staff.



Ideas and recommendations that will have a positive impact for stakeholders and clients but that require further exploration to define the issue and best course of action.



Ideas that are outside of Manitoba EMO's area of responsibility and will not be actioned.

While reviewing recommendations, Manitoba EMO also identified several recommendations that should become part of its ongoing business to increase client understanding of the DFA program. Some of these recommendations are already done as part of Manitoba EMO's current business, including:

- updating website and training information annually;
- participating annually in the Manitoba Municipal Administrators' Association conferences;
- providing clients with clarity on damaged items or infrastructure when payments are deferred; and
- continually working with other provincial departments to identify the requirements and limitations of the DFA program where there is overlap in programs.

The DFA program review working group has also established the following timeframes for completion of action items and areas to explore recognizing that time frames may be impacted by the frequency of disaster-related events that occupy Manitoba EMO staff time:

**Short term**      Action items are targeted to be completed by June 2019

**Medium term**    Action items are targeted to be completed by June 2020

**Long term**        Action items are targeted to be completed beyond 2020

## 4.1 Action Items

Manitoba EMO has identified ideas and recommendations that can be actioned without further study and will have an immediate impact for stakeholders and clients. These are ideas where solutions have already been identified and that can be implemented internally by Manitoba EMO staff.

-  **Action #1** – Manitoba EMO to provide information to clients and stakeholders to increase client understanding of the DFA program. Specific items that will be developed include:
  - Renew and update the Manitoba EMO Recovery section website to ensure it is user-friendly and that information is readily available for clients (Short term, by June 2019).
  - Develop website FAQs that provide answers to commonly asked questions<sup>1</sup> (Short term, by June 2019).
  - Develop information bulletins for more complex DFA issues to share with stakeholders and on the website<sup>2</sup> (Short term, by June 2019).
  - Develop an information sheet for clients who have experienced event-related damage (Short term, by June 2019).
  - Develop templates and/or checklists for DFA clients. Templates will help DFA clients easily identify the information required by Manitoba EMO and will help to streamline approval processes (Short term, by June 2019).
  - Review and re-draft standard correspondence materials to ensure information is clear and complete for clients (Short term, by June 2019).
-  **Action #2** – Manitoba EMO will provide resources for municipal stakeholders to better understand the DFA program and to support municipalities in answering questions from their residents, recognizing that municipalities are a point of contact for the DFA program. Specific items that will be developed include:
  - Review the Community Impact Assessment submission process with a group of municipal stakeholders; identify documents, templates, training materials, internal Manitoba EMO resources and other information that would improve the claims process and that would be helpful to municipalities in navigating a DFA claim; Manitoba EMO to publish and circulate information identified by stakeholders (Medium term, by June 2020).
  - Training materials will be provided online for remote communities and those clients not able to attend in-person training opportunities (Medium term, by June 2020).
-  **Action #3** – Manitoba EMO Recovery branch to communicate what is permitted under the DFA for contracting out regular municipal job functions. This is currently permitted by the DFA program; however, this issue was raised during stakeholder consultations and requires better communication as to what is permitted to be contracted out (Short term, June 2019).
-  **Action #4** – Manitoba EMO Recovery branch to establish a system for municipalities to request that DFA program staff visit the community during and shortly after a disaster event to answer questions on the DFA program and application process. Deployment of DFA staff will remain at the discretion of Manitoba EMO (Short term, by June 2019).

<sup>1</sup> Stakeholders outlined a number of DFA topics that could be used as frequently asked questions on the Manitoba EMO website. The DFA topics to be included in FAQs are outlined in appendix B.

<sup>2</sup> Stakeholders outlined a number of complex DFA topics. It would be helpful to have an information bulletin for each topic on the Manitoba EMO website. The DFA topics to be included in information bulletins are outlined in appendix C.

- ✔ **Action #5** – Manitoba EMO to provide municipalities with a copy of the Individual Site Damage Report (ISDR) upon inspection of that site (Short term, by June 2019).
- ✔ **Action #6** – Manitoba EMO to release general information on the volume of claims within a municipality to municipal officials, upon request (Short term, by June 2019).
- ✔ **Action #7** – Manitoba EMO to make changes to its standard correspondence to claimants to suggest that they contact their municipality in cases where repairs may impact on municipal infrastructure, such as dikes or drains (Short term, by June 2019).
- ✔ **Action #8** – Manitoba EMO will bring recommendations for changes to the federal Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA) to the attention of the federal government as part of the planned review of the DFAA. Recommendations for changes raised by stakeholders include the ineligibility of regular staff time, interest costs and purchasing capital assets under the DFAA (Short term, by June 2019).
- ✔ **Action #9** – Manitoba EMO is committed to improving transparency around the DFA appeal process where it is within its control. The Manitoba Disaster Assistance Appeal Board (MDAAB) is an independent and neutral body and Manitoba EMO has no influence over MDAAB decisions. However, Manitoba EMO commits to providing clearer information to DFA clients about what can and cannot be appealed and the appeal process as this was an issue raised during stakeholder consultations. As well, Manitoba EMO commits to improving the timeliness of its own internal appeal process and will communicate process improvements to stakeholders (Short term, by June 2019).

## 4.2 Areas to Explore

Manitoba EMO has identified many issues raised by stakeholders that will have a positive impact for clients but that require further exploration to define the issue and the best course of action. Manitoba EMO is committed to initiating further study on these ideas within the timeframes outlined below.

-  **Explore #1** – Manitoba EMO to initiate a review of the current indicators of financial burden and the criteria used to determine whether an event qualifies for a disaster. This review will include a stakeholder engagement with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, Manitoba Municipal Administrators' Association and Manitoba Municipal Relations to determine if any changes are required. (Long term, beyond 2020).
-  **Explore #2** – Manitoba EMO is committed to exploring ways to use technology to improve the DFA program. Specific areas to explore further are:
  - Using online portals to manage DFA claims.
  - Allowing the electronic submission of documents.
  - Examining other online tools used by DFA clients.

Technology exploration phase: Medium term, by June 2020; Implementation of new technologies: Long term, beyond 2020.

 **Explore #3** – Manitoba EMO will review ways to streamline municipal inspections. Once the review is complete, options will be communicated to stakeholders. Ideas for streamlining municipal inspections that were raised by stakeholders include:

- Using non-engineering staff to conduct minor damage inspections.
- Using technology, such as drones or devices to enable uploading from the field.
- Deploying inspectors immediately after a disaster event.
- Providing timelier approvals for damaged sites.
- Investigating the practice of hiring local inspectors, similar to the Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation.

(Medium term, by June 2020)

 **Explore #4** – Manitoba EMO will review the assistance rates paid for using municipally-owned equipment for repair work in order to determine whether assistance rates need to be changed. Manitoba EMO will engage DFA clients as part of its review and will communicate the outcome and options to stakeholders. (Medium term, by June 2020).

 **Explore #5** – Manitoba EMO to review the timelines established for DFA programs in order to determine whether DFA programs can span across two full construction seasons. A review of the federal Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements will be included, as well as a review of Manitoba regulations and budget cycle. Once the review is complete, options will be outlined for stakeholders. (Medium term, by June 2020).

 **Explore #6** – Manitoba EMO is committed to improving transparency around the DFA appeal process where within its control. The Manitoba Disaster Assistance Appeal Board (MDAAB) is an independent and neutral body; Manitoba EMO has no influence over MDAAB decisions. However, Manitoba EMO will explore options to allow appeals to the MDAAB before a DFA claim is fully closed, where it makes sense to do so. The outcome will be a written communication to DFA clients outlining changes, if any, to the appeal process. (Medium term, by June 2020).

### 4.3 Areas that are Out-Of-Scope

Manitoba EMO has identified issues during the stakeholder consultations that are out-of-scope – these issues may not be within the responsibilities of Manitoba EMO or they may already be addressed by another organization. As such, no further work is planned on these issues. They include:

- Providing public information and media awareness training to municipal officials (note: the AMM currently offers a media training course);
- Establishing a central location for media information that is maintained by Manitoba EMO during an event (note: this is outside of the role of Manitoba EMO); and
- Circulating information on typical machinery rates and contracting fees to municipalities (note: decisions regarding tendering and acceptable repair costs are municipal decisions).

## 5.0 Next Steps and Conclusion

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Manitoba EMO has established internal project teams to manage action items and areas to explore stemming from the DFA review and will provide regular updates to members of the DFA Program Review Steering Committee and Working Group as progress is made.

The DFA Program Review Steering Committee and Working Group would like to thank all of the stakeholders that provided feedback and recommendations on how to improve the DFA program and look forward to the continued support and feedback of stakeholders in order to improve the DFA program for all Manitobans.

## Appendix A: Stakeholder Feedback

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In February 2018, the DFA program review started with a consultation session, where stakeholders were asked for suggestions on how to improve the program. In addition, the working group held interviews with key organizations, and Manitoba EMO staff sought input on DFA program improvements from municipalities at the MMAA Annual Conference in April 2018. These consultation sessions included stakeholder representatives from:

- Municipalities
- AMM
- MMAA
- Manitoba Disaster Assistance Appeal Board (MDAAB)
- Western Financial Group
- Stantec Engineering Consultants
- Manitoba Municipal Relations
- Contracted Claims Preparation Service Providers
- Public Safety Canada (PS)
- Manitoba EMO

Appendix A summarizes the feedback received through the various stakeholder consultation sessions. Not all recommendations will be implemented. Refer to sections 4.1 and 4.2 on pages 5-7 for a listing of the action items that Manitoba EMO has committed to implementing.

The feedback received from stakeholders has been categorized into the following themes:

1. Training and Education
2. DFA Program Approval
3. Access to Information
4. Municipal Inspections and Repairs
5. Municipal Equipment Rate Cap
6. Claims Preparation and Submission
7. Municipal Insurance
8. Disaster-related Costs
9. Return to Pre-Disaster Condition
10. Private Sector Claims
11. Appeals
12. Beyond the Scope of the DFA program

## THEME 1: Training and Education

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Not all recommendations will be implemented. Refer to sections 4.1 and 4.2 on pages 5-7 for a listing of the action items that Manitoba EMO has committed to implementing.

**1.1** Stakeholders identified that they would like additional training and more information on various areas of the DFA program.

### Stakeholders' Recommendations:

- Manitoba EMO should provide additional training and information on the following topics:
  - Accessing municipal advances, including the process for requesting an advance and the amount of funding that can be provided.
  - Accessing municipal insurance and how it affects DFA eligibility – How to access innovative solutions.
  - How to take pre-emptive actions, including the required documentation and any provincial assistance maximums, caps or limits.
  - The federal government's role and its effect on a provincial DFA program.
  - The process and limitations for hiring additional temporary staff, backfilling permanent positions, hiring claims preparation service providers and eligible contracted administrative costs.
  - The process and limitations for hiring project management or site supervision staff.
  - The eligibility of evacuation costs incurred by local authorities when voluntary and mandatory evacuations occur.
- Manitoba EMO should provide:
  - Stakeholder training that is applicable to their level and type of involvement in the DFA process. This should include a DFA information slot in the annual MMAA conference, as well as training workshops where changes to the DFA program can be communicated and municipal administrators have the opportunity to ask questions.
  - DFA program training online (e.g., through webinars) to make it more accessible for those in remote areas or those with time conflicts. This would allow people to refer back to the training as needed when completing a DFA submission. The content of the training should include examples of claims and necessary supporting documentation, additional templates for municipalities to use, and information on completing deferral responses, including reference material.
- Manitoba EMO should:
  - More regularly update its DFA website information. Program requirements and changes to administrative practices should be updated yearly. Relevant changes to any DFA processes should also be highlighted.
  - Create an information package that helps municipalities with the submission of a Community Impact Assessment (CIA).
  - Manitoba EMO should make their private sector evaluation guide available to the public. Develop more templates for use by municipalities, such as a template to track eligible public works activities and costs.

**1.2** Stakeholders said they would like more information about deferred items on municipal claims and appropriate municipal responses.

**Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- Manitoba EMO should provide:
  - More information on proper tracking techniques and documentation requirements for commonly deferred activities and costs.
  - More information on the municipal payment worksheet when deferring municipal costs. This should include the documentation required by Manitoba EMO to have items considered for eligibility.

**THEME 2: DFA Program Approval**

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Not all recommendations will be implemented. Refer to sections 4.1 and 4.2 on pages 5-7 for a listing of the action items that Manitoba EMO has committed to implementing.

**2.1** Stakeholders said it isn't clear whether a DFA program will be established for specific events, and what constitutes a financial burden for municipalities, warranting the creation of a DFA program. As well, stakeholders expressed a lack of clarity in the role of the federal government in the establishment of a DFA program.

**Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- Manitoba EMO should:
  - Create clear guidelines and a list of event types that may be considered eligible for DFA, so municipalities have a better sense of when a DFA program is likely to be established.
  - Consider a formula for determining unreasonable financial burden for municipalities and what factors should be part of the calculation. This formula would need to be transparent and able to be communicated to municipal ratepayers and should have a contingency for municipalities that recently experienced multiple events and may not have fully recovered.
- Manitoba EMO should:
  - Streamline the process to establish a DFA program, and inform stakeholders in a timelier manner, regardless of whether damages are widespread or localized. A determination of a DFA program earlier in the recovery process allows the municipality to determine the appropriate course of action for repairs and expenditure of municipal funding.
  - Provide greater clarity on where municipalities should send their Community Impact Assessment (CIA) and Council Resolution.
  - Provide municipalities with a less complex form for initial event-related impacts. This would alert Manitoba EMO that the municipality will be submitting a DFA claim, while allowing the municipality time to gather the appropriate information in order to provide a thorough CIA.

## THEME 3: Access to Information

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Not all recommendations will be implemented. Refer to sections 4.1 and 4.2 on pages 5-7 for a listing of the action items that Manitoba EMO has committed to implementing.

**3.1** As documentation requirements and other information changes from year to year, stakeholders said that it's hard to differentiate specific requirements that are applicable to each program.

### Stakeholders' Recommendations:

- Manitoba EMO should provide program changes and requirements on its website stating the year they become effective.
- When Manitoba EMO presents on the DFA program at different venues, such as the flood preparedness seminars, the presentation should identify and explain changes to the DFA process for that year.

**3.2** Stakeholders identified they are often subject to media requests during an event, but do not have the time to devote to their public messaging strategy.

### Stakeholders' Recommendations:

- Manitoba EMO should:
  - Provide a central location for media outlets to obtain information about affected areas and event impacts.
  - Help municipalities to create their public information strategy, so they are prepared, should an event occur.

**3.3** Stakeholders identified that they would like to access information online regarding the status of their DFA claims. They would also like to have the ability to electronically upload claims information, rather than mailing information to Manitoba EMO.

### Stakeholders' Recommendations:

- Manitoba EMO should:
  - Provide claimants with access to their claims online.
  - Use a website similar to Manitoba Municipality Online to allow municipalities to see information on their DFA claim (e.g., submission status, site status, engineering report status) and upload or download claim documents.
  - Develop a mobile app that allows municipalities to view the status of their claim and the status of specific sites.
  - Create an online system for municipal inspections that allows both the contracted engineering consultants and municipalities to upload and access site information, such as photos, for immediate review.

## THEME 4: Municipal Inspections and Repairs

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Not all recommendations will be implemented. Refer to sections 4.1 and 4.2 on pages 5-7 for a listing of the action items that Manitoba EMO has committed to implementing.

**4.1** Stakeholders indicated that it would be beneficial if the length of time it takes for damaged municipal sites to be inspected could be reduced.

### Stakeholders' Recommendations:

- Manitoba EMO should:
  - Have a line item in its budget and direct their contracted engineering consultants to conduct inspections as soon as an event happens, as opposed to after a DFA program has been established.
  - Clearly communicate to municipalities the role of the DFA contracted engineering consultants.
  - In conjunction with the federal DFA, allow non-engineers (e.g., municipalities or other provincial or local inspectors) to conduct inspections of small sites such as minor road wash outs that could be reviewed by engineers. Onsite inspections by engineers should be limited to large sites with moderate to large-scale damage, and those requiring an engineering report.
  - Develop a template for municipalities to provide the contracted engineering consultants with a summary of the damaged sites prior to the engineer's site visit.
  - Consider the use of drones to conduct municipal inspections.
  - Create a standardized spreadsheet for municipalities to document any permanent or temporary repairs completed prior to the contracted engineering consultants conducting a site inspection.
  - Have knowledgeable staff accompany the contracted engineering consultants to site inspections. For example, Public Works employees may be best suited for this task, as they can often provide background information on the damaged sites.
  - Work with their contracted engineering consultants to ensure they have extensive knowledge of all types of municipal infrastructure and related repairs.
  - Allow a dollar amount to be attributed to each site, rather than machine hour and material value limit. This would allow stakeholders the flexibility to use the machinery that they have available and deem appropriate to complete a site repair.
  - Provide municipalities with an initial copy of the individual site damage report at the time of inspection.
  - Allow the contracted engineering consultants to determine site eligibility. This should occur at the time of inspection.
  - In conjunction with the contracted engineering consultants, consider using technology that would allow Individual site damage reports to be uploaded in real time from the field.

**4.2** Stakeholders identified that in some instances, there may be rate gouging by outside contractors during the response and recovery phase of a disaster event. To offset this, stakeholders can have contracts in place prior to an event, with pre-determined equipment and staff rates. This would avoid paying a higher price as the result of an emergency event.

### Stakeholders' Recommendation:

- Manitoba EMO should circulate information regarding machinery rates and contracting fees for municipalities, so stakeholders can make financially conscious decisions when hiring contractors.

**4.3** Stakeholders identified that contractors do not always complete event repairs to the same standards that municipal employees do, since contractors are not accountable to the taxpayer.

**Stakeholders' Recommendation:**

- Manitoba EMO should allow municipalities to hire contractors to complete the municipalities' regular maintenance tasks, such as grading, so that municipal resources can be used to repair event-related damages.

## **THEME 5: Municipal Equipment Rate Cap**

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Not all recommendations will be implemented. Refer to sections 4.1 and 4.2 on pages 5-7 for a listing of the action items that Manitoba EMO has committed to implementing.

**5.1** Stakeholders identified that the allowable 65 per cent cost-share rate for public sector equipment is an incentive for municipalities to contract out municipal repairs to construction companies to complete. Municipalities advised that the 65 per cent cap does not accurately reflect the actual cost of municipal machinery operation.

**Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- Manitoba EMO should:
  - Remove the municipal equipment rate cap.
  - Consult with municipalities, AMM and MMAA for a more accurate depiction of the actual costs associated with machinery usage.
  - Allocate an appropriate amount for municipal employee time that matches the actual cost of employee salaries when repairs are conducted during regular working hours.
  - Consider the financial state of the affected municipality when applying the equipment rate cap, and provide greater flexibility to municipalities that have experienced a number of disasters over a short period of time.
  - Consider different equipment rate caps that are dependent on the scale and scope of an event.
  - Consider a different equipment rate cap for response activities undertaken within the initial onset of the event.

**5.2** Stakeholders identified that the one-year program deadline is problematic, as large repairs often stretch over multiple construction seasons.

**Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- Manitoba EMO should consider extending program deadlines to include two construction seasons. This will reduce the documentation required by municipalities.

**5.3** Stakeholders identified that they would like more autonomy and flexibility in hiring local residents to complete eligible DFA event-related activities.

**Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- Manitoba EMO should work with municipalities to better understand municipal needs and local capabilities and encourage employing local residents to complete municipal event-related activities.

**5.4** Stakeholders identified that financial assistance should be provided for site supervision and site management costs when these services are conducted by regular municipal staff during a normal work day, as these tasks take away employee focus from regular municipal maintenance.

**Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- Manitoba EMO should allow municipalities to claim a portion of a public works foreman's general wage when conducting site management or supervision tasks.

## **THEME 6: Claims Preparation**

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Not all recommendations will be implemented. Refer to sections 4.1 and 4.2 on pages 5-7 for a listing of the action items that Manitoba EMO has committed to implementing.

**6.1** Stakeholders identified that they would like greater communication between contracted claims preparation service providers and Manitoba EMO.

**Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- Manitoba EMO should:
  - Accept a municipal council resolution as sufficient documentation to authorize a third party, contracted claims preparation service provider, to act on behalf of that municipality.
  - Develop clear guidelines for working directly with contracted claims preparation service providers on day-to-day claims management, when requested by the municipality.
  - Copy the contracted claims preparation service provider on claim correspondence sent to the municipality.
  - Provide guidance on the level of information required on contracted claims preparation service providers' invoices.

**6.2** Stakeholders identified that the ineligibility of regular staff administrative costs encourages municipalities to outsource claims preparation and submission duties to third party claims preparation contractors.

**Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- Manitoba EMO should:
  - Allow municipalities to claim a portion of the general wages of administration staff when undertaking claims preparation tasks.
  - Create a formula or allow a maximum per cent of a claim total to be considered for eligible administrative costs for claims preparation.
  - Provide financial incentive for municipalities to complete their own claims submission in-house and attend relevant training sessions.

## **THEME 7: Municipal Insurance**

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Not all recommendations will be implemented. Refer to sections 4.1 and 4.2 on pages 5-7 for a listing of the action items that Manitoba EMO has committed to implementing.

**7.1** Stakeholders identified that they are unclear on the relationship between municipal insurance and the DFA program.

### **Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- Manitoba EMO should develop a better understanding of the coverages available by municipal insurance providers and provide the appropriate education to municipalities regarding how municipal insurance affects eligibility under the DFA program.

## **THEME 8: Disaster-related Costs**

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Not all recommendations will be implemented. Refer to sections 4.1 and 4.2 on pages 5-7 for a listing of the action items that Manitoba EMO has committed to implementing.

**8.1** Stakeholders identified that there can be significant event-related costs, and since many stakeholders have small budgets, it can be difficult to cash flow disaster-related costs.

### **Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- Manitoba EMO should:
  - Provide additional education and information on accessing municipal advances and requesting progress payments.
  - Advise PS that the ineligibility of interest costs under the federal DFAA is problematic for both municipalities and the Manitoba government.

**8.2** Stakeholders said that it would be more cost effective to make capital purchases for equipment eligible for DFA rather than only making rental costs for equipment eligible.

### **Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- Manitoba EMO should:
  - Give consideration to the eligibility of capital purchases for items that will be rented for an event that will extend over a significant time period.
  - Advise PS that the ineligibility of capital purchases under the DFAA is problematic and may increase the cost of disasters.

## **THEME 9: Return to Pre-Disaster Condition**

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Not all recommendations will be implemented. Refer to sections 4.1 and 4.2 on pages 5-7 for a listing of the action items that Manitoba EMO has committed to implementing.

**9.1** Stakeholders identified they would like greater clarity on repairing sites beyond returning them to their pre-disaster condition.

### **Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- Manitoba EMO should clearly outline the proper process and procedure for municipalities who fund site upgrades or enhancements that go beyond returning a site to pre-disaster condition, for the purpose of preventing future disasters.

**9.2** Stakeholders identified confusion around when temporary or permanent earthen diking may be eligible for assistance.

**Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- Manitoba EMO should provide greater clarity regarding when municipalities can leave earthen dikes in place permanently that were constructed as the result of an event, and receive assistance for the construction costs of those dikes.
- Where a dike is being finished so it can be left in place permanently, Manitoba EMO and the federal DFAA should allow dike finishing costs to be considered eligible under the DFA program.

**9.3** Stakeholders identified that the current requirements to have a damaged site approved for an innovative solution are unclear.

**Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- Manitoba EMO should:
  - Provide better education on when an innovative solution could be used.
  - Provide municipalities with written confirmation of approval to implement an innovative solution for site repair.
  - Develop clear guidelines and procedures for municipalities to implement an innovative solution.

**9.4** Stakeholders identified they would like the ability to reallocate estimated repair funds from one site to another, should a site repair be completed under budget.

**Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- Manitoba EMO should allow municipalities to self identify when a site no longer requires the funding that has been allocated for it, and the site to which the municipality wishes to reallocate DFA funding.

**9.5** Stakeholders identified they would like better coordination between Manitoba EMO and other agencies responsible for permitting, additional studies and other sources of funding.

**Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- Manitoba EMO should:
  - Assist municipalities with navigation of funding sources that may be used to assist or “stack” on top of DFA funding. This would help maximize government assistance for site damage repairs.
  - Work with other provincial departments that are responsible for items such as hydrologic studies and permitting, to facilitate a faster turnaround time for municipal DFA eligible site repairs that require additional documentation.
  - Assist municipalities in determining other funding sources that may be accessed, in addition to DFA.
  - Facilitate information sharing between provincial departments when various provincial approvals are needed.

## THEME 10: Private Sector Claims

Not all recommendations will be implemented. Refer to sections 4.1 and 4.2 on pages 5-7 for a listing of the action items that Manitoba EMO has committed to implementing.

**10.1** Stakeholders have identified that private sector applicants have expressed concern about various aspects of the DFA program.

### Stakeholders' Recommendations:

- Manitoba EMO should:
  - Attach a checklist of required documentation to the application form.
  - Provide claimants with access to their claims online.
  - Provide private sector claimants with one recovery advisor (RA) for the entirety of a private sector claim to allow for continuity.
  - Ensure there is consistent verbal messaging by all private sector RAs throughout a program.
  - Provide comprehensive, consistent, plain language messaging to private sector claimants. Written correspondence that quotes the DFA Regulation or federal DFAA should include a plain language explanation.
  - Allow their private sector DFA inspectors to document the event damage and determine eligibility at the time of the inspection.
  - Consider hiring local people to inspect private sector damages.
  - Provide a more detailed breakdown of payment information to private sector claimants, with greater clarity and understanding of eligible costs.

**10.2** Stakeholders identified that public messaging regarding the establishment of a DFA program could be improved.

### Stakeholders' Recommendations:

- Manitoba EMO should:
  - Use a broad variety of public education mediums, including newspaper, radio and social media in an effort to communicate program information to a broad variety of potential applicants.
  - Make greater use of the Manitoba's Mobile Command Unit, which is equipped with DFA staff, to answer private sector applicants' questions and assist claimants in applying for DFA. A request system should be considered for municipalities that want to request that the unit be dispatched to their area to assist ratepayers to apply to the DFA program.

**10.3** Stakeholders have identified that private sector inquiries related to DFA programs have a large impact on municipal staff during and after an event. In many situations, municipal staff do not have the knowledge base to answer DFA related inquiries.

### Stakeholders' Recommendations:

- Manitoba EMO should create:
  - Better education for front-line municipal staff to answer basic DFA-related inquiries from residents.
  - A plain language information sheet available as both a reference tool for municipal staff and for municipal distribution to residents. Suggested information for this document includes explanations of claims eligibility, seasonal residences, insurable items and documentation requirements.
  - Additional education campaigns for private sector claimants before an event occurs, including education about the introduction of overland flood insurance.

**10.4** Stakeholders are unclear about municipal roles and responsibilities when residents are mandatorily evacuated, as well as during a voluntary evacuation.

**Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- Manitoba EMO should:
  - Provide additional education about financial eligibility, and about proper procedures related to municipal residents who are mandatorily versus voluntarily evacuated.
  - Develop clear municipal guidelines and thresholds for evacuation procedures within their boundaries, including areas of high risk. Municipalities should request assistance from their regional Manitoba EMO emergency management advisor, if required.

**10.5** Stakeholders identified that the denial of private sector DFA claims can create a reduced revenue stream for municipalities in some instances.

**Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- Manitoba EMO should undertake additional consultation with stakeholders to better understand the impacts of private sector claims denial on municipalities.
- Municipalities would like Manitoba EMO to provide statistics related to private sector claims within their municipal boundaries for planning purposes.

## **THEME 11: Claim Appeals**

Not all recommendations will be implemented. Refer to sections 4.1 and 4.2 on pages 5-7 for a listing of the action items that Manitoba EMO has committed to implementing.

**11.1** Stakeholders identified that private sector claimants have various concerns about the DFA program appeal process.

**Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- The appeals process should have designated timelines for completion of Manitoba EMO's first stage appeal decisions and MDAAB's second stage appeal hearings and corresponding decisions.
- Manitoba EMO should have an additional appeal process available for private sector applicants that do not fit into program guidelines.

**11.2** Stakeholders have identified that the requirement for public sector claims to be completed before being able to access the appeal option for one or more sites or items is not ideal.

**Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- Manitoba EMO should consult with the MDAAB to determine if complex public sector claims should be eligible if the entire claim has not been closed.

**11.3** Stakeholders have identified that they are unsure of the actual authority held by the MDAAB.

**Stakeholders' Recommendations:**

- Manitoba EMO should provide better education for the public and private sector regarding the actual authority of MDAAB.

## THEME 12: Beyond the Scope of the DFA Program

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Not all recommendations will be implemented. Refer to sections 4.1 and 4.2 on pages 5-7 for a listing of the action items that Manitoba EMO has committed to implementing.

**12.1** Stakeholders identified that in years where the province has administered multiple financial assistance programs for a single disaster, some event-related costs have been subject to funding gaps and were not recoverable through any provincial program. This leaves the additional costs to be borne by the municipality. In addition, in these instances, private sector claimants experienced confusion as a result of multiple programs. Furthermore, private sector claimants that received assistance above DFA rates, now have unrealistic expectations of the DFA program.

### Stakeholders' Recommendations:

- Manitoba EMO should provide additional assistance to municipalities to help navigate programs. This will ensure that all event-related costs are encompassed and can be recovered.
- The Manitoba government should ensure public and private sector claimants have accessed the appropriate assistance program.
- Manitoba EMO should develop information and a public education campaign to help private sector claimants to better understand the limitations of the DFA program.

**12.2** Stakeholders have identified that they would like the province to use and consult residents with local area knowledge when undertaking provincial mitigation efforts.

### Stakeholders' Recommendations:

- The province should consult with the local public works department when employing provincial mitigation techniques.

**12.3** Stakeholders identified that in some cases, municipalities experience a decline to their tax assessment base due to reduction of property values in connection with disaster related impacts. As a result, the municipality is subject to ongoing financial strain.

### Stakeholders' Recommendations:

- The Manitoba government should consider how to assist municipalities with reduced property values as a result of a disaster.

**12.4** Stakeholders have identified that they would like additional provincial assistance when responding to a disaster.

### Stakeholders' Recommendations:

- Manitoba EMO should provide municipalities with additional training and education regarding the use of the Manitoba EMO Duty Officer system and the process to request provincial assistance during an event.
- The Manitoba government should provide municipalities with best practices and mitigation tactics that municipalities can implement when pre-emptive and response activities are required.
- The Manitoba government should develop an instruction manual and create a task force that may be dispatched to assist with mitigation techniques during the pre-emptive and response periods of an event.

## Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions

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During consultations, stakeholders outlined a number of DFA topics that were unclear or where additional information would help to clarify the topic. DFA program staff recommended that topics be answered in frequently asked questions (FAQs) on the Manitoba EMO website. FAQs should include:

- How to submit a Community Impact Assessment
- Municipal insurance and the DFA program
- Eligibility of evacuation costs (mandatory vs. voluntary)
- The use of machinery by municipalities, other than the machinery outlined in the Individual Site Damage Report
- Overland flood insurance
- Eligibility of snow removal costs
- Eligibility of costs for steaming culverts
- Eligibility of costs related to an Emergency Operations Centre and tracking costs
- The Federal Government's role in the DFA program

## Appendix C: Information Bulletins

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Stakeholders outlined a number of more complex DFA topics where additional information would help to clarify the topic. DFA program staff recommended these topics be outlined in an information bulletin on the Manitoba EMO website. Information bulletins would provide help with more complex information that can't be summarized in an FAQ. Information bulletin topics should include:

- Hiring temporary staff for DFA event-related activities
- Preparing municipal claims, including staffing related to municipal claims (backfilling positions, hiring temporary staff, hiring third party claims service providers)
- Payments to municipalities, including advanced payments, progress payments, final payments and overpayments
- Undertaking pre-emptive actions prior to an event, including required documentation
- Hiring project management and site supervision staff
- Municipally-funded site upgrades and mitigative enhancements
- Eligibility of capital purchases made to respond to an event
- Guidelines for innovative solutions
- Eligibility of dikes

