

REQUEST FOR PRESIDENTIAL EMERGENCY DECLARATION

January 23, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Through: Arsany Thomas
Acting Regional Administrator
FEMA Region 6
800 North Loop 288
Denton, TX 76209

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 501 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR §206.35, I respectfully request that you declare an emergency for the State of Arkansas as a result of the anticipated severe winter weather expected to begin on January 23, 2026, and continue thereafter. In response to this event, I took appropriate action under state law and directed the execution of the Arkansas Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan on January 23, 2026, and proactively declared a State of Emergency on January 22, 2026.

I have determined this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and affected local governments and that supplementary Federal assistance is necessary.

The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) activated to Level 2 (Increased Preparedness) at 0850 on January 23, 2026, with support from all 16 Emergency Support Functions. ADEM Area Coordinators are supporting the local EOCs with technical and logistical support; ADEM Public Information Officer is supporting local EOCs with all media relations, conducting rumor control, and providing safety messages through press releases and social media. ADEM hosts daily response coordination calls with all Emergency Management partners at the local, state, and federal levels; continues to partner with the USACE. Arkansas National Guard is coordinating with the Arkansas

State Police to pre-position winter strike teams to aid in traffic control, citizen aid, and security. Arkansas State Police (ASP) Emergency Response Teams are monitoring the event and are capable of response if necessary. They are prepared to support local law enforcement and Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) with road closures and traffic control points. ARDOT has been actively pre-treating major interstates and highways in preparation for the severe winter weather. Arkansas Department of Human Services is maintaining situational awareness and coordinating any mass care needs with local jurisdictions and volunteer agencies with approximately 42 warming centers opened across the state. The Department of Finance and Administration is supporting procurement needs in the SEOC and currently ordering additional generators for future operations.

Due to the evolving nature of this severe winter weather event and rapidly changing conditions, it is difficult to estimate the level of Direct Federal Assistance required.

Since January 2015, there have been 38 gubernatorial declarations in Arkansas, which have severely depleted the Governor's Response and Recovery Fund. Although Arkansas has a State Public Assistance Program, it would be difficult for the State to bear all financial responsibility and properly recover without the assistance of a Presidential Emergency Declaration. Many of the same counties in Arkansas continue to experience repeated disaster impacts, compounding recovery challenges and significantly limiting local and state capacity to absorb additional emergency response costs.

While this event is expected to impact the entire state of Arkansas, significant damage is expected in counties that are still in the early stages of recovery from the two federal disasters that occurred in March and April of 2025.

The prolonged and repeated activation of state and local emergency resources, combined with the depletion of state response funds from prior disasters, has exceeded the State's ability to effectively sustain response operations without federal assistance. Direct Federal Assistance may be required for emergency protective measures including, but not limited to, debris clearance for emergency access, traffic control, power generation, warming center support, and life-safety operations during extended periods of extreme cold.

Accordingly, I have determined that this event is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and affected local governments, and that supplementary Federal assistance is necessary. Therefore, I respectfully request a Presidential Emergency Declaration for the State of Arkansas, authorizing Category A and Category B assistance, limited to Direct Federal Assistance, on a statewide basis. Your favorable consideration for this declaration is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sarah Sanders". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah Huckabee Sanders
Governor

Enclosures:

OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13

Enclosure C

Governor's Executive Order

National Weather Service Data