



**STATE OF ARKANSAS**  
**SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS**  
**GOVERNOR**

September 19, 2024

Ms. Deanne Criswell  
Administrator of FEMA  
Washington, D.C.

Through: Mr. George A. Robinson  
Regional Administrator  
FEMA Region 6  
800 North Loop 288  
Denton, TX 76209-3698

RE: FEMA-4788-DR-AR,  
Federal Cost Share Adjustment for Public Assistance  
Categories A (Debris) and B (Emergency Protective Measures)

Dear Administrator Criswell:

This letter is regarding an appeal request for the 100% federal cost share adjustment for Public Assistance Categories A and B (debris removal and emergency protective measures) for the first 30 days of FEMA-4788-DR. FEMA originally concluded that the increased level of funding requested in the major disaster declaration FEMA-4788-DR was unwarranted. I have enclosed information from cities and counties that show the need to increase the funding level to aid in the recovery efforts of those affected by this disaster. The State requests that FEMA reconsider the denial of the 30-day 100% cost share adjustment for Public Assistance Categories A and B.

- Severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding resulted in a major disaster declaration for the State of Arkansas on May 30, 2024. The incident period began on May 24, 2024, and ended on May 27, 2024.
- FEMA-4788-DR encompassed a disaster area spanning eleven counties and twenty towns and cities. This extensive disaster area experienced excessive debris, both vegetative,

construction, and demolition. The debris projects have placed a significant financial burden on these towns, cities, and counties, forcing them to allocate substantial resources to clear the debris from their communities. We have received twenty letters from the affected communities detailing how a cost share adjustment would greatly benefit their communities as they recover from the severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding. In one of the attached letters, Little Flock stated that without the 100% cost share, the applicant share for their Category A would account for over 25% of the city's general fund. In another letter, Rogers stated that without the federal cost share adjustment, the city would be responsible for covering \$4.25 million as its portion of the Category A projects within the first 30 days. Within Benton County, this destructive weather event contained the top two widest tornadoes in Arkansas history, and both tornadoes rank in the top 10 widest tornado paths in the United States, with the Decatur tornado being 1.9 miles wide and the Rogers tornado being 1.8 miles wide, per the National Weather Service. For the past twenty years, all other tornado events on this top 10 widest path list have received increased federal funding percentages for Category A and Category B projects. The wide path of these destructive tornadoes has affected countless businesses, homes, and communities in Arkansas, and the economic impact felt years to come. The decision not to grant the 100% cost share for the first 30 days will greatly impact these communities, which might not have a large general account or surplus to account for their 25% cost share of each Category A & B project.

- This disaster not only greatly affected a large portion of the state, but it also affected poverty-stricken communities. The chart below indicates that while the State of Arkansas' poverty rate is at 16.8%, which is above the National Average of 11.5%, most of the impacted counties and communities have higher poverty rates than the state's average, with Nevada County representing the most significant number of residents below the poverty level at 27.8%. A federal cost share adjustment to 100%, increasing from 75%, will relieve the financial burden of recovery for the struggling communities in Arkansas that were severely impacted by the severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding.

<i>Percentage of the population</i>	<i>for whom poverty status is determined</i>
<b>Data Source*</b>	<b>US Census Bureau</b>
<b>National Average</b>	<b>11.5%</b>
<b>State Average</b>	<b>16.8%</b>
<b>Requested Jurisdictions</b>	
<b>Baxter</b>	<b>13.5%</b>
<b>Benton</b>	<b>7.3%</b>
<b>Boone</b>	<b>13.2%</b>
<b>Carroll</b>	<b>15.4%</b>
<b>Fulton</b>	<b>15.3%</b>
<b>Madison</b>	<b>16.5%</b>
<b>Marion</b>	<b>17.8%</b>

<b>Nevada</b>	<b>27.8%</b>
<b>Randolph</b>	<b>19.2%</b>
<b>Sharp</b>	<b>15.9%</b>

- Many of these communities experienced additional disasters in 2024 before and after FEMA-4788-DR. These additional disasters have put a financial strain on these recovering communities. On January 22, 2024, severe storms and flooding struck Arkansas and continued to cause dangers, hardships, and suffering throughout the state, which included Carroll, Fulton, Madison, Nevada, and Sharp Counties in that disaster. On July 17, 2024, severe storms and flooding struck Arkansas, affecting Boone and Marion Counties. The storm system caused flash flooding, with over ten inches of rain falling in just eight hours. This led to emergency evacuations in Yellville, Marion County, and a main highway bridge wash out. On August 31, 2024, severe storms and flash flooding caused extensive damage to the western side of Fulton County. While FEMA-4788-DR was devastating for these affected counties, the continued disasters they have faced on top of FEMA-4788-DR have placed financial hardships on these counties as they attempt to recover and restore their communities to pre-disaster conditions. Collectively, these repeated disasters have created overwhelming hardships and severe financial burdens on these already strained communities, and the state, making the path to recovery increasingly difficult.

Your favorable consideration is appreciated when reviewing this appeal. Please contact Jodi Lee, State Coordinating Officer, at (501) 683-6700 or [recoverybranch@adem.arkansas.gov](mailto:recoverybranch@adem.arkansas.gov) with any questions.

Sincerely,



Sarah Huckabee Sanders  
Governor of Arkansas