

**REQUEST FOR PRESIDENTIAL MAJOR  
DISASTER DECLARATION AND APPEAL  
TO MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATION  
DENIAL**

April 18, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

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

Dear Mr. President:

Pursuant to Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121–5207, as implemented by 44 CFR §§ 206.36 and 206.46, I respectfully request that you reconsider your denial of a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Arkansas for Individual Assistance and accept our request for a Major Disaster Declaration for Public Assistance. The severe storms and tornadoes that occurred on March 14 and 15, 2025, produced catastrophic impacts across the state. The sheer magnitude of this event resulted in overwhelming amounts of debris, widespread destruction to homes and businesses, the tragic loss of three lives, and injuries to many others. Less than three weeks later, Arkansas was once again devastated by a second wave of severe storms, tornadoes, and a generational flooding event. These compounding disasters severely affected many of the same counties, adding even more catastrophic debris and tragically claiming the lives of three additional Arkansans. Given the cumulative impact of these events, federal assistance is essential to help our communities recover.

In response to this event, I took appropriate action under state law and directed the execution of the Arkansas Emergency Management Plan on March 14, 2025, and declared a State of Emergency on March 15, 2025. As a result of severe weather across the state, the State Emergency Operations Center was activated at 1:00 am on March 15 and remained activated through 5:00 pm on March 16. The Arkansas Division of Emergency Management (ADEM) remained in close contact with emergency managers throughout the affected areas and coordinated with agencies and organizations, including the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT), Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Forestry Division, Arkansas Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), Arkansas Department of Human Services (ADHS), Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), Arkansas National Guard (ARNG), US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), National Weather Service (NWS), American

Red Cross of Arkansas, The Salvation Army, and the Arkansas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (ARVOAD). Resources from all State departments and agencies were made available and are hereby committed, to the reasonable extent necessary, to protect lives and to prevent, minimize, and repair injury and damage.

### **State EOC Activation and Response**

On March 15, 2025, the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) was activated to Level I at 1:10 am in response to the severe storms and tornadoes. Twenty-six personnel were assigned to the SEOC in response to the event over the two-day activation. The SEOC returned to Level III at 5:00 pm on March 16, 2025.

During this event, ADEM coordinated with multiple state agencies, such as the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT), Arkansas Department of Human Services, Arkansas Wireless Information Network (AWIN), Arkansas Forestry Commission, Arkansas Department of Health, Arkansas Public Service Commission, and the Arkansas National Guard. ARDOT assisted with debris removal and right-of-way clearance in the declared counties. AWIN deployed a Site on Wheels (SOW) & Cell on Wheels (COW), as well as twenty-two AWIN handheld radios, to Cave City to assist in restoring communications for the residents and first responders. Arkansas Public Service Commission supplied the Cave City Water Treatment Plant in Sharp County with a 75-kilowatt 3-phase generator to avoid prolonged disruption to service for Cave City residents. Arkansas Forestry Commission assisted the National Weather Service with an aerial drone flyover for the longest storm paths from Searcy County through Randolph County, Cleburne County to Clay County, White County to Craighead County, and White County to Poinsett County. ADEM deployed its Mobile Command Vehicle to Cave City on March 15 to assist with communication efforts and establish a temporary Command Center in the immediate response to the severe storms and tornadoes. The Mobile Command Vehicle was used from March 15 at 9:40 am to March 17 at 5:30 pm. Arkansas Department of Corrections (DOC) received a request through ADEM for an inmate crew to assist in debris removal in Jackson and Stone Counties, and over twenty personnel responded. ADH assisted displaced residents in Lawrence County in finding solutions to obtaining prescription medications. Arkansas National Guard provided nine security force teams in Jackson and Sharp County, and a total of 90 National Guard troops were deployed to the affected communities.

## **Weather Summary**

A powerful storm system resulted in a multi-day outbreak of severe storms across Arkansas beginning Friday, March 14, and continuing through Saturday, March 15. A large-scale upper-level trough moved eastward from the Central Plains on March 14 and crossed the Lower Mississippi Valley on March 15. Increasingly favorable environmental conditions for severe thunderstorms and tornadoes spread across Arkansas ahead of the approaching upper-level trough, with a series of embedded disturbances in the main trough producing numerous reports of hazardous weather from March 14 to March 15.

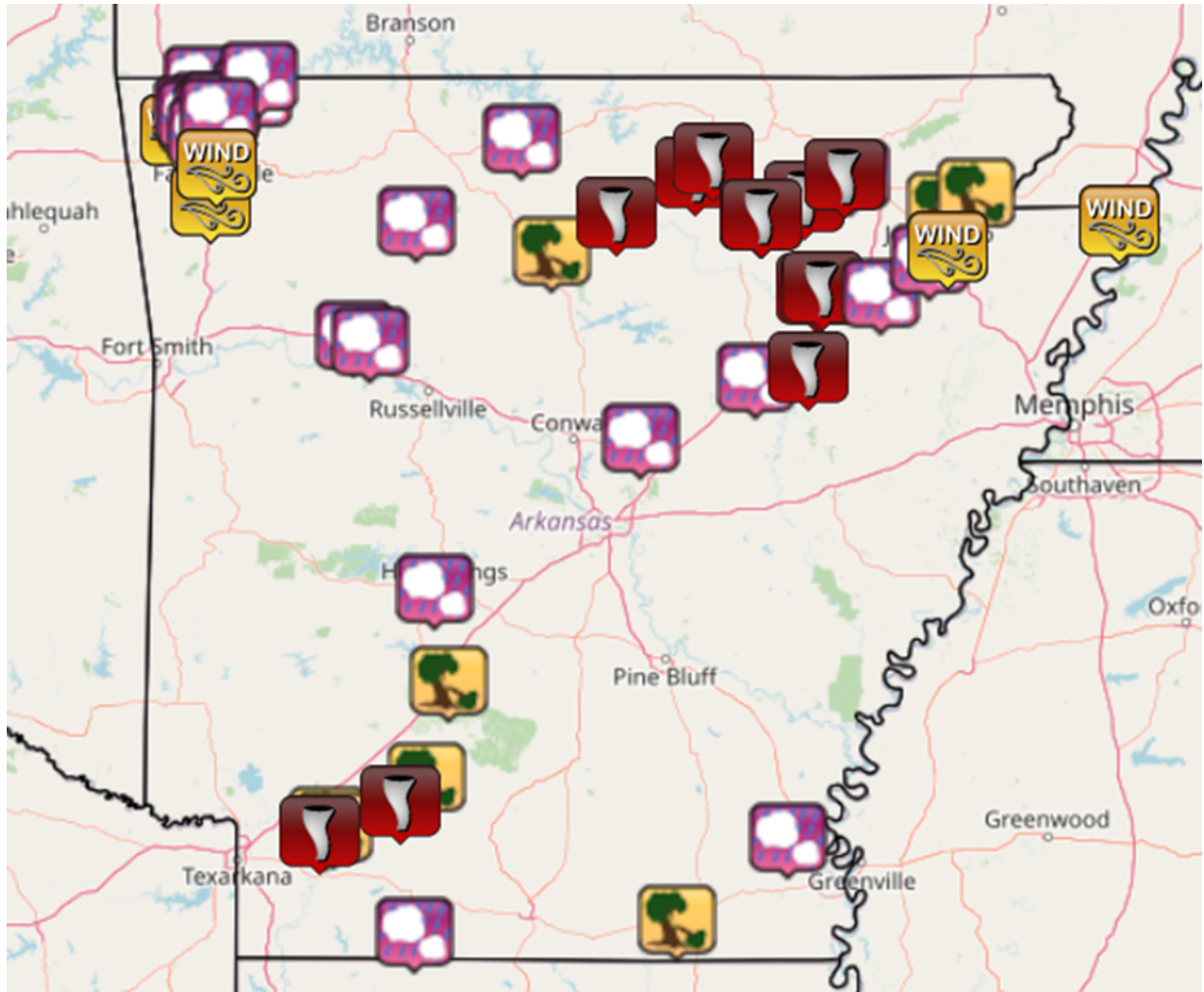
As of March 17, at least 3 fatalities and 32 injuries had been reported across Arkansas. Tornado surveys remain underway as of this writing, but for now, we can state:

- 10 of the tornadoes that have been confirmed were rated EF-2 or stronger.
- 6 tornadoes had paths of 18 miles or longer.
- 3 tornadoes tracked 32, 45, and 117 miles, respectively.
- The tornado, which struck the towns of Ash Flat and Fifty-Six, is one of the longest tracks in state history, with a path length of 117 miles and a total time on the ground of 2 hours and 13 minutes.
- This tornado outbreak is the second largest since the tornado outbreak on April 25, 2011, sitting behind the Memorial Day weekend outbreak of 2024.
- The number of EF-3+ tornadoes in this event is the highest since January 21, 1999.

Local National Weather Service offices received numerous reports of large hail (some as large as baseball-sized), damaging thunderstorm winds, and tornadoes. The upper-level trough shifted east during the day on March 15, ending the severe weather threat.

**Storm Report Summary:**

The map below contains all of the Local Storm Reports gathered by NWS Offices during this event.



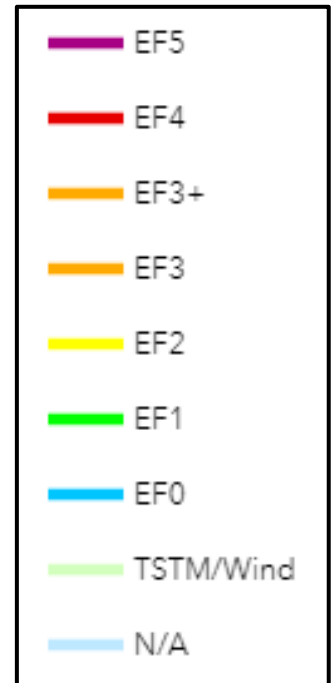
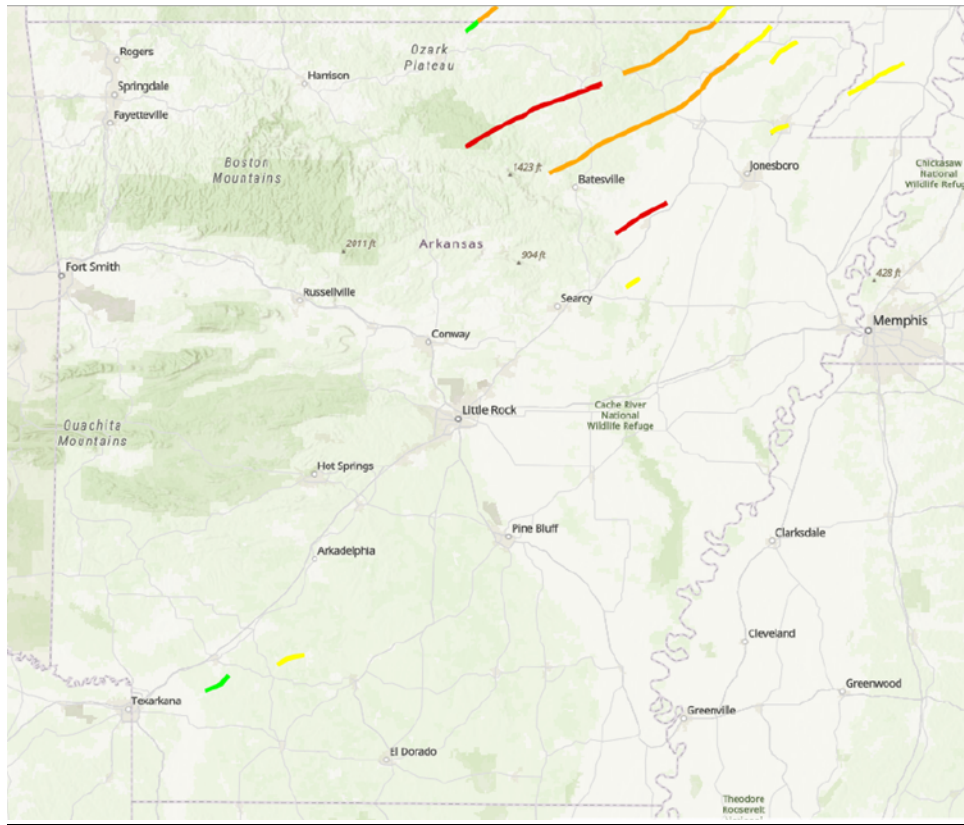
 Tornado  Wind Damage  Hail  Severe Thunderstorm Winds

## Tornado Summary:

*The table below includes any confirmed tornadoes by NWS Offices for this event*

<b>County</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Start (CDT)</b>	<b>End (CDT)</b>	<b>EF Rating</b>	<b>Maximum Wind Speed (MPH)</b>	<b>Fatalities</b>
Baxter	Gamaliel	8:34 PM	8:40 PM	EF-1	100	-
Stone/Sharp	Fifty-Six/ Ash Flat	9:16 PM	10:11 PM	EF-4	170	-
Hempstead	Patmos	10:09 PM	10:28 PM	EF-1	100	-
Independence/ Randolph	Cushman/ Reyno	10:16 PM	11:38 PM	EF-3	165	3
Sharp/Randolph	Williford/ Maynard	10:21 PM	10:56 PM	EF-3	155	-
Nevada	Cale/ Bluff City	10:55 PM	11:09 PM	EF-2	115	-
Independence/Jackson	Diaz	11:13 PM	11:36 PM	EF-4	190	-
Randolph/Clay	Corning	11:38 PM	11:51 PM	EF-2	120	-
Woodruff	Fitzhugh	11:50 PM	11:55 PM	EF-2	120	-
Clay	Walnut Grove	11:53 PM	12:02 AM	EF-2	135	-
Greene	Paragould	12:22 AM	12:34 AM	EF-2	125	-

## Map of tornado damage surveys completed by the NWS:



## Hail Reports:

*Any known hail reports (greater than 1") that were sent to NWS Offices are listed below.*

Only 1 report of severe hail was received in Lawrence County. Other reports outside of Green, Independence, Izard, Jackson, Lawrence, Randolph, Sharp, and Stone counties received reports of hail greater than 1 inch.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time (CDT)</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Diameter (Inches)</b>
3/14	5:31 PM	Benton	1 N Rogers	1.25
3/14	5:34 PM	Benton	2 E Cave Springs	1
3/14	5:35 PM	Benton	3 N Rogers	1
3/14	5:47 PM	Benton	Gateway	1
3/14	7:42 PM	Johnson	1 W Clarksville	1
3/14	7:52 PM	Marion	Summit	1
3/14	7:58 PM	Johnson	2 NW Lamar	1
3/14	8:05 PM	Newton	1 SW Gum Springs	1.75
3/14	10:52 PM	White	3 SW El Paso	1
3/14	11:17 PM	Lawrence	Black Rock	1.5
3/14	11:34 PM	White	1 NE Bald Knob	1.25
3/15	12:21 AM	Poinsett	4 WNW Weiner	1
3/15	12:34 AM	Craighead	4 SW Jonesboro	1
3/15	7:00 AM	Columbia	2 N Emerson	1.75

## Damaging Wind Reports:

Surface winds strengthened on March 14 ahead of thunderstorm activity, producing localized reports of non-thunderstorm wind damage. Both non-thunderstorm and thunderstorm wind reports are included in the table below. Two reports of wind damage were received from Greene County on March 15.

Date	Time (CDT)	County	Location	Event Type	Wind Gust (MPH)	Remark
3/14	4:12 PM	Craighead	2 ENE Jonesboro	NON-TSTM WND GST	59	Jonesboro Airport ASOS gusted to 59 mph.
3/14	4:59 PM	Benton	Northwest Arkansas Region	TSTM WND GST	60	
3/14	5:18 PM	Benton	2 W Rogers	TSTM WND DMG		Thunderstorm wind gusts damaged tree limbs up to 2 inches in diameter.
3/14	6:05 PM	Washington	Shady Grove	NON-TSTM WND DMG		Report of a couple of power lines down. Some tin roof was also torn off. This damage was produced by non-thunderstorm winds estimated to be around 60 mph. Information was relayed by Broadcast Media.
3/14	6:23 PM	Washington	Drake Field	NON-TSTM WND GST	62	
3/14	8:56 PM	Searcy	2 SSE Leslie	TSTM WND DMG		Tree down on US 65.
3/14	10:12 PM	Hempstead	4 NW Patmos	TSTM WND DMG		***1 INJ*** Trailer house blown over south of Hope, AR. One person was taken to the hospital.
3/14	10:12 PM	Hempstead	3 WNW Patmos	TSTM WND DMG		Tree reported down on Hwy 29 south of Hope, AR.
3/14	10:20 PM	Clark	2 ENE Dexter B Florence	TSTM WND DMG		Trees down on AR Hwy 7 and Hwy 51.
3/14	10:25 PM	Hempstead	2 NNW Patmos	TSTM WND DMG		Damage to a roof and 4-wheelers, destroyed and flipped storage buildings, all near a home on Hempstead 57 Rd.
3/14	11:07 PM	Nevada	2 NNW Bluff City	TSTM WND DMG		Multiple trees down across roads, including Hwy 24 east of Prescott, AR.
3/15	12:21 AM	Greene	4 S Walcott	TSTM WND DMG		Several trees were uprooted or snapped near the Finch community at the intersection of County Road 737 and County Road 721. Possible tornado.
3/15	12:27 AM	Greene	1 SSW Paragould	TSTM WND DMG		Emergency management report of damage to homes in the Pruett Chapel area. Possible tornado.
3/15	1:09 AM	Mississippi	5 E Blytheville	NON-TSTM WND GST	58	
3/15	6:20 AM	Ashley	North Crossett	TSTM WND DMG		Report of multiple trees downed along HWY-52, HWY-133, and Camp Rd.



## **Uninsured Home and Personal Property Loss**

Joint local, State, and FEMA Individual Assistance damage assessments began on March 17, 2025, and concluded on March 20, 2025. Damage assessments continued to occur as residents returned to their homes and assessed the damage to their residences and the locally owned businesses. After ground assessments, a review of geospatial data, and open-source data, there have been 456 structures assessed with an average of 72.17% ownership and 66.77% insured:

- 156 categorized as destroyed
- 93 categorized as major
- 88 categorized as minor
- 119 categorized as affected

## **Casualties**

This event resulted in the loss of three lives, all in Independence County. All three were lifelong residents and neighbors who ranged in age from 67-81 years old. Two of the victims, ages 67 and 70, were sisters who lived together. One of the sisters was pronounced deceased at the scene, while the other was transported to the hospital, where she was pronounced deceased, as well, after a great deal of suffering. There have also been multiple injuries reported throughout the state. These injuries will eventually heal, but there will no doubt be mental scars that will follow tens of thousands of Arkansans who have survived the damage while losing their entire life's belongings.

## **Volunteer Agencies**

Due to the devastation in these affected counties, multiple volunteer agencies, under the guidance of ARVOAD, have set out to help survivors in these communities. Minuteman Disaster Response deployed a team to Cave City on March 17 and will remain on-site through March 22. Their team has experienced sawyers and a compact track loader with a grapple to assist with debris removal. The Food Bank of North Central Arkansas distributed over 110 pounds of food and water to disaster survivors. Crisis Clean Up and the Presbytery of Arkansas coordinated cleanup efforts in the affected communities. The American Red Cross provided food and shelter in Cave City. Operation BBQ Relief provided over 500 meals to Cave City survivors. The American Red Cross provided food, immediate needs, and opened a temporary shelter in Cave City. First Baptist Church provided diesel fuel to those in need in Sharp County. Eight Days of Hope arrived in Cave City on March 20 and provided services for cutting, removing tree debris, and placing tarps through April 5. The East Side Baptist Church served as a disaster response team base for coordination and assessments. The Salvation Army provided emergency services to survivors and first responders. U-Haul provided Self-Storage Units in 10 locations across the affected areas for 30 days free of charge. Wal-Mart coordinated with food banks to provide gift cards for survivors' immediate needs. Horseshoe Bend Chamber of Commerce collected immediate needed supplies and distributed them at food pantries and mobile units. Heart to Heart donated electrolyte drinks, hygiene kits, medicine, medical supplies, and PPE to non-profits and free clinics. American Logistics Aid Network assisted non-profits with unmet logistical needs. Information Technology Disaster Resource Center assisted with communication, phone services, computers, and logistical needs. Samaritans Purse is in the field doing damage assessments for debris removal, placement of tarps, cutting trees, and some repairs. ARVOAD worked with volunteer groups to establish Multi-Agency Resource Centers in three of the most impacted counties to provide a one-stop-shop for survivors to receive resources to aid in recovery.

## Disaster Impacted Population Profile

These counties are in dire need of assistance to help individuals regain suitable living conditions that cannot be obtained at their current financial status. The average unemployment rate for the nine counties under Individual Assistance is 3.95%. Because several of the hardest-hit areas also experienced major damage to infrastructure, industry, trade, local businesses, and agricultural enterprises, applications for disaster-related unemployment are expected to be high.

<i>Percentage of the population:</i>	<i>for whom poverty status is determined</i>	<i>Already receiving governmental assistance</i>	<i>Pre-disaster unemployment rate</i>	<i>65 years and older</i>	<i>18 years and younger</i>	<i>with a disability</i>	<i>who speak a language other than English</i>
Data Source*	US Census Bureau	Arkansas DHS	US Census Bureau	US Census Bureau	US Census Bureau	US Census Bureau	US Census Bureau
National Average	11.1%	6.62%	3.8%	17.5%	21.7%	22.7%	22%
State Average	15.7%	8.76%	3.3%	18.0%	23%	13.1%	8.09%
Requested Jurisdictions							
Greene	16.2%	0.23%	3.7%	16.7%	23.7%	15.8%	2.2%
Hot Spring	16.9%	0.14%	3.7%	19.7%	19.0%	20.6%	3.1%
Independence	13.5%	0.15%	3.1%	18.6%	24.2%	15.1%	6.0%
Izard	20.3%	0.06%	5.4%	25.3%	17.9%	18.9%	3.2%
Jackson	24.6%	0.10%	4.5%	18.3%	19.8%	18.6%	1.3%
Lawrence	18.3%	0.09%	3.5%	19.5%	22.2%	16.1%	1.7%
Randolph	18.5%	0.08%	3.5%	19.4%	24.6%	16.1%	4.5%
Sharp	19.7%	0.10%	3.9%	25.9%	20.2%	16.2%	1.5%
Stone	17.7%	0.06%	4.3%	28.7%	19.7%	17.5%	2.3%

While infrastructure is crucial to economic growth, citizens also play a vital role in the need for recovery efforts. According to the United States Census Bureau, Arkansas currently has 16.8% of individuals below the poverty level, making the state the fifth in the nation among impoverished states. While this may not appear to be a large number, the average number of individuals living below the poverty level within the counties affected is 18.41%, with Jackson County representing the most significant number of residents below the poverty level at 24.6% and Sharp County at 19.7% - one of the hardest hit areas. Each affected county struggles with poverty. Severe poverty is a significant component of economic depression, leading to the need for assistance. The median income for Arkansans is \$58,700; however, a large percentage of homes affected represent individuals below the poverty level, which creates a hardship for individuals needing to repair or replace their property.

The individuals residing in the nine counties seek to remain in their communities but ask for assistance to repair their property. Based on preliminary damage assessments conducted by FEMA, housing assistance is needed for an estimated 249 households. Temporary housing provided by FEMA would help individual and community recovery by keeping citizens close to their homes and allowing the tax base to remain in place.

## **Housing Stock**

There is a significant deficit in available and affordable housing in the rural affected areas, which could lead to a future housing mission. Three of the hardest hit communities, the cities of Cave City, Diaz, and Fifty-Six, are all an hour to two hours away from Jonesboro, the nearest city with the hotel and rental stock that can accommodate the survivors. A temporary housing mission would help keep citizens in their communities and allow the tax base to stay in place.

## **Sheltering**

With close to 500 homes impacted, many families struggle to find temporary shelter and permanent home solutions. The American Red Cross opened a temporary shelter for displaced survivors in Cave City, one of the most impacted areas of the state. While most of the survivors of this disaster are fortunate enough to be able to shelter with family members in their current communities temporarily, long-term sheltering and housing options for the 250 households who had major damage or completely lost their homes are uncertain. Sheltering solutions close to schools and places of employment will be a main priority for local and state officials.

## **Power Outages**

At the peak of the event, an estimated 30,941 households were without power, and at the time of the initial request letter, 3,600 households were still without power. The power companies worked to restore lines and power to the community where it is safe to do so. Even as the damage assessment teams continue to survey the damage, downed power lines are throughout the affected area.

## **Disaster-Related Unemployment and Other Community Impacts**

In Clay County, a farm consisting of approximately 8,000 acres was impacted along State Highway 135 in Knobel. Damage was incurred to portable grain elevators, power units, semi-trucks and trailers, grain carts, and two equipment sheds, with an estimated \$3,000,000 in damages.

In Randolph County, the largest employer in the county, PECO Foods, sustained structural damage near Pocahontas and lost its cooling system, which was an anhydrous ammonia cooling system. As of March 19, it was still not in operation, resulting in employees being unable to work. Randolph County had a pre-disaster unemployment rate of 3.5%, and if PECO Foods remains non-operational for an extended period of time, approximately 2,000 employees will be unemployed, causing the unemployment rate to rise in Randolph County. Biggers-Reyno Volunteer Fire Department sustained damage to their firehouse, which will result in a delayed response to the two communities of Biggers and Reyno.

The only grocery store in Cave City, Hometown Market, sustained heavy damage and will likely be closed for at least three months to recover. This will greatly impact the community, as residents will now need to travel 30 miles round-trip to Batesville to procure food. Also, in Cave City, the town's only funeral home, health clinic, pharmacy, and auto parts store were badly damaged or completely destroyed. A multi-unit storage facility was also completely leveled, leaving many residents to comb through the rubble to try and reclaim the remnants of their lives. The loss of these critical businesses was a devastating blow to this community and will be felt for years to come. Additionally, the cellular tower in Cave City, located in the city's center, was completely

destroyed, leaving thousands unable to communicate within city limits. This will profoundly affect everything from emergency services to everyday communication between loved ones and friends for weeks to come.

The Campbell Station Volunteer Fire Department in Jackson County was completely destroyed during the storms. Because of this, firefighters will now have to be deployed from the town of Tuckerman, which will delay responses by at least 8 miles. This will cost critical time and potential loss of life that could have been saved during any emergency response situation. Jacksonport Volunteer Fire Department also sustained damage to their firehouse and a few of their fire apparatuses, which will cause delayed response times to the Jacksonport community.

In Stone County, Fifty-Six, a popular tourist destination due to its proximity to Blanchard Springs Caverns, suffered heavy damage to numerous small businesses, which provided much-needed employment and resources to the community. In addition, one of the only churches in the area, Fifty-Six Missionary Baptist Church, suffered heavy structural damage and will adversely affect Fifty-Six as this is a key meeting area for the community and a place of gathering and worship for many who are now suffering and in need of the support that they have come to rely upon from their fellow church-goers. The Fifty-Six City Hall also sustained heavy damage; a pivotal meeting area for the community that is now unavailable. The Fifty-Six community park is now rendered unusable due to the damage it incurred. This will negatively impact small communities such as Fifty-Six since it, as well as all of Arkansas, is known for its accessibility to the beauty of nature and its expansive outdoor spaces.

On March 16, the NWS reported that much drier air moved into the state in the wake of the strong storm system that brought all of the severe weather with it. Humidity dropped below 20% in many areas with winds between 20-25 mph. This drier air continued through March 20 and resulted in over 100 wildfires breaking out across the state in one day. On March 19, wind gusts neared 60 mph in Central Arkansas, which made containing the fires extremely difficult. At one point, power outages exceeded 28,000 across the state from the wind gusts. Because of these fires, the Arkansas Forestry Commission needed to focus its limited resources on these fires and was restricted in what resources they could provide for the recovery efforts from the severe storms and tornadoes.

## **Public Assistance Impact on Community Infrastructure**

PDA's for the Public Assistance Program began on March 24, 2025, for Clark, Clay, Greene, Hot Spring, Independence, Izard, Jackson, Lawrence, Nevada, Randolph, Sharp, Stone, and Woodruff counties. As a result of those PDA's, and pursuant to 44 CFR Part 206.40 (c), I respectfully request Public Assistance, Categories A – G, for Clay, Greene, Independence, Izard, Jackson, Lawrence, Nevada, Randolph, Sharp, Stone, and Woodruff counties be considered for inclusion to my previously requested Major Disaster Declaration. The counties have an estimated damage of \$8,732,629; supporting documentation is enclosed with this letter.

Arkansas National Guard provided nine security force teams in Jackson and Sharp County, and 90 National Guard troops were deployed to the affected communities.

Arkansas State Police reported that approximately 40 Troopers, along with their Arkansas State Police Emergency Response Team, responded to Independence and Sharp Counties for search and rescue missions and to provide extra patrol and security for the affected areas. Troopers worked around the clock with local law enforcement and the Arkansas National Guard. The Arkansas State Police Troop B Headquarters in Newport, Jackson County, sustained roof damage.

Arkansas Department of Agriculture, Forestry Division, reported approximately \$10,000 in costs related to response efforts to clear roadways in Fifty-Six, Blanchard Springs, and Cave City. They also assisted the National Weather Service with storm track survey flights.

In Clark County, South Central Electric Cooperative estimates \$95,000 in damages to their poles, lines, and transformers.

In Clay County, Clay County Electric Cooperative reported an estimate of \$140,000 in damages with a large loss of poles and transformers. Joint Preliminary Damage Assessments estimates \$140,000 for Category F.

In Greene County, the City of Paragould had numerous debris sites and two debris disposal areas - one for vegetative and one for construction and demolition. The City of Paragould Emergency Operations Center reported that fifteen of their sixteen tornado sirens for the city incurred damage, resulting in only one usable tornado siren for the foreseeable future. Craighead County Electric Cooperative estimates approximately \$250,000 in damages, with 30-35 poles, transformers, and around 3,500 feet of main fiber lines being damaged. Paragould Municipal Utilities reported approximately \$100,000 in damages to their poles, transformers, and lines. Joint Preliminary Damage Assessments estimates \$116,113 for Category A, \$23,110 for Category B, \$10,000 for Category E, and \$250,000 for Category F.

In Hot Spring County, large piles of vegetative debris were removed from the roadway, and there were many large tree root balls in Malvern. The debris removal is underway, and staging sites are located within Malvern and Rockport.

In Independence County, approximately 16,000 cubic yards of debris have been hauled to staging areas. Debris removal operations have damaged several county roads, including Claxton Loop,

where the three fatalities occurred. Joint Preliminary Damage Assessments estimates \$104,175 for Category A, \$75,000 for Category F, and \$10,000 for Category G.

Izard County has a large county-wide ROW (Right of Way) debris project with plans to burn vegetative debris. Izard County also had a wooden planked, steel stringer, single-lane bridge that was impacted by multiple large tree falls, causing damage to wooden components on decking and guardrails. This bridge is over a waterway at the Wideman Creek and Sycamore Creek convergence and has a large debris field on both sides of County Road 13. Arkansas Department of Transportation is scheduled to inspect the bridge by the close of business on March 28, 2025. North Arkansas Electric Cooperative, which services Izard, Independence, Sharp, and Baxter Counties, estimates damages to their poles and transformers to be around \$6,225,000, with 158 poles damaged in Izard County and 171 poles damaged in Sharp County. Joint Preliminary Damage Assessments estimates \$115,000 for Category A, and \$1,500,000 for Category F.

In Jackson County, large amounts of vegetative debris have been removed from roadways. A Diaz police car was destroyed during the tornado, resulting in injuries to the officer inside the car. Jacksonport State Park had a large amount of vegetative debris throughout the camping and public use areas and a damaged maintenance building. The Jacksonport Volunteer Fire Department was also damaged. Farmers Electric Cooperative reported approximately \$500,000 in damages to its lines and poles within Jackson County. The Campbell Station Volunteer Fire Department in Jackson County was completely destroyed during the storms. Because of this, firefighters will now have to be deployed from the town of Tuckerman, which will delay responses by at least 8 miles. This delay will cost critical time and potential loss of life that could have been saved during any emergency response situation. Jacksonport Volunteer Fire Department also sustained damage to their firehouse and a few fire apparatuses, which will cause delayed response times to the Jacksonport community. Joint Preliminary Damage Assessments estimates \$60,075 for Category A, \$25,000 for Category E, and \$100,000 for Category F.

In Lawrence County, Craighead Electric Cooperative reported approximately \$600,000 in damages, including over 60 poles, 9 transformers, and 46,000 feet of main fiber lines being damaged, as well as a breaker, numerous network access points, and splice points. Moderate amounts of vegetative debris have been collected county-wide. Joint Preliminary Damage Assessments estimates \$63,333 for Category A, \$40,000 for Category B, and \$550,000 for Category F.

In Nevada County, a large amount of vegetative debris was removed from County Road 45. White Oak Lake State Park incurred a large amount of vegetative damage to approximately fifteen miles of walking trails, with 175 downed trees along the trails, resulting in the immediate closure of the trails to the public. The state park-owned superintendent's house sustained roof damage from fallen trees. Debris removal within the park will utilize force account labor of over 300 man-hours to clear and remove the debris. The Ebenezer Cemetery in Bluff City reported approximately 85 headstones and 300 feet of chain-link fence were damaged as a result of twenty fallen trees in and around the cemetery. South Central Electric Cooperative reported approximately \$140,000 in damages to their poles, lines, and transformers. Joint Preliminary Damage Assessments estimates \$12,650 for Category A and \$140,000 for Category F.

In Randolph County, a water sewage pond sustained damage in Reyno. Pocahontas Water & Sewer had a waterline that was ripped up and destroyed by trees being blown over next to the waterline. Fallen trees completely crushed a pavilion in Ravenden Springs in its city park. Large amounts of debris were collected county-wide and taken to the county-owned dump site, with approximately one-third of the debris being collected. The Randolph County Sheriff's Department had a 911 communications tower that was broken in half & the Sheriff's Office is awaiting estimates for repair of the tower. In Randolph County, the largest employer in the county, PECO Foods, sustained structural damage near Pocahontas and lost its cooling system, which was an anhydrous ammonia cooling system. As of March 19, it was still not in operation, resulting in employees being unable to work. Randolph County had a pre-disaster unemployment rate of 3.5%, and if PECO Foods remains non-operational for an extended period of time, approximately 2,000 employees would be unemployed, causing the unemployment rate to rise in Randolph County. Biggers-Reyno Volunteer Fire Department sustained damage to their firehouse, which will result in a delayed response to the two communities of Biggers and Reyno. The City of Pocahontas Senior Wellness Center sustained minor damage to its roof. Joint Preliminary Damage Assessments estimates \$107,935 for Category A, \$10,000 for Category E, and \$2,005,000 for Category F.

In Sharp County, Cave City was greatly impacted, with two of their fire stations sustaining damages. Both will likely need to be replaced, pending architecture and engineering reports. City parks, fences, and light poles were damaged throughout the city, and a city-owned cemetery reported damage to roughly 1,200 linear feet of its perimeter fence due to multiple uprooted trees, which also resulted in several disturbed grave sites and markers, one of which dated back to 1872. Cave City Baptist Church reported roof and siding damage to its campus. The only grocery store in Cave City, Hometown Market, sustained heavy damage and will likely be closed for at least three months to recover. This will greatly impact the community, as residents will now need to travel 30 miles round-trip to Batesville to procure food. Also, in Cave City, the town's only funeral home, health clinic, pharmacy, and auto parts store were badly damaged or completely destroyed. A multi-unit storage facility was also completely leveled, leaving many residents to comb through the rubble to try and reclaim the remnants of their lives. The loss of these critical businesses was a devastating blow to this community and will be felt for years to come. Additionally, the cellular tower in Cave City, located in the city's center, was completely destroyed, leaving thousands unable to communicate within city limits. This disruption will profoundly affect everything from emergency services to everyday communication between loved ones and friends for weeks to come. In Hardy City, the water department's SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) equipment was struck by lightning and will need a replacement with a new system. Joint Preliminary Damage Assessments estimates \$345,000 for Category A, \$12,500 for Category E, \$2,505,000 for Category F, and \$30,000 for Category G.

In Stone County, debris has not been picked up or removed throughout the county as the cities of Fifty-Six and Timbo do not have the means to pick up the debris. A burn site has been established, and a debris pile and six county roads have been identified as having vegetative debris. The Fifty-Six City Park had vegetative debris, a shed, lighting, three destroyed gazebos, a water line, and electrical wiring uprooted from downed trees. The Fifty-Six City Hall sustained heavy damage and had down trees completely around its building. The Fifty-Six Missionary Baptist Church sustained roof and siding damage from downed trees and hail damage. Joint Preliminary Damage

Assessments estimates \$250,075 for Category A and \$5,000 for Category E.

In Woodruff County, Woodruff Electric Cooperative reported roughly \$50,000 in damages to 3800 feet of lines and 7 poles. Joint Preliminary Damage Assessments estimates \$43,143 in Category F.

Electric Cooperatives throughout the affected area estimate more than \$8.6 million in damages. These cooperatives provide low-cost, reliable electric energy and related services such as the internet, which improves the quality of life for tens of thousands of members throughout the affected areas. They keep the lights on across Arkansas, primarily in low-income and sparsely populated areas. Without these services, these communities, from small business owners to private citizens, will suffer daily. Restoring these cooperatives to full power will be a crucial first step for these communities attempting to rebuild their lives post-disaster.

### **Recent Disaster Impact**

Since 2023, Arkansas has experienced an unprecedented frequency of disasters, with four federally declared disasters and ten state-declared disasters. These overlapping events have severely strained the capacity of state and local agencies to respond and recover effectively. Many communities have been impacted by multiple disasters, compounding recovery challenges and delaying critical infrastructure restoration.

In 2024, several counties—Clark, Independence, Izard, Jackson, Nevada, and Sharp—were hit by severe storms and flooding on January 22, resulting in significant debris accumulation and widespread road damage. Nevada County experienced further devastation on October 11, prompting a state of emergency declaration due to additional severe storms and flooding.

Most recently, on April 2, 2025, another powerful system brought severe storms, tornadoes, and generational flooding across the state. The impact of this event has proven to be more extensive than the March 14 disaster, with damage assessments revealing a higher number of homes destroyed or severely damaged, some of which were struck in both events. Infrastructure losses alone are estimated at \$25 million, which is five times the federal threshold for Arkansas.

Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDAs) for Individual Assistance began on April 10, with Public Assistance PDAs scheduled to begin April 22 and continue into May. The same counties affected in March are now facing even greater destruction, making recovery from the initial disaster virtually impossible without significant federal support.

The cumulative effect of repeated disasters has led to widespread disaster fatigue among residents and responders alike. Many Arkansans are still living in temporary conditions or repairing damages from previous events, only to be displaced or impacted once again. The state and its citizens are in dire need of assistance to recover, rebuild, and mitigate further loss.



In conclusion, without the support of a Major Disaster Declaration, Arkansas will face significant challenges in assuming full responsibility and achieving an effective recovery from this event. I have determined that the severity and magnitude of these storms exceed the capabilities of the State and affected local governments to respond adequately. As such, supplemental Federal assistance is crucial. Therefore, I am formally appealing the denial of Individual Assistance to include SBA Disaster Assistance for the counties of Greene, Hot Spring, Independence, Izard, Jackson, Lawrence, Randolph, Sharp, and Stone. Additionally, I am requesting Public Assistance (Categories A–G) and statewide Hazard Mitigation for the counties of Clay, Greene, Independence, Izard, Jackson, Lawrence, Nevada, Randolph, Sharp, Stone, and Woodruff. I respectfully ask that you consider the significant strain the citizens of Arkansas have endured over the past month. In addition to this hardship, the State of Arkansas faces a substantial financial burden in addressing both recent and ongoing events. Your favorable consideration of this declaration is truly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sarah Sanders". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sarah" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Sanders".

Sarah Huckabee Sanders  
Governor of Arkansas

Enclosures:

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

Enclosure A: Individual Assistance

Enclosure B (Public Assistance)

NWS Data

Executive Order