



After disasters, local leaders often stare down a complex, years-long recovery. To help you jumpstart the recovery and avoid common mistakes, the American Flood Coalition simplified this process into four clear steps.

1. As soon as regular government services can resume, convene key stakeholders to establish a vision, strategy, and plan for recovery

Leaders should work with local, county, and/or state emergency management agencies to convene and maintain a recovery task force or other organizational structure, as well as appoint a person to lead the recovery.

The task force should include, but not be limited to, government departments, private sector partners, and non-governmental organizations responsible for the critical response functions laid out in the [National Disaster Recovery Framework](#).

Communities can also consider establishing a recovery office to manage long-term regulatory, fiscal, infrastructure, community development, and human services recovery functions.

2. Track disaster response expenses and donations to help meet the local match requirement of federal disaster assistance*

FEMA allows communities to apply the value of donated resources used in eligible activities toward the cost-share requirement of their Public Assistance projects. To do so, recipients must meet certain conditions. Most importantly, local governments:

- Cannot use donated resources for ineligible emergency work or for any permanent work (eligible or ineligible) to offset their local cost share.
- Cannot apply the value of resources donated or funded by a federal agency to their local cost share.

Eligible categories that can offset the local cost share requirement include: volunteer labor; donated equipment, based on [FEMA equipment rates](#); donated supplies or materials, based on current commercial rates; and logistical support, such as storing donations.



3. Avoid common procurement mistakes that will affect federal reimbursement

During a disaster, local governments may need to procure contracted supplies and services through an uncompetitive process. To ensure procurements are eligible for federal grant funding, communities should avoid 10 common pitfalls, [outlined by FEMA's Procurement Disaster Assistance Team](#):

1. Restricting full and open competition.
2. Not performing a detailed price or cost analysis for procurements above \$250,000.
3. Improperly engaging in sole-sourcing (non-competitive) procurement.
4. Continuing work under a sole-source contract after the urgent need has ended.
5. Not making and documenting efforts to solicit small and minority businesses, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms.
6. Improperly awarding a "time-and-materials" contract.
7. Not including the required contract clauses found in the [contract provisions for the Code of Federal Regulations](#).
8. Awarding a prohibited "cost-plus-percentage-of-cost" or "percentage-of-construction-cost" contract.
9. Awarding a contract to contractors that were suspended or debarred.
10. Not properly documenting all steps of a procurement.

4. Communicate coordinated information to the public and media

Local governments can use both traditional and social media to generate confidence in the recovery, secure buy-in for recovery priorities, and establish accountability. Such communications should include American Sign Language, captioning, and language translation as needed.

Local leaders should also work with emergency management, other jurisdictional agencies, and non-governmental partners to conduct public meetings that determine unmet needs and identify current or future actions related to the disaster.

Finally, leaders should ensure a regular stream of timely and accurate information about the recovery:

- Present the main points and avoid "what-if" questions.
- Use simple sentences with short, concise bits of information.
- Avoid terms unfamiliar to those working outside of emergency management or government.
- Be honest and direct to manage community members' expectations.
- Be genuine, personable, and conversational to build credibility.