

COUNTY OF YORK

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 25, 2025
TO: York County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Mark L. Bellamy, Jr., County Administrator
SUBJECT: FEMA Funding Update

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'M. Bellamy', is written over the 'FROM' line of the memorandum.

I am sharing the attached information, which Chief Kopczynski communicated to me regarding a potential elimination and/or reduction in FEMA funding. This update outlines the concerns and possible implications for local emergency management and response efforts.

We will continue to monitor the situation and provide additional updates as more details become available.

Schott/3326

Attachment:

- Memorandum from Chief Kopczynski dated April 25, 2025

COUNTY OF YORK

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 25, 2025

TO: Mark L. Bellamy, Jr., County Administrator

FROM: 
Stephen P. Kopczynski, Fire Chief/Director

SUBJECT: Potential FEMA Funding Elimination and/or Reductions

Elimination of Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program

The Federal Emergency Management Agency issued a press release on April 4, 2025 (attached), regarding the ending of the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program and the cancellation of all BRIC applications from fiscal years 2020 to 2033. If grant funds have not been distributed to states, tribes, territories, and local communities, funds will be returned either to the Disaster Relief Fund or the U.S. Treasury. On April 21, 2025, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management conducted a local official's conference call to address FEMA grants (generally) and the BRIC program (specifically).

Currently, York County does not have any BRIC grants or associated applications; it has not been successful in being awarded this funding in recent years. The elimination of the BRIC program will result in losing access to funds that support qualifying projects; therefore, the County will need to explore alternative funding sources in the future.

Federal Flood Insurance Coverage

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and other programs administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are currently undergoing a comprehensive review.

Implications for York County Residents:

York County currently holds a Class 7 rating under the NFIP's Community Rating System (CRS), providing eligible policyholders a 15% discount on federal flood insurance premiums. The County is scheduled for its next CRS evaluation in 2026, with the objective of improving to a Class 6 rating. Achieving this upgrade would increase the discount to 20%, resulting in an additional 5% savings for residents.

However, the Insurance Services Office (ISO) representative for the NFIP CRS has recently advised the Virginia NFIP CRS Work Group to postpone scheduling site visits or reviews until further notice. At this time, no additional information has been provided regarding the future of the NFIP or potential impacts to York County and its residents.

**Federal Grant Funding related to Emergency Management Programs,
Commonwealth of Virginia**

In February 2025, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) directed the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) to implement a manual review process for all grant-related allocations. FEMA stated, *“Effective immediately, FEMA and DHS are conducting additional reviews of allocations before releasing funds for all grants.”*

On March 19, 2025, FEMA issued revised guidance regarding documentation requirements for certain, but not all, federal grant programs. In response, VDEM promptly submitted the required documentation. Following this submission, VDEM issued an update to localities regarding the status of federal grant funding (see attached memorandum from Acting State Coordinator John Scrivani). Additionally, VDEM adjusted internal processes to mitigate delays in funding distribution.

As previously noted, on April 21, 2025, VDEM conducted a statewide conference call with local officials. During this call, Acting State Coordinator Scrivani provided several key updates, including clarification on the status of the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program, of which York County is not currently a recipient.

Critically, the manual grant review requirement has now been lifted. VDEM has resumed its standard procedures for processing grant applications and disbursing payments. Reimbursement processes for non-disaster (preparedness) grants and declared disaster grants have resumed, with VDEM again receiving federal funds from FEMA for approved state and local government projects. It is important to note that these funds are federally allocated and may only be used for pre-approved projects. VDEM will not reprioritize or redirect funding; all reimbursements must adhere strictly to FEMA’s established guidelines.

Aside from the information shared during the April 21 conference call, the memorandum from Director Scrivani, and media coverage related to BRIC, the broader implications of changes to FEMA’s funding practices remain unclear. This includes how future grant opportunities, such as disaster relief funds, may affect York County, whether received directly, through VDEM, or via the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission.

FEMA Ends Wasteful, Politicized Grant Program, Returning Agency to Core Mission of Helping Americans Recovering from Natural Disasters

Release Date: April 4, 2025

Under Secretary Noem, DHS is eliminating waste, fraud and abuse

WASHINGTON -- FEMA is ending the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program and canceling all BRIC applications from Fiscal Years 2020-2023. If grant funds have not been distributed to states, tribes, territories and local communities, funds will be immediately returned either to the Disaster Relief Fund or the U.S. Treasury.

Statement Attributable to a FEMA Spokesperson:

"The BRIC program was yet another example of a wasteful and ineffective FEMA program. It was more concerned with political agendas than helping Americans affected by natural disasters. Under Secretary Noem's leadership, we are committed to ensuring that Americans in crisis can get the help and resources they need."

Approximately \$882 million of funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will be returned to the U.S. Treasury or reappropriated by Congress in the next fiscal year. The 2021 law made \$1 billion available for BRIC over five years, \$133 million to date has been provided for about 450 applications. FEMA estimates more than \$3.6 billion will remain in the Disaster Relief Fund to assist with disaster response and recovery for communities and survivors.

Ending this program will help ensure that grant funding aligns with the President's Executive Orders and Secretary Noem's direction and best support states and local communities in disaster planning, response and recovery.



FEMA

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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Department of Emergency Management

9711 Farrar Court, Suite 200, North Chesterfield, Virginia 23236

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JOHN J. SCRIVANI
Acting State Coordinator

MEMORANDUM

TO: Local Emergency Managers and Grant

Recipients FROM: John Scrivani, Acting State

Coordinator, VDEM DATE: April 11, 2025

RE: Grant Funding Status

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Scrivani".

To provide full transparency and details as we know them, I am writing today with an update on the status of federal grant funding related to emergency management programs across the commonwealth. On February 28th, VDEM was notified by FEMA of a manual review process requirement stating that "Effective immediately, FEMA and DHS are conducting additional reviews of allocations before releasing funds for all grants." On March 19th, FEMA provided revised guidance on how documentation should be presented and submitted for some, but not all, of their grant programs. VDEM submitted the requested documentation but have not received feedback as of today. For some programs, we are still awaiting guidance. The outstanding expenses awaiting payment include all federal grants that VDEM administers, such as disaster reimbursements to state, local, and non-profit organizations; preparedness funds to local governments to be ready for the next disaster; funds to enhance security for non-profit organizations, and funds to build back stronger and reduce future risk to flooding.

Unfortunately, at this time, we do not have an update as to when and if these funds will be made available. We understand that we have several local projects and programs that rely on grant funding, as many of our agency's functions do as well. Therefore, we are asking for your patience and understanding as we navigate this together.

Within VDEM we are adjusting our operations to accommodate the delays in funding. This includes limiting staff travel and purchasing, as well as strategically filling vacant positions. Our teams have spent the past few weeks assessing the status of current internal budgets and programs so that we can prioritize our critical functions. Please know that we will do everything we can to ensure that those who receive federal grant funding are issued their reimbursements in a timely manner if and when the funding is made available to us.

Saving lives through effective emergency management and homeland security. "A Ready Virginia is a Resilient Virginia." Page | 1

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I apologize that we do not have any additional details or answers at this time. If you have any questions on your payment status or to determine if your specific grant is currently affected by the DHS/FEMA review process, please reach out to your Chief Regional Coordinator or log-in to VDEM EM Grants to check your payable status. If it is in Step 4 (Pending Batch Processing) this means that it is affected. As we receive additional details or guidance from our federal partners, we will keep everyone updated.