



# CITY OF APPLETON

Office of the Mayor  
Jacob A. Woodford  
100 N. Appleton St.  
Appleton, WI 54911  
p: 920.832.6400  
f: 920.832.5962  
mayor@appleton.org

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Governor Tony Evers  
Wisconsin State Capitol  
115 East State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Governor Evers,

On Friday, July 5, 2024, the City of Appleton experienced a flooding event as a result of receiving an extraordinary amount of rain in a short period of time. National Weather Service data indicated that over 2.5 inches of rain fell on a swath of our city in an hour or less.

In the immediate aftermath of this event, I declared a local emergency to facilitate our municipal response and to formalize our recognition of the scope and scale of the disaster. Unfortunately, like most, if not all municipalities, we do not have local financial resources to support individual residents when they experience damage and loss from natural disasters.

We are doing everything we can to support our residents in the wake of this flooding, from coordinating shelter resources and flood cleanup kits with the American Red Cross, to organizing special bulk trash collections to help people dispose of destroyed property. We have been exploring creative ways to support residents' remediation efforts with existing aid programs, and trying to determine a process for reevaluating property taxes for finished basements that will now have to be gutted. However, these are very limited options, and our impacted residents are truly hurting.

Appleton Emergency Management has been in contact with Wisconsin Emergency Management and has been advised that the level of damage our community sustained is unlikely to qualify for State or Federal assistance. Evidently, to qualify for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance, Appleton would have to meet a threshold of \$347,000 in debris clearance, protective measures, and road and bridge repair; it is unlikely that we have sustained that level of loss as a city.

To qualify for FEMA Individual Assistance to property owners, we need roughly 500 "Destroyed" and/or homes with "Major Damage." As defined, this would mean flooding would have had to be 18" above the main living area to the roof under "Major Damage" or the waterline at the roofline or higher for "Destroyed."

We had hoped that the State of Wisconsin would be able to provide some assistance to residents under the Wisconsin Disaster Fund, however, the same \$347,000 threshold applies, and it is not clear we will meet that criteria. I have also been informed that Wisconsin does not have an Individual Assistance Program for events such as this, which means, again, that residents should not expect assistance from the State.

On top of these facts, it is also worth noting that most home insurance policies do not cover the type of losses sustained by our residents; especially if they have not included a basement flooding rider on their policies.

Cumulatively, this leaves many Appletonians facing the prospect of having to personally finance the clean up and recovery from the natural disaster we experienced last week. For many, the costs of this work will be devastating and for some, impossible, to meet.

As such, and despite the odds of being denied, I feel obligated to plead with you for support for our residents who have sustained losses. Even if outright grants and aid are not available, if there are low interest loans or other financial assistance programs that might be available, we would appreciate support in exploring and offering these options to our community. Additionally, I urge the State of Wisconsin to consider adopting an individual assistance program with reasonable parameters to provide even baseline support to Wisconsinites impacted by extreme weather events, even those events that are narrow in their impact – after all, it is of little consolation to a resident whose possessions, heirlooms, food, and mementos of their lives have been lost.

The City of Appleton stands ready to support efforts of your Office and the State of Wisconsin in aiding our residents, and in creating means of supporting Wisconsinites in the future when disasters like this occur.

I thank you for your consideration and appreciate the many ways your administration has worked to support the City of Appleton. If not for your previous efforts on our community's behalf, I would not have even bothered to send this letter.

Sincerely,



Jacob A. Woodford  
Mayor