



Pennsylvania
Emergency Management Agency

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**Supporting Pennsylvanians After Disaster Strikes: Shapiro
Administration Has Distributed Nearly \$270,000 to Help
Pennsylvanians Rebuild through the Commonwealth's Disaster
Recovery Assistance Program**

Governor Josh Shapiro is committed to helping Pennsylvanians recover after disasters, delivering nearly \$270,000 in state grants directly to disaster-impacted homeowners and renters across the Commonwealth since 2023.

Shapiro Administration continues to help communities across the Commonwealth recover and rebuild.

Reading, PA – The Shapiro Administration today highlighted the recovery efforts in Berks County made possible through the [Commonwealth Disaster Recovery Assistance Program \(DRAP\)](#). The grant program was activated 18 months ago for the first time since the law went into effect as Governor Shapiro vowed to provide aid to Berks County following devastating flooding resulting from heavy rainfall on July 9, 2023.

"Immediately following the Berks County flooding, Governor Shapiro promised residents that his Administration would work with state and local officials and volunteer organizations to help them recover from these storms." said **Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) Director Randy Padfield**. "We delivered on that promise using a whole community approach with our VOAD partners and activated the Commonwealth's Disaster Recovery Program, distributing nearly \$125,000 in state recovery dollars directly to impacted residents of Berks County who needed this critical financial support."

The Commonwealth DRAP grants are designed for homeowners and renters who meet lower income thresholds, are uninsured or underinsured, or have not received other local, state, federal, non-governmental, or private aid. For those who qualify, DRAP grants up to \$10,000 per household can be used to repair their home, cover temporary housing and rental expenses, or replace essential personal property.

"The devastation caused by the July 9, 2023, flooding was overwhelming for many Berks County residents," said **Senator Judy Schwank**. "By activating the Commonwealth's Disaster Recovery Assistance Program, the Shapiro administration ensured that families with nowhere else to turn received critical support and that relief reached those who needed it most."

In response to the flooding, the Shapiro Administration worked with county and local partners to open a Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) for flood survivors. Over the three days it was open, 235 people registered for services from state, county and volunteer agencies. The MARC

helped to connect Pennsylvanians to state and local resources, including information about submitting insurance claims, the replacement of vital documents, well water testing kits, and access to crisis counseling services.

“The flash flooding produced by the July 9, 2023, storm in Berks County took a major toll from Lower Alsace Township and the Antietam School District and the surrounding community,” said **Berks County Department of Emergency Services Director Brian Gottschall**. “PEMA’s Disaster Recovery Assistance Program helped to mitigate some of the most immediate needs from affected households in the aftermath of the floods.”

Additionally, the Shapiro Administration provided technical support to Antietam School District to ensure they could help students be successful during the school year after the middle school was significantly damaged by the flooding. In September 2024, the Shapiro Administration awarded **\$7,831,350** in [PA Department of Education Environmental Repair Grant Funding](#) for necessary repairs, affirming the commitment to stand by the community through the recovery process.

Thanks to a whole community approach to disasters, volunteers from trusted community agencies helped stretch these aid dollars even further by providing the labor and expertise for repairs. Pennsylvania Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (PAVOAD) worked closely with state and local officials and businesses to provide recovery assistance to residents impacted by disaster. PAVOAD worked with trusted community partners like Antietam Valley Community Partnership, Pennside Presbyterian Church, Berks County Lutheran Churches, and St. Paul’s UCC Amityville, to meet the long-term disaster related needs of households impacted by the flooding.

“We have identified 31 homes that need \$134,410 in repairs to make them safe and secure. More than half of this funding, \$79,130, has come from the Shapiro Administration’s Disaster Recovery Assistance Program,” said **PAVOAD President and Lutheran Disaster Response Director Julia Frank**. “The combined strength of volunteer rebuilders, expert case managers, and DRAP funds, make survivor recovery possible in an era marked by more frequent and volatile storms.”

Julia shared an example of how this funding and whole community commitment to disaster recovery made a direct impact to a homeowner. The floodwaters ruined the insulation, skirting and flooring in the home of a Berks County mother and her teenage daughter. Family members and church members helped with cleanup, but major repairs were required. With the help of \$8,400 in DRAP funds to cover materials, volunteers from Lowes coordinated with PAVOAD partner Antietam Valley Long Term Recovery Group to make the repairs, helping to bring mom and daughter close to a full recovery today.

While Berks County was the first disaster for a DRAP activation, the program has since been activated an additional five times. To date, DRAP has provided **\$269,337** in aid to **51 homeowners and renters** suffering damages from flooding and fires. Prior to this program which was signed into law as [Act 54 in July 2022](#), these individuals would have faced significant financial hurdles when insurance or other grant, loan and assistance programs were not available.

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