Does FEMA Public Assistance cover damages to all municipal roads?

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No. FEMA Public Assistance does not cover all municipal roads.

FEMA Public Assistance does not cover federal-aid highways. The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Emergency Relief (ER) program covers federal-aid highways. Federal-aid highways are public roads that are classified as arterial, urban collectors, and major rural collectors. You can identify Federal-aid highways in your municipality using VTrans' Vermont Functional Class and Federal Aid Highways webmap. FHWA's ER program has different rules and requirements than FEMA's PA program. Learn more at https://www.vlct.org/resource/fhwa-emergency-relief-er-program-federal-aid-highways.

FEMA Public Assistance only covers roads that the municipality owns or has legal responsibility for maintaining, Eligible roads must be open to the general public and provide a service to the general public, Damages to the surface of a Class IV road or bridges and culverts on Class IV roads may not be covered by FEMA. FEMA may request the municipality share road maintenance policies and records to determine eligibility of damages on Class IV road surfaces and structures.

FEMA Public Assistance may not cover roads that are scheduled for repair or replacement. Scheduled repairs or replacement projects that include federal funds may be eligible if the claimed damage did not exist prior to the disaster incident. FEMA may review procurement and contract documents to validate eligibility. If damage existed prior to the incident, only the repair of damage caused by the incident is eligible. A facility scheduled for replacement within 12 months of the start of the incident period using Federal funds is ineligible. In such a case, the Applicant should coordinate with the agency funding the project to expedite replacement, if possible.

When in doubt about eligibility of a road for FEMA Public Assistance, a municipality should include the road damages in its FEMA PA worksheet and discuss the damages with FEMA representatives.

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