R4R Mitigation Grant

Enabling Small Business Resilience

Des Alexander, Manager, Disaster Resilience



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Foundation

Foundation's Mission

- U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation harnesses the power of business for the good of America and the world

- The Chamber Foundation's Disaster Resilience team harnesses the power of business to improve and sustain community disaster resilience

- Program Examples
    - Small Business Readiness for Resiliency (R4R) Grant Program
    - Resilience in a Box
    - Small Business Disaster Help Desk
    - Maui Small Business Recovery Grant Program

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Hawai’i Hazard Spotlight

Primary Hazards

- Floods
- Fires
- Hurricanes
- Tsunamis
- Volcanoes

Recent Events

- 2023 Maui Wildfires
- 2024 Landslides
- 2026 Kona Low Flooding
- 2026 Hawaii Island Earthquake
- 2026 Hurricanes Lala & Lowell

Super El Niño

- Hawai’i enters this El Niño already in a significant, multi-year drought.
- NOAA forecasts a 70% chance of an above-normal season, and the basin's accumulated cyclone energy is currently running 90% above normal.

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Why Mitigation, Why Now?

- Most disaster grants arrive after the disaster occurs.
- Small businesses are a conduit for community benefit.
- Pre-disaster dollars protect continuity of operations.

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Staying open keeps customers served and communities moving.

Small Business Voices

- *"We had a bunch of materials delivered to our shop...it flooded...Luckily we had insurance but they dropped us after making a claim and they didn't pay for everything. It cost us an additional $15,000 to fix things and repurchase materials. Which set us back very badly."*

- *“We have not had damage, but it would be [a] prolonged power outage and loss of equipment and data that would hurt us"*

- *"The only situation where the weather damages my business is during a prolonged power outage. But, I do have a generator, and can plug in my laptop long enough to charge it whenever needed ."*

Grant Overview

The U.S. Chamber Foundation, with support from Verizon, is helping small businesses prepare for natural disasters before they happen through the **Readiness for Resiliency (R4R) Mitigation Grant Program.**

The program connects disaster preparedness training with financial support to help small businesses reduce their risk from future disasters. Small businesses that complete an eligible free Disaster Resilience course through Verizon's Small Business Digital Ready platform can apply for a **$5,000 R4R Mitigation Grant** to support a project designed to strengthen their business against disaster-related disruptions.

Applications are open through November 15, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. ET.

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Power Continuity

Eligible Projects

- Permanently installed or portable backup generator (propane, natural gas, or diesel) with transfer switch
- Battery energy storage system (BESS) sized for critical load continuity
- Solar-plus-storage system providing backup power capability
- Automatic transfer switch (ATS) installation
- Uninterruptible power supply (UPS) system for critical equipment
- Electrical panel upgrades required to support backup power integration



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Communications Redundancy

Eligible Projects

- Satellite internet backup system
- Two-way radio system (VHF/UHF or GMRS) for staff coordination
- Emergency notification system for employees and customers
- Secondary cellular data device or mobile hotspot for business continuity
- Redundant internet connection via a different technology or provider (e.g., fiber + cellular)
- Installation and configuration of communications failover systems

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Flood & Water Intrusion Mitigation

Eligible Projects

- Deployable or permanent flood barriers (HESCO, AquaDam, door barriers, or equivalent)
- Backflow prevention valve installation
- Sump pump system with battery backup
- Drainage improvements directly tied to flood risk reduction
- Elevation of critical equipment, inventory, or utilities above base flood elevation
- Waterproofing of below-grade walls or floors in flood-prone areas
- Water sensors and automated shutoff systems
- Flood-resistant door or window seals

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Physical & Structural Mitigation

Eligible Projects

- Impact-resistant storm shutters or panels for windows and doors
- Roof-to-wall connection reinforcement (hurricane straps, clips, or ties)
- Roof deck attachment upgrades (ring-shank nails, enhanced fastening patterns)
- Wind-resistant or impact-rated door replacement
- Seismic anchoring of structural elements or equipment
- Fire-resistant roofing or siding materials in wildfire-prone areas
- Opening protection systems (roll-down shutters, plywood systems with permanent hardware)



Critical Equipment Protection

Eligible Projects

- Elevation of critical equipment above base flood elevation (platforms, mezzanines, or raised mounting)
- Seismic or wind anchoring of essential equipment
- Waterproofing or protective enclosures for critical equipment in flood-prone areas
- Whole-facility or equipment-level surge protection systems
- Protective storage solutions for critical business records, inventory, or supplies
- Relocation of critical equipment to a less vulnerable area of the facility



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How Do You Apply?

Digital Ready

- Businesses must complete one of the following eligible free Disaster Resilience courses on Verizon's Small Business Digital Ready platform:
  - **Know Your Hazards**
  - **Build Your Business Continuity & Mitigation Plan**

Grant Application

- Once complete, businesses can sign up and apply for the R4R Mitigation Grant until **November 15, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. ET.**
- Businesses that apply for the grant will be automatically registered for our Small Business Readiness for Resiliency (R4R) program, which offers $5,000 recovery grants if a qualifying disaster hits your region.

Next Steps

- Once the application period closes, the U.S. Chamber Foundation will review applications. Applicants will be notified of grant status by January 2027.
- Grant recipients must complete their mitigation project proposed in their application by **April 30, 2027**.

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Questions?



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Contact Us

- Application-Related Questions: info@disastergrants.uschamber.com
- Partnership-Related Questions: resilience@uschamber.com

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Apply Now!

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