

Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program Overview



Typhoon Merbok Unmet Needs Assessment and Action Recovery Plan

Snapshot

On September 17, 2022, Typhoon Merbok struck the coast of Western Alaska. The storm brought hurricane-strength winds, storm surges, and high waves that destroyed or damaged homes, schools, roads, airstrips, utilities, fish camps, and other infrastructure along a 1,300-mile stretch of coastline. In the aftermath of the storm,

- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded the State of Alaska funds through the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program for disaster recovery and mitigation, including restoration of infrastructure, housing, and local economies.
- The State of Alaska must decide how to allocate a total of \$38,493,000 (including \$33,472,000 for unmet needs and a \$5,021,000 mitigation set aside) to benefit the 53 communities that were designated by HUD or the State of Alaska as Most Impacted and Distressed (MID) by Typhoon Merbok.
- The Action Recovery Plan (ARP) proposes a plan to allocate the awarded funding based on unmet needs from the impacts of Typhoon Merbok and according to eligibility requirements set forth by HUD. It is developed by combining data available from public sources, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Small Business Administration (SBA), with input from impacted communities compiled during a robust public engagement process.

For more information, visit: <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/dcra/GrantsSection/CDBG-DR-Merbok.aspx>.

Geographic Scope of the CDBG-DR Award

Typhoon Merbok affected over 50 communities in the Bering Strait, Lower Yukon, Lower Kuskokwim, Kashunamiut, Yupiit, and Pribilof Islands Regional Education Attendance Areas (REAs). The HUD CDBG-DR process uses REAs as geographic units to determine areas of impact. REAs are not used to determine funding priorities or designate school districts as subgrantees. A map and complete list of the 53 MID communities identified by HUD and the State of Alaska are provided below.

- **HUD-identified MID:** HUD designates MID communities based on concentration of damages to and losses of housing, infrastructure, businesses, and other assets from a specific disaster using data from federal agencies like FEMA and SBA.
- **State-identified MID:** State grantees can also identify additional communities within their jurisdiction that suffered significant damage from the federally declared disaster using quantifiable data and in collaboration with partners.

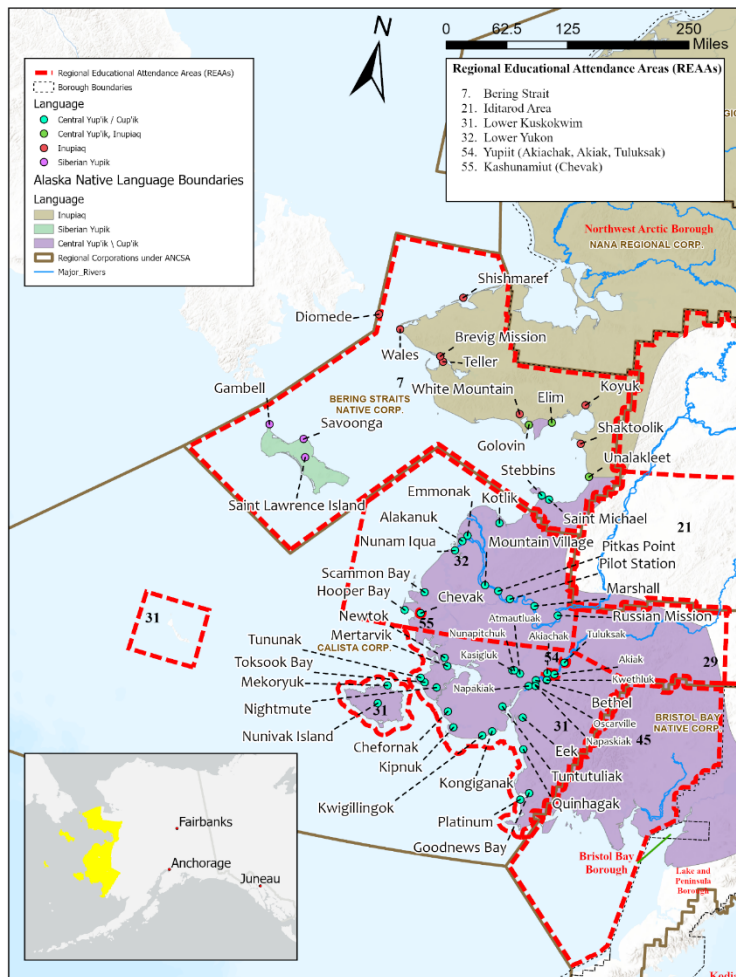


Figure 1. Most Impacted and Distressed (MID) Communities Map

HUD-identified MID Area	State-identified MID Area
Bering Strait REAA: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brevig Mission 2. Diomedes 3. Elim 4. Gambell 5. Golovin 6. Koyuk 7. Nome 8. Savoonga 9. Shaktoolik 10. Shishmaref 11. St. Michael 12. Stebbins 13. Teller 14. Unalakleet 15. Wales 16. White Mountain 	Lower Kuskokwim REAA <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Atmautluak 2. Bethel 3. Chefnak 4. Eek 5. Goodnews Bay 6. Kasigluk 7. Kipnuk 8. Kongiganak 9. Kwethluk 10. Kwigillingok 11. Mekoryuk 12. Napakiak 13. Napaskiak 14. Nightmute 15. Nunapitchuk 16. Oscarville 17. Platinum 18. Quinhagak 19. Tooksook Bay 20. Tuntutuliak 21. Tununak
Kashunamit REAA <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Chevak 	
Lower Yukon REAA <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Alakanuk 19. Emmonak 20. Hooper Bay 21. Kotlik 22. Marshall 23. Mountain Village 24. Nunam Iqua 25. Pilot Station 26. Russian Mission 27. Scammon Bay 	Yupiit REAA <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 22. Akiachak 23. Akiak 24. Tuluksak
	Pribilof Islands REAA <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 25. St. George Island 26. St. Paul Island

The CDBG-DR Process

CDBG-DR funds are meant to address needs not met by other federal programs after a disaster occurs. The funds focus on long-term recovery efforts linked to disaster-related impacts and help to restore housing, infrastructure, and economies. CDBG-DR funds are meant to be the funds of last resort, after all other assistance programs have been utilized; they cannot replace other federal funds and are meant to supplement other funding programs and fill remaining gaps.

Allocation Guidelines and Requirement

- The CDBG-DR grant requires that the non-mitigation set aside (\$33,472,000) be allocated:
 - 80% (\$30,794,400) to HUD identified MID areas: Bering Straits, Kashunamit, and Lower Yukon REAs.
 - 20% (\$2,677,600) to State identified MID areas: Lower Kuskokwim, Yupiit, and Pribilof Islands REAs.
- Funding Allocation Guidelines
 - Recovery Activities:
 - Housing: restoring and improving housing stock (new construction, rehabilitation).
 - Infrastructure: rebuild or replace impacted infrastructure (roads, water, sewer).

- Economic Revitalization: address job losses, impacts to tax revenues, and impacts to business (loans to businesses, improvements to commercial districts).
- Public Services: supporting activities to address housing, infrastructure, and economic revitalization (housing counseling, job training, mental health).
- Resilience and Mitigation Set Aside:
 - Increase resilience to disasters by lessening the impact of future disasters.
- Other Eligible Activities: State and Local Planning and Administration and Technical Assistance Set Aside

Allocation Determinations

To determine how to direct the funds to support recovery efforts across impacted communities, the State must develop an **Unmet Needs Assessment and an Action Recovery Plan** to submit to HUD. For this award, a draft Action Recovery Plan based on the best available public data was developed first to expedite funding to known priorities in the aftermath of Typhoon Merbok (e.g., housing construction). A robust Stakeholder Engagement Process began in August 2025 and will continue through spring 2026. This process will refine and revise the proposed unmet needs prioritization and funding allocation and will result in a Substantial Amendment to be published in September 2026.

- **The Action Recovery Plan** includes:
 - Assessment of unmet needs from Typhoon Merbok. Unmet needs are damages linked to or worsened by Typhoon Merbok that have not been addressed with other disaster recovery funding. The assessment should also include unmet needs that existed before the disaster struck.
 - A proposed plan to allocate awarded funding according to eligibility requirements set forth by HUD.
- **The Unmet Needs Assessment** includes:
 - Assessment of the gross needs in eligible use category (e.g., housing rehabilitation, relocation of building(s), construction of a retaining wall, repairs to damaged water/sewer system, job training).
- **The Unmet Needs Assessment also quantifies the unmet needs** using the following calculation. A sample calculation has been provided in the table below using an example award amount of \$25,000,000:
 - Start with [A] – Total estimated post-disaster loss
 - Subtract [B] – Federal and other funding spent on recovery
 - Equals [C] – Total remaining unmet need
 - [D] – The total remaining unmet need in each category is translated into a percentage.
 - [E] – These percentages are then used to guide allocation of the award amount.

Table I. **EXAMPLE** Allocation Determination Calculations using a \$25,000,000 award amount.

Category	Post-Disaster Loss [A]	Obligated and Disbursed Disaster Recovery Funds [B]	Remaining Unmet Need (\$) [A - B = C]	Remaining Unmet Need (%) [C / \$87,000,000 = D]	Approx. Allocation of \$25 million CDBG-DR Award [D * \$25,000,000 = E]
Housing	\$12,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$10,000,000	11%	\$2,873,563
Infrastructure	\$41,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$40,000,000	46%	\$11,494,253
Economic Revitalization	\$4,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$2,000,000	2%	\$574,713
Public Services	\$67,000	\$67,000	\$0	0%	\$0
Mitigation	\$55,000,000	\$20,000,000	\$35,000,000	40%	\$10,057,471
Total			\$87,000,000	100%	\$25,000,000