



Government contributions to Relief Funds

This factsheet outlines the process local authorities (for example, a local council) and Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Groups would need to follow to receive Government contribution to Relief Funds.

What is a Mayoral or Disaster Relief Fund?

A Relief Fund (also known as a Disaster Relief Fund) is founded and administered by a local authority or a CDEM Group. The Disaster Relief Fund is often contributed to a Mayoral Relief Fund that is administered by a local authority.

The Government may donate to a local authority's / CDEM Group's Relief Fund as an additional way to quickly help impacted communities recover from emergencies.

Relief Funds supplement other available Government assistance, such as contributions from the Ministry of Social Development and Ministry for Primary Industries.

How would you receive Government contribution to a Relief Fund?

This contribution recognises local authorities' responsibilities to support communities recovering from an emergency. Any decision on whether a contribution can be made, along with the contribution amount is determined based on an event's scale and community needs.

While you may request the Government to consider a contribution following an event, the final decision sits with the Minister for Emergency Management or Government.

The Minister for Emergency Management, together with the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, may authorise a contribution of up to \$100,000 (GST exclusive) per event. Government contributions above \$100,000 (GST exclusive) per event will require Cabinet approval. As of April 2022, all contributions are announced as GST exclusive amounts.

Once you receive or are made aware of a Relief Fund contribution:

1. Your local authority/CDEM Group will receive a letter from the Director of Civil Defence Emergency Management, detailing the contribution amount and instructions on how to receive funds.
2. You will then be asked to prepare and submit a tax invoice to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) for the contribution amount, plus GST.
3. To receive Government contribution to Relief Funds, local authorities/CDEM Groups are asked to set up a Relief Fund, publicise this and create a committee to oversee fund spending.
4. DPMC will make the payment to the local authority/CDEM Group after receiving the appropriate authorisation from joint Ministers or Cabinet (depending on the value of the contribution) and a tax invoice.

Local authorities/CDEM Groups determine their own criteria to disburse Relief Funds

Local authorities and CDEM Groups are well-placed to know exactly what they need and have discretion in setting their own criteria to disburse funds. NEMA plays no role in setting individual Relief Fund criteria beyond the policies set out in this factsheet.

The funds may be used to support the immediate needs of affected individuals, families, community organisations and marae.

Examples of how Relief Funds have been used

Government contribution to Relief Funds **may be used** to:

- deal with septic tank overflow
- fill water tanks
- clear debris from properties
- support individuals/families faced with hardships because of an emergency
- koha to a team or individual who assist in clean up at their expense – for example a local rugby team that helps out
- provide refreshments for organisations/people who help with clean up
- replace articles that cannot be insured by people – for example fences, footpaths etc.
- assist people with basic needs, clothes, bedding etc where the individual/family does not have the capacity to buy their own insurance cover.

Government contributions to Relief Funds **must not be used** to finance a local authority's administrative / business costs, or replace other existing funding sources, such as: ¹

- **Welfare** — Eligible costs are funded separately by the Government (for example, through the Ministry of Social Development)
- **Infrastructure** — The Government will meet some costs of essential infrastructure (for example, through Waka Kotahi)
- **Insurance or costs** covered by other funding sources
- **Other response costs** — for example, 60 per cent funded by the Government (above the local authority's threshold) and 40 per cent funded by the local authority.

Factsheets for other existing funding sources listed above can be found on the National Emergency Management Agency's (NEMA) website. ²

Local authorities who receive Government funding are asked to provide a report on their Relief Fund spending:

To enable NEMA to understand local authorities' needs after an emergency and meet obligations regarding taxpayers' funds, local authorities who receive funding are asked to:

- report back on their expenditure within six months of receiving this fund. Any unspent monies must be returned to the Crown
- provide a high-level report outlining how funds were spent and the rationale
- engage with NEMA if there are any unspent monies six months after receiving the fund.

More information can be found in the National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan 2015

Section 33.5.2 of the [Guide to the National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan 2015](#) outlines expectations for how fund administrators may disburse Government contributions to Relief Funds. The Government expects that administrators will not only address the needs of affected individuals and families but also those of community organisations and marae and their associated facilities and infrastructure.

¹ <https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/publications/Claims-factsheets/Factsheet-response-other-response-and-recovery.pdf>

² <https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/cdem-sector/guidelines/claims-factsheets/>