

# **Gov. Walker: Announces no-interest loans now available for South-Central Wisconsin business owners affected by flooding**

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*WEDC awards \$755,000 grant for loan program to assist small businesses in paying for restoration and related costs*

**MADISON** - Governor Scott Walker today announced the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) has awarded a \$755,000 grant to the Madison Region Economic Partnership (MadREP) to provide no-interest loans to small businesses in south-central Wisconsin that were impacted by the recent flooding.

Businesses in eight counties will be eligible for microloans of up to \$15,000, which will provide them with a short-term source of funds for repair work and operating expenses until more long-term recovery funding can be secured. The loans have a two-year repayment period, with payments deferred for at least six months.

"Just weeks after the WEDC Board approved its new Disaster Recovery Microloan Program, we are ready to start providing loans to businesses that have been hard hit by the flooding and need some help for restoration work and related expenses," said Governor Walker. "We realize there are many small businesses still struggling to recover from the flooding and these loans will give them the funds to help them quickly recover and get back on track."

Under the \$2 million program, WEDC awards grants to its regional partners, which in turn issues loans to businesses. In addition to MadREP, WEDC expects to provide grants to the Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission, two regional organizations in areas hit hardest by the flooding and severe weather in late August and early September.

MadREP is now accepting loan applications from businesses impacted by the severe weather. To be eligible for a loan, a business must be located in the MadREP region - Dane, Rock, Sauk, Dodge, Iowa, Columbia, Jefferson and Green counties. Businesses also must have suffered measurable physical damage because of the disaster and must intend to resume business operations in the community as quickly as possible.

The loans can be used for procurement of cleanup and restoration services, operating expenses, temporary space, and repair and reconstruction work. Applications can be found at [madisonregion.org](http://madisonregion.org).

"Businesses in our community are still struggling to recover from August's flood and wind damage," said MadREP Acting President Michael Gay. "The program is designed to provide business owners with a readily available financial resource to make repairs and replace equipment."

In Dane County alone, 126 businesses sustained \$21 million in damage, including 22 that had major damage, according to Wisconsin Emergency Management. In Sauk County, 32 businesses sustained \$900,000 in damage.

Van Nutt, executive director of the Middleton Chamber of Commerce, said the funds will provide much-needed assistance for local businesses, which sustained about \$30 million in structural damage.

"We are appreciative of MadREP administering WEDC's Disaster Recovery Microloan Program," Nutt said. "With more than 40 businesses affected by the August 20 historic rains in Middleton, this program comes at an important time for small businesses that are experiencing a very tight cashflow during their recovery."

The WEDC Board of Directors on Sept. 18 approved the program after businesses and homes in 18 counties were damaged in late August and early September following several weeks of intense storms, tornados and heavy rainfall across much of southern and central Wisconsin. These storms produced devastating flash flooding in multiple regions, resulted in seven dam failures, and caused several lakes and rivers to spill out of their banks and damage homes, bridges and roads.

More than 300 businesses statewide sustained nearly \$34 million in damage, while more than 1,200 homes sustained more than \$25 million in damages, according to Wisconsin Emergency Management. Governor Walker has asked President Donald Trump to declare the 18 counties as federal disaster areas.

WEDC's Disaster Recovery Microloan Program is available to businesses in all 72 counties. For more information, visit [wedc.org/disasterrecovery](http://wedc.org/disasterrecovery).