



Public Assistance FAQ's

Background

On March 13, 2020, President Trump declared a Nationwide Emergency Declaration in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, which resulted in an Emergency Disaster Declaration for the State. This is an unprecedented action in the FEMA Public Assistance Program. Following this declaration, the State of New Hampshire requested, and was approved for, a Major Disaster Declaration on April 3, 2020 which opens up Public Assistance grant funds for the state.

The Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) is committed to assisting applicants in navigating the FEMA reimbursement process for eligible costs incurred during the response of and recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic.

This is the 7th Major Disaster Declaration the State has managed in the last three years. The COVID-19 disaster will be processed by HSEM in the same manner as the others.

What is Public Assistance?

FEMA's Public Assistance Program provides supplemental grants to state, tribal, territorial, and local governments, and certain types of private non-profits so that communities can quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies.

What Dates are Eligible for Reimbursement?

The Disaster Declaration is valid from January 20, 2020 and continuing. As we are still in response mode, the end date of the incident period will be defined later.

Who is Eligible?

There are **four (4) types** of eligible Applicants for Public Assistance (PA).

1. **State Government Agencies.**
2. **Local governments and special districts – For example school districts, utility districts, etc.**
3. **Private nonprofit organizations (PNPs).**
 - a. PNPs must own or operate facilities that are open to the general public and that provide certain essential and critical services otherwise performed by a government agency.
4. **Federally recognized Native American Indian Tribes**
 - a. Not applicable in New Hampshire

See the Public Assistance "PA Eligible Applicants" document.

Is There a Cost Share?

Currently, the PA program has a 75% Federal cost share, in which the applicant is responsible for 25% of their eligible costs. Typically, federal funds cannot be matched with other federal funds. We have requested approval of 100% federal cost share, which is under review by FEMA and the President.

What is Eligible under the Major Disaster Declaration?

Most natural disasters in NH result in a Major Disaster Declaration which opens up PA funding for emergency and permanent work. This particular declaration is unique as it only authorizes Direct Federal Assistance (DFA) and Emergency Protective Measures work at this time.

Our request for Individual Assistance was approved for the Crisis Counselling Program on April 30, 2020. The request for Hazard Mitigation funding is currently under review by FEMA and the President.

Individual Assistance, in general, provides financial help or direct services to individuals and households who have disaster-caused needs that are not covered by insurance or other means. A plan is currently being developed by NHDHHS to implement the FEMA Crisis Counselling Program in NH.

Hazard Mitigation is intended to enact mitigation measures that reduce the risk of loss of life and property from future disasters.

What Work is Eligible for Reimbursement?

NOTE: FEMA will not duplicate assistance provided by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or other federal agencies.

Eligible work, materials, and activities are still being defined, but FEMA has released the below list of examples. This list is not all inclusive.

Management, Control and Reduction of Immediate Threats to Public Health and Safety

- Emergency Operation Center Activities
- Training
- Facility disinfection
- Technical assistance on emergency management
- Dissemination of information to the public to provide warnings and guidance
- Pre-positioning or movement of supplies, equipment, or other resources
- Purchase and distribution of food, water, or ice
- Purchase and distribution of other commodities
- Security, law enforcement, barricading and patrolling
- Storage of human remains or mass mortuary services

Emergency Medical Care

- Purchase and distribution/use of medical supplies and equipment, including:
 - In vitro diagnostic supplies
 - Personal protective equipment, including: respirators, N95 respirators, medical gloves, surgical masks, medical gowns, coveralls, face shields, etc.
 - Decontamination systems
 - Ventilators and products modified for use as ventilators
 - Therapeutics
- Provision of medical services, including:
 - Disease testing
 - Treatment
 - Diagnosis
 - Emergency medical transport

- Medical waste disposal
- Enhanced medical facilities, including:
 - Alternate Care Sites or temporary medical facilities
 - Expansion of capacity within an existing medical facility
 - Community-based testing sites

Sheltering*

- Isolation-related temporary lodging
- Quarantine-related temporary lodging
- High-risk population sheltering
- Healthcare worker and first responder temporary lodging
- Household pet or assistance animal service animal sheltering

*Non-congregate medical sheltering is subject to prior approval by FEMA and is limited to that which is reasonable and necessary to address the public health needs of the event, is pursuant to the direction of appropriate public health officials and does not extend beyond the duration of the Public Health Emergency.

Where Can I Access the Applicant Briefings?

HSEM conducted Applicant briefings at the end of April for all potential applicants. These briefings provided high-level information regarding the PA program, including:

- Application procedures
- Project funding
- Administrative requirements
- Procurement requirements
- Environmental and historic preservation (EHP) compliance requirements
- General eligibility criteria
- Documentation requirements
- Recordkeeping

[Applicant Briefing slides](#) and a [recording of an Applicant Briefing session \(Password to access recording: NHDisasterDR4516\)](#) can be found on the [HSEM Resource Center Public Assistance Homepage](#).

Is Funding Available for Small Businesses and Non-Eligible Private Non-Profits?

Eligible private non-profits (PNP) may apply for funding under the PA Program. Small businesses and PNPs that are not eligible under the PA Program may apply for a loan through the Small Business Administration (SBA) for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan of up to \$2 million to help meet financial obligations and operating expenses which could have been met had the disaster not occurred. These loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact.

How will the PA Process for this Disaster be Different?

FEMA has created a streamlined process for the COVID-19 disaster due to the national need for the PA Program. In order to provide reimbursements as quickly as possible, FEMA has eliminated many process steps and provided a COVID-19 specific Project Worksheet that state liaisons will be using to create projects using minimal documentation requirements.

The COVID-19 Project Worksheet will be completed by the Applicant with assistance from an HSEM liaison in the GrantsPortal.

How Does HSEM Manage the Public Assistance Program?

FEMA provides PA funding for administrative costs related to managing the PA Program and PA projects. Management costs are indirect costs, administrative expenses, and other expenses the State or Applicant incurs in administering and managing PA awards that are not directly chargeable to a specific project.

FEMA provides 100 percent Federal funding for management costs based on actual costs incurred up to 7 percent of the total award amount for the disaster for the State, and up to 5% of the total award amount for Applicants. Activities eligible as management costs include those related to developing eligible PA projects and receiving reimbursement.

Due to this disaster, HSEM will be hiring four temporary positions to supplement current staffing to ensure adequate administration of reimbursement to applicants. These positions are fully funded by the FEMA management costs.