FEMA

Fact Sheet

Public Assistance

The Public Assistance Program provides grants to state, , local, and federally recognized tribal governments and certain private non-profit entities to assist them with the response to and recovery from disasters. Specifically, the program provides assistance for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and permanent restoration of infrastructure.

Eligible Applicants: Eligible applicants include state, , local, and federally recognized tribal governments and any other political subdivision of the state. Certain private non-profit (PNP) organizations may also receive assistance. Eligible PNPs include educational, utility, emergency, medical, temporary or permanent custodial care facilities (including those for the aged and disabled), irrigation, museums, zoos, community centers, libraries, homeless shelters, senior citizen centers, rehabilitation facilities, shelter workshops and health and safety services and other PNP facilities that provide essential services of a governmental nature to the general public. PNPs that provide "critical services" (power, water - including water provided by an irrigation organization or facility, sewer, wastewater treatment, communications and emergency medical care) may apply directly to FEMA for a disaster grant. All other PNPs must first apply to the Small Business Administration (SBA) for a disaster loan. If the PNP is declined for a SBA loan or the loan does not cover all eligible damages, the applicant may reapply for FEMA assistance.

Public Assistance Process: As soon as practicable after the declaration, the grantee (state, territory, or tribe), assisted by FEMA, conducts the Applicant Briefings for state, territorial, local, tribal and PNP officials to inform them of the assistance available and how to apply for it. A Request for Public Assistance must be filed by the grantee within 30 days after the area is designated eligible for assistance. Following the Applicant's Briefing, a Kickoff Meeting is conducted where damages will be discussed, needs assessed, and a plan of action put in place. A combined federal/state/territorial/tribal/local team proceeds with Project Formulation, which is the process of documenting the eligible facility, the eligible work, and the eligible cost for fixing the damages to every public or PNP facility identified by State, territorial, tribal, or local representatives. The team prepares a Project Worksheet (PW) based on actual costs or on the basis of an estimate for each project.

Public Assistance Projects Categories:

- Category A: Debris removal
- Category B: Emergency protective measures
- Category C: Roads and bridges
- Category D: Water control facilities
- Category E: Public buildings and contents
- Category F: Public utilities
- Category G: Parks, recreational, and other facilities

Small Projects: Projects falling below a certain threshold are considered "small." The threshold is adjusted annually for inflation. For small projects, payment of the federal share of the estimate is made upon approval of the project and notification is required upon completion of the project.

Large Projects: For large projects, payment is made on the basis of actual costs determined after the project is completed, although interim payments may be made as necessary, or on the basis of an agreed upon estimate. The eligible applicant has the choice of how it wishes to receive the federal grant. Once FEMA obligates funds to the grantee, further management of the assistance, including disbursement to sub-grantees, is the responsibility of the grantee. FEMA will continue to monitor the recovery progress to ensure the timely delivery of eligible assistance and compliance with the law and regulations.

The federal share of assistance is not less than 75 percent of the eligible cost for emergency measures and permanent restoration. The grantee determines how the non-federal share (up to 25 percent) is split with the sub-grantees (eligible applicants).

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"FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards."

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