

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Public Health Emergency: Coordinating Public Assistance and Other Sources of Federal Funding

The President's March 13, 2020, COVID-19 nationwide emergency declaration and subsequent major disaster declarations authorize the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide Public Assistance (PA) Program funding under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act) to state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) government entities and certain private nonprofit (PNP) organizations for emergency protective measures. For COVID-19, Congress authorized over \$3 trillion to multiple federal agencies for them to provide assistance to SLTTs in addressing the effects of this public health emergency pandemic. The extensive COVID-19 authority of other federal agencies in some cases overlaps with FEMA's authority.

Multiple Sources of Funding – Given the need of SLTTs to quickly address the public health threats of the COVID-19 pandemic and that Congress has made funding available to several federal agencies for this purpose, potential applicants for PA have the flexibility to determine which source of funding to use for their costs in order to best meet their needs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, subject to the purpose and eligibility requirements of each of the federal programs and funding sources. Given the multiple overlapping authorities and funding for the federal response to COVID-19, FEMA may provide PA funding to applicants for eligible costs under the COVID-19 declarations that may also be eligible for funding under another federal agency's authorities. FEMA will not deny a PA eligible cost under a COVID-19 declaration solely because that cost may be eligible under another federal agency's authorities, except as described in the next section. (A list of federal funding for COVID-19 is available at: <https://www.usa.gov/coronavirus>.)

Coordination of Funding – To avoid confusion and streamline options amongst multiple funding sources, FEMA may decide not to pay for certain types of work and may direct SLTTs to another agency with more subject matter expertise or with a more flexible funding source. For example, contact tracing is potentially an eligible PA emergency protective measure, in coordination with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of the Treasury (Treasury); however, FEMA has determined that those agencies are the most appropriate for SLTTs seeking funding for contact tracing. As FEMA continues to coordinate with our federal partners to ensure coordination of funding, we will provide additional guidance to SLTTs for where they can seek funding. If an applicant applies to FEMA for PA funding and then determines it no longer wants the funding for the cost of certain activities from FEMA and will instead seek funding from another federal agency, the applicant should notify FEMA as soon as possible. Applicants should notify FEMA by withdrawing or amending their PA project application if funding has not been awarded yet or request an updated version to amend their PA project if funding has been awarded.

Duplication of Benefits – Section 312 of the Stafford Act prohibits all federal agencies from duplicating benefits for disaster relief. Multiple agencies having authority to expend funds for the same purpose is not, by itself, a duplication of



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benefits under Section 312. However, all federal agencies are prohibited by Section 312 from paying SLTTs for the same work twice. FEMA is coordinating closely with other federal agencies to provide information about the eligible use of various COVID-19 funding resources. Recipients and subrecipients are ultimately responsible for ensuring that they do not accept payment for the same item of work twice. FEMA applicants will certify in the PA application process that assistance is not being duplicated.

Cost Share – For COVID-19, PA funding is authorized at 75% federal cost share. Generally, other federal agency funding cannot be used to meet the FEMA non-federal share requirement. For COVID-19, there are two exceptions: Treasury's CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund and the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Disaster Block Grant (CDBG-CV) can be used to meet the PA non-federal share. Cost share requirements vary from agency-to-agency and program-to-program; however, many of the programs funded by the CARES Act and the other supplemental appropriations do not require a non-federal share.