Public Assistance Tips for Officials 2019

FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) grant program provides federal assistance in the form of grants to government organizations (state, tribal, territorial, and local governments) and certain private nonprofit (PNP) organizations following a Presidential disaster declaration.

Through the program, FEMA provides supplemental federal disaster grant assistance for debris removal, life-saving emergency protective measures, and the repair, replacement, or restoration of disaster-damaged publicly-owned facilities, and the facilities of certain PNP organizations. The PA program also encourages protection of these damaged facilities from future events by providing assistance for hazard mitigation measures during the recovery process.

The federal share of assistance is not less than 75 percent of the eligible cost. The Recipient (usually the state) determines how the non-federal share (up to 25 percent) is split with the sub-recipients (eligible applicants).

PNPs must have "an effective ruling letter from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, granting tax exemption under sections 501(c), (d), or (e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, or satisfactory evidence from the State that the nonrevenue producing organization or entity is a nonprofit one organized or doing business under State law." Additionally, for a PNP operated facility to be eligible, the PNP must demonstrate the facility provides a critical service or provides a non-critical, but essential government service and is open to the general public. A facility that provides a critical service is defined as one used for an educational, utility, emergency, or medical purpose.

Project Categories

FEMA processes PA grant funding according to the type of work the applicant undertakes. Eligible work must be required as a result of the declared incident, be located in the designated area, be the legal responsibility of the applicant, and be undertaken at a reasonable cost. Eligible work is classified into the following categories:

Emergency Work
Category A: Debris removal
Category B: Emergency protective measures
Permanent Work
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

Federal funding guidelines for each of these categories are listed in the Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide, which is located online at https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/111781.

Application Process

After a federal declaration, the recipient (i.e. state, tribe, or territory) conducts Applicant Briefings to inform potential applicants (i.e. state, local, tribal, territorial, and PNP officials) of the assistance available and how to apply. Applicants must then file a Request for Public Assistance within 30 days of the date their respective area is designated by the federal declaration. Following the approved request, FEMA and the applicants will conduct additional meetings to discuss disaster damage and project formulation. Applicants must identify and report damages to FEMA within the 60-day regulatory timeframe. FEMA, the recipient, or the applicant will then prepare project worksheets for eligible work and eligible facilities based on actual or estimated project costs.

Grant Administration

The federal share of assistance will not be less than 75 percent of the eligible cost for emergency measures and permanent restoration. The recipient determines how the non-federal share of 25 percent will be dispersed to its applicants. Recipients are responsible for managing the funds obligated to them by FEMA, including disbursement to applicants. FEMA will continue to monitor the recovery progress to ensure the timely delivery of eligible assistance, and compliance with federal laws and regulations.

FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide

The FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG) is available for download on the Public Assistance (PA) Policy and Guidance page on FEMA.gov. The PAPPG was created in Adobe for easy access and download, and includes several features designed to improve navigation and quick access to information. The following tips and tricks may be useful to optimize the utilization of this document.

Attached are tips to navigating the PAPPG.