

# COVID-19 Process Overview

## Public Assistance Applicant Quick Guide



The Public Assistance Program provides federal grant assistance to help communities quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies declared by the President. An Applicant is a non-Federal entity (state, territorial, tribal, and local government or private non-profit) submitting an application for assistance under a Federal award given to a Recipient (the state, territorial, or tribal entity managing the Federal award under the declaration). Once FEMA approves funding for an Applicant, the Applicant becomes a Subrecipient. This Quick Guide provides an **overview** of the **Public Assistance process** for **Applicants seeking assistance** under **COVID-19** declarations.

FEMA provides funding for management costs that an Applicant incurs in administering and managing PA awards. For details on management costs, see the [Public Assistance \(PA\) Management Costs Interim Policy](#).

### Summary of COVID-19 Process Changes

For COVID-19 declarations, FEMA has streamlined the PA application process, including:

- Enabling the Applicant to apply directly to FEMA without relying on FEMA or Recipient staff.
- Providing a COVID-19 Streamlined Project Application.
- Reducing documentation requirements for projects under \$131,100.

For more information, refer to FEMA’s *Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic: Public Assistance Simplified Application Fact Sheet*.

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The streamlined application for COVID-19 allows for applications to be processed and managed remotely through the following steps:

#### Virtual Applicant Briefing

The Applicant Briefing is a Recipient-led meeting that occurs after a declaration to discuss Public Assistance procedures and requirements with potential Applicants. Organizations interested in applying for Public Assistance should contact their state, territorial, tribal, or local emergency management representative to obtain information on attending an Applicant Briefing.

#### Grants Portal Account Creation and Requests for Public Assistance

Applicants apply for assistance through FEMA’s [Grants Portal](#). Applicants can create accounts directly in Grants Portal or work through their Recipient to gain access. FEMA and the Recipient

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review the Request for Public Assistance for eligibility. If FEMA approves the application, the Applicant proceeds with submitting its project application(s). For more information on the process, see *Public Assistance Applicant Quick Guide: Grants Portal Account and Request for Public Assistance*, located in the Resources tab on Grants Portal.

**Grants Portal**  
is the system used by  
Recipients and  
Applicants to manage  
PA applications.

### COVID-19 Streamlined Project Application

The Applicant completes and submits its project application(s) in Grants Portal. The project application includes detailed information about the activities for which an Applicant's is requesting funding and lists supporting documentation the Applicant needs to provide to justify the request. Once the Applicant completes the project application, the Applicant can follow prompts in Grants Portal to upload and submit the application. For more information on the process, see *Public Assistance Applicant Quick Guide: Completing and Submitting the COVID-19 Streamlined Project Application in Grants Portal*, located in the Resources tab on Grants Portal.

### FEMA and Recipient Review

FEMA and the Recipient review and validate the project application to ensure completeness, eligibility, and compliance with Federal laws and regulations on items such as contracting and environmental and historic preservation. FEMA or the Recipient may request additional information from the Applicant during these reviews.

### Applicant Signs Project

The Applicant reviews all terms and conditions that FEMA or the Recipient include in the project application and signs in agreement to the funding terms, including requirements for reporting on project work progress and completion.

### Post-Award Activities

The Applicant provides additional documentation as its response efforts unfold and work is completed to document actual costs and expenditures of Public Assistance funds. Upon completion of work, the Applicant coordinates with the Recipient to formally close projects. The Applicant must retain records of all project-related documentation.

The *Applicant Quick Guide* series is a set of documents that explain the roles and responsibilities of Applicants in key steps in FEMA's Public Assistance Program delivery process. Read more about Public Assistance Program delivery in the [Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide](#), and other resources available on [Grants Portal](#).