Public Assistance Applicant Briefing Questions

DR-4492 (COVID-19)

Application Process/General PA Questions

Should applicants submit a Request for Public Assistance (RPA) now, even if cost estimates are not yet available?
Yes, potential applicants should submit RPAs as soon as possible through FEMA’s Grants Portal. The RPA deadline for COVID-19 will be 30 days from the end of the incident period.

Every county has been encouraged to begin the application process. Currently we are addressing everything internally or via Palmetto. Therefore, our expenses have been minimal. Therefore, once we begin the public assistance process, do we base our project on projections?
You can submit your RPA now and wait until you have a better understanding of your costs incurred or you have accrued more eligible costs.

Where can we see the FEMA Cat B Excel form on Grants Portal?
This is still not available in Grants Portal. We will inform when it is.

How do Private Nonprofits (PNPs) register for access to Grants Portal?
PNPs should contact SCEMD at pa@emd.sc.gov to create a Grants Portal account.

Will a webinar/WebEx be held walking through Grants Portal?
This has been requested.

What is the Period of Performance (POP) for Emergency Protective Measures?
The POP for emergency work is six months from the declaration date. For COVID-19, this means the POP ends September 27, 2020.

After we complete the RPA, how long do we have to complete the Damage Inventory?
This question is pending clarification from FEMA.

Will all of our projects be added together to contribute to the threshold? For example, if we have multiple small projects, would they be added together to create one large project?
All expenses related to emergency protective measure can be on one project.

What is the large project threshold?
The large project threshold is $131,100.

Can a facility apply for and receive funds from both the Small Business Administration and Public Assistance?
Specific to non-critical PNPs, the applicant must apply for an SBA loan prior to submitting for reimbursement on permanent work projects. However,

What will not be accepted by FEMA?
FEMA will not accept paper forms of the project template worksheet, only submission through Grants Portal.

Can SNS be used toward our 25%?
Use of other federal resources cannot be used to offset the non-federal share of Public Assistance.

04/02/2020
Equipment/Technology Purchases

Is the purchase of laptop computers, IT equipment and software for employees to work from home eligible?
Only technology and laptop computers for staff working in response to (not as a result of) COVID-19 will be considered for eligibility.

Would the cost of computers for mental health professionals working from home to support patients while social distancing be eligible?
Only if the patients are being seen for COVID-19 related concerns. Normal appointments with patients would not be eligible for support of teleworking.

With regard to technology purchases being directly in response to COVID 19, would faculty now teaching online qualify? The Governor ordered that classes at the University be moved online, so could the purchase of a laptop for a faculty member be covered?
The costs related to faculty teaching would not be an eligible expense.

Many if not all of the local governments have moved to electronic Council meetings. Would the cost of that electronic video platform be considered eligible?
If the meetings are for public information related to COVID-19, it may be considered for eligibility.

Several employees are working from home in order to properly quarantine and protect employees/community. Will the purchase of laptops needed for quarantine eligible?
The purchase of laptops to support social distancing and quarantine is not an eligible expense. This is considered a modification of duties and not a cost incurred in response to COVID-19.

Labor and Compensation

Would compensation for employees with potential exposure who are on administrative leave be reimbursable?
This is not a reimbursable expense as it is not a cost incurred related to eligible work.

Would paying employees for standby time to rotate staff for providing critical services (e.g. water, electricity) be eligible?
Standby time will not be eligible as there is no threat to the system of work to being continuous

Would the pay for employees with potential exposure who are on administrative leave be reimbursable?
This is not a reimbursable expense. There is not a cost incurred here related to eligible work.

Would non-working staff (school district) salaries be covered? Food service and additional employees are working to give out lunches and additional cleaning of all buildings.
This is not a reimbursable expense. There is not a cost incurred here related to eligible work.

If we had employees that worked extra hours to continue to provide meals for children that are out of school, would these employees’ overtime pay be eligible?
This would not be an eligible expense as these costs should be covered by the USDA grants.

Do you consider staff providing meals to kids out of school eligible?
This is covered under a different federal grant.

If a school district is closed, would salaries for any personnel required to stay home be covered?
This would not be considered an eligible expense.

04/02/2020
Would work performed by a lawyer and paid for by a municipality be covered as an eligible damage?  
If the work performed by the lawyer is in response to COVID-19, it could be considered for eligibility.

If current employees are redirected to perform tasks that are not a part of their normal duties - specifically man a call center to deal with stress, anxiety, grief as result of COVID-19, would any cost be eligible?  
This could be considered for eligibility.

For first responders, if we wanted to implement temporary hazard pay to their salaries, would that cost be eligible?  
This would not be eligible.

Would that be the case if they are public employees like police and sanitation and they are being asked to stay home to limit exposure to the public?  
This is not a reimbursable expense. There is not a cost incurred here related to eligible work.

If our EMS staff gets depleted with exposure to COVID-19, requiring quarantine, would contract services for EMS be eligible?  
If the staff contracted are supporting COVID-19 response, this could be considered for eligibility.

Food, Shelter, and Cleaning

Would the cost for cleaning non-congregate facilities used for housing isolated individuals (such as motels) be eligible?  
If approved by FEMA, these costs will be considered for eligibility.

Would the cost for cleaning congregate meal sites be eligible?  
Cleaning of public facilities to include congregate sheltering and meal sites would be considered for eligibility.

Would the cost of supplies and labor for sanitization of public facilities (e.g. schools) be eligible?  
Costs related to sanitization will be considered for eligibility. Only overtime for force account labor would be considered for eligibility related to COVID-19 response.

What kind of justification is needed for food? If we are supplying for EOC operations and training?  
Only bulk purchases of food are eligible for EOC operations and training.

How do we need to justify food for EOC operations and training for COVID-19?  
This is an eligible expense in the PAPPG and emergency protective measures. This has to be a purchase for all and not individual meals per person.

Would food for departments for emergency stockpile be eligible?  
This would not be an eligible expense.

Can our AAA’s use these funding for cleaning of senior homes if needed?  
This could be an eligible expense.

Other Costs

04/02/2020
Are masks, sanitizers, and wipes provided for troopers working the road considered eligible?
Providing PPE can be considered for eligibility.

Would any eLearning materials be covered? Paper supplies and books?
If this is for training related to COVID-19, it would be considered. If this is related to education, this is not an eligible expense.

Is lost revenue eligible for Public Assistance funding?
Lost revenue is not eligible for PA funding.

Would costs for emergency communications (e.g. SCETV) be eligible?
Emergency communications for public information for COVID-19 can be considered for eligibility.

Our work site, fire station that houses staffed fire, and separate county-provided EMS is only accessible via ferry transportation. Currently, daily staffing travels via a public ferry system with approximately 50 other people. We are exploring utilizing the vendor for the ferry, to create a public safety only ferry, for members to travel to work, to limit exposure to public safety members. The additional ferry has separate costs out of the current county contract, is that considered reimbursable?
The costs of transportation of people and supplies in response to COVID-19 could be considered for eligibility. However, additional costs associated with social distancing would not, for example an additional ferry.

Since municipal court cases have been continued, would postage for letters to citizens be reimbursable?
This does not tie to eligible work related to the response of COVID-19 and would not be eligible.