



# Public Assistance: COVID-19

## Applicant Briefing Questions & Answers

- **Is this presentation available to download?**

For your reference, the presentation with notes can be found here:

<https://www.maine.gov/mema/grants/public-assistance-grant-program>

A prerecorded presentation can be found here: <https://youtu.be/aigr1laXvv4>

- **How do we find out if we already have an account? We have had turnover in our organization due to the furloughs?**

Please email your organization's name and current information to MEMA's [Maine.Recovery@maine.gov](mailto:Maine.Recovery@maine.gov) mailbox. We will be happy to assist.

- **Do you have a timeline for RPA approval?**

We do not specifically, since RPAs require approval by both the state and FEMA. State approval is done quickly (within a day or two depending upon the workload). The FEMA approval can take a bit longer.

- **Can the RPA be saved and done in multiple sessions or does it have to be done at one session? I could not see how to save.**

The RPA needs to be completed in one session, there is no functionality to save as you progress through the questions. Government organizations and the like are required to submit limited questions regarding contact information which are easily submitted in one session. PNPs will need to provide additional information such as specific facility documentation which may require them to gather documentation beforehand in order to submit their RPA in one session. Supporting cost documentation is submitted during the Project Application process and allows for multiple sessions with information being saved as you progress through the application.

- **Does MEMA have a preference for Small Project initial submission? i.e. weekly, monthly**

For this event, FEMA is simplifying the PA application process. Given this flexibility, it is reasonable for applicants to apply for reimbursement in weekly or 30-day increments which could result in multiple Project Applications. Each small Project Application must meet the \$3,300 minimum threshold; therefore, do not submit multiple Project Applications if you are not confident each application will exceed the minimum threshold.

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- **We have some completed activities with invoices for incurred costs and some activities with quotes for planned costs. Can these be included in the same application, or do you recommend separate applications?**

Applicants will have the ability to combine incurred and planned costs on one application. If multiple applications, each application must exceed the minimum threshold of \$3,300.

- **Can standard hours worked on a particular day be considered for cost share? In other words, an employee works 10 hours, 8 hours are standard and 2 are OT. Reimbursement would only be considered for the 2 hours of OT. Can the other 8 hours be used as a factor for cost share?**

FEMA reimburses for overtime labor expenses and reimbursement is based on the organization's predisaster pay policies. FEMA will review all labor expenses as part of the project formulation. Any hours not reimbursed cannot be counted as part of the cost share.

- **Can we use other federal COVID 19 money (in our case, the BJA CESF) to meet the cost share requirement or do those funds need to be locally sourced?**

As detailed in 2 C.F.R. § 200.306(b)(5), the contributions towards that non-Federal share or match of a Federal award cannot be paid by the federal government under another federal award, except where the federal statute authorizing a program specifically provides that federal funds made available for such program can be applied to matching or cost sharing requirements of other federal programs.

As it relates to using funding under the BJA CESF towards the non-Federal share of a Public Assistance project, you will need to ask the DOJ whether this would be permissible.

- **If a community has received HHS reimbursement for lost EMS revenues through the CARES act, does that prohibit us claiming ambulance cost for responding to COVID calls as asked previously.**

FEMA can provide financial assistance for an eligible EMS applicant to perform eligible emergency protective measures under Public Assistance Category B. As detailed in FEMA Policy No. 104-010-04, this can include certain medical care work and associated costs such as emergency medical transport related to COVID-19 for a primary medical care facility. This financial assistance, however, cannot duplicate funding received by the applicant for the same purpose from another source such as private insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, or pre-existing private payment agreement or duplicate assistance provided by HHS or other federal agencies for the same purpose. In this case, it does not appear that the payment to a facility was intended to reimburse the facility for the specific cost of COVID-19 medical care such as medical transport, but rather to pay a facility that experienced lost revenue as a result of COVID-19, such that there would not be a duplication. FEMA would, however, need additional information about the payments in order to make a final determination.

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- **What kind of documentation of activity would be required for a Fire Department that needs to operate on a daily basis? There was significant overtime utilized within our department to ensure we had adequate staffing during this pandemic, but the activity was to fill open positions on the department. How is this documented?**

Reimbursement for overtime labor expenses and backfill will be based on the organization's predisaster pay policies. FEMA will review all labor expenses as part of the project formulation.

- **Will MEMA hold back a portion of the funding on estimated large projects until closeout is complete?**

It is MEMA's policy to retain 25% of the Federal Award for Large Projects (Projects over \$131,000) until project reconciliation and approved by FEMA.

- **If an expense is covered by another grant (such as overtime for FD or PD in AFG or BJA) and the applicant chooses not to use those funding sources and only applies for overtime expenses for FEMA-PA, is that allowable?**

If there is no duplication of funds from another Federal Agency, overtime expenses can be submitted for Public Assistance.

- **Are police cruisers eligible for force account equipment if responding to a call that is presumed COVID positive or COVID positive?**

Police cruisers responding to COVID-19 related calls could be reimbursed using the established FEMA Equipment Cost Codes. A link to the current rates can be found at <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/136901>.

- **Our organization has over a dozen facilities. When uploading PNP and mortgage lease documents should these be combined in single PNP and single mortgage/lease document?**

Documents can be combined into a single document for ease of submission. FEMA will issue a Request for Information (RFI) if additional documentation is required.

- **Are ambulances responding to possible COVID calls eligible for hourly reimbursement when responding? How does commercial medical insurance coverage for an ambulance call affect FEMA reimbursement for ambulances?**

A key thing to remember here is that FEMA is the payer of last resort. This means that all other funding provided on a project is considered first and deducted from the costs eligible for reimbursement under the PA Program. So, if the transport is paid for by other funds, from any source, it will not be reimbursed through the PA program.

If not covered by other payers, ambulance services responding to COVID-19 related calls could be reimbursed using the established FEMA Equipment Cost Codes. A link to the current rates can be found at <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/136901>.

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- **Is the cost of continuing to pay employees to stay home who are not able to work from home covered under section B?**

FEMA will only reimburse overtime for employees performing COVID-19 activities. They will not reimburse employees not able to work from home.

- **Could a town apply for hazard pay bonus for essential emergency service workers?**

Reimbursement for labor expenses and backfill will be based on your specific organization's predisaster pay policies. FEMA will review all labor expenses as part of the project formulation.

- **How do we reimburse for call firefighters?**

Reimbursement for labor expenses and backfill will be based on your specific organization's predisaster pay policies. FEMA will review all labor expenses as part of the project formulation.

- **Where is guidance on reimbursing costs for transportation of supplies (PPE). Or for travel costs of staff who have been grocery shopping on behalf of home bound seniors?**

Vehicles transporting COVID-19 related PPE or staff could be reimbursed using the established FEMA Equipment Cost Codes. A link to the current rates can be found at <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/136901>.

- **Are police departments considered critical?**

Yes, police departments are included in "local unit of government" regarding eligibility.

- **Are public schools eligible?**

Yes. An "independent school district" and "public/state-controlled institution of higher education" are two types of eligible applicants under the PA program. Schools can apply by emailing their Regional School Unit, Maine School Administrative District or University name, contact name, phone number, and email address of the person that will be accessing Grants Portal to [Maine.Recovery@maine.gov](mailto:Maine.Recovery@maine.gov).

- **For supply costs, you stated 3 quotes are needed. With COVID-19, we are unable to get 3 quotes as the supplies are not available. We purchased what we could find, usually a single vendor. We are unable to get 3 quotes for items such as masks, gowns, gloves, etc.**

Procurement guidance has been posted to MEMA's website: <https://www.maine.gov/mema/grants/public-assistance-grant-program>. Specifically, two fact sheets relating to COVID-19:

Procurement During EE Circumstances Fact Sheet: (pdf format)

Procurement Under Grants Conducted Under Exigent or Emergency Circumstances

Procurement During EE Circumstances Memo: (pdf format)

Procurement Under Grants Conducted Under Exigent or Emergency Circumstances for COVID-19

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- **Our Police dept is interested in purchasing a mobile message board. Is there a threshold amount or process for emergency purchases I need to be aware of to comply with?**

There is a minimum amount of \$3,300 in eligible costs to be able to apply for assistance. Please refer to the FEMA Fact Sheet Category B located on MEMA's website for a list of eligible expenses.

<https://www.maine.gov/mema/grants/public-assistance-grant-program>. Mobile message boards could be considered an eligible expense if used to provide communications of general health and safety information to the public.

- **Can an EMS ambulance service claim all EMS runs during the open period or only those directly related to COVID-19?**

Only ambulance services responding to COVID-19 related calls could be reimbursed using the established FEMA Equipment Cost Codes. A link to the current rates can be found at <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/136901>. FEMA is a payer of last resort, so other payments associated with the COVID-19 runs must be applied first before requesting reimbursement.

- **Could a state, local, or tribal government be eligible under Public Assistance Category B for making construction alterations to public facilities to support social distancing? For example, a county court building intends to make permanent renovations to its counter windows to limit person-to-person contact.**

No. Eligible emergency protective measures taken to respond to COVID-19 at the direction or guidance of public health officials may be reimbursed under Category B of the Public Assistance Program under either an emergency or major disaster declaration. This includes costs to manage, control, and reduce immediate threats to public health and safety such as disinfecting eligible public facilities. It does not include, however, the permanent renovations of a building to support social distancing.