Public Assistance Frequently Asked Questions

Are there deadlines associated with the process?

There are currently no deadlines for Public Assistance regarding the COVID-19 event. When FEMA determines an end date for the event, deadlines will be established and applicants will be notified.

If we are partially funded by CARES are we still eligible for Public Assistance? And should we be applying for Public Assistance if our costs might be covered by CARES?

Yes. You are still eligible for Public Assistance even if your agency is being partially funded by CARES. For a Request for Public Assistance can be submitted even if your costs may be fully covered under CARES. If there are no costs after CARES is reimbursed, the Request for Public Assistance can be withdrawn

Can we check and/or update our own Grants Portal Account?

Yes. Once your Grants Portal account has been created, you will receive information on logging into your account. When registration is complete, you can manage your account and all Public Assistance projects

Can we upload our own documentation to our Grants Portal Account?

Yes. MEMA can continue to assist you, but Grants Portal users will have the ability to upload all necessary documentation for the Public Assistance Process.

How do we upload our own documentation to Grants Portal?

Step by step procedures on general document management within Grants Portal can be found here.

I submitted my Request for Public Assistance (RPA). What are the next steps?

FEMA is in the process of reviewing a large number of RPAs, and so it may take them a little while to get through to everyone's. You can check your status on your Grants Portal account, under 'Applicant Event Profiles'. When you see that you have reached the 'Pending Grant Completion' step, you may complete Project Application (see the Applicants Briefing for more information). Keep an eye out for emails from FEMA or Grants Portal tasks requesting additional information to complete your RPA review.

Where can we find the link to the registration survey?

The registration survey can be found at the following link: Grants Portal Registration. Please fill in all the information (no n/a or placeholder numbers), as all information is necessary for enrollment in to the system, as well as reimbursement of eligible costs.

I have a Grants Portal, but I can't remember my login information. What do I do?

If you can't remember your login information, or need the link to the login page, send an email to publicassistance.mema@maryland.gov. We can both reset your password for you and can send you the link to the login page.

What are administrative costs and which are eligible for Public Assistance?

Administrative costs go into a Management Costs (category Z) project for each applicant who wishes to claim them. This project can amount up to 5 percent of your agencies total eligible project costs. Costs must be fully documented to be considered for reimbursement. Costs that can potentially go in to a Management Costs project include necessary work, staff, or supplies and equipment needed to effectively administer the Public Assistance grant for the declared disaster. Examples include personnel time involving submitting documentation, meetings with FEMA and MEMA staff and necessary training related to Public Assistance. Also, equipment such as computers, scanners, may be considered for reimbursement if the documentation shows that the purchase of equipment is directly related to managing the Public Assistance process.

Audio is not working with the presentation, what should I do?

End the slide show presentation and hit the play button in the bottom right corner of the slides to play the audio. Or remain in presentation mode and click the bottom right to advance the slides.

What are my next steps from here if I have all of my documents submitted in Grants Portal? This question doesn't show where they start getting confused. Should it say something like "What is the next step when Request for Public Assistance is submitted?"

After FEMA approves your RPA, the status of the event (DR-4491) changes to "Pending Grant Completion" and projects can be submitted

Some essential employees are receiving a higher rate of compensation as a result of COVID-19, is that higher rate of compensation reimbursable even if it is during their regular work hours or is it limited to comp time?

Only overtime for regular employees is eligible under PA reimbursement, any additional pay that is eligible under that must be shown in existing pay policies to be considered for reimbursement

Are equipment such as laptops, cellphones, and other equipment reimbursable?

Telework equipment is considered an increased operating cost, so it will not be reimbursable under PA. This includes the purchasing of new equipment.

Are the cleaning supplies that purchased to disinfect the work areas reimbursable?
Yes. Cleaning supplies are considered eligible under Category B, Emergency Protective Measures to mitigate hazards and save lives.

Are face coverings reimbursable?
Yes, Face coverings are considered a type of PPE which his eligible under Category B, Emergency Protective Measures.

Is overtime pay for hourly staff in public safety, and IT, among other departments, eligible for reimbursement?
As long as you can document the overtime as a result of the COVID response, it will be eligible.

Is work done by salaried staff that is directly COVID related and outside their normal Scope of work, such as transporting students to airports and train stations or moving them out, eligible for reimbursement?
If you can directly relate the work to COVID-19 then it will be eligible for reimbursement as long as it is within your entities legal responsibility to provide that work. Note that private nonprofits are not eligible to receive reimbursement for services provided. A relationship may be established with the government entity that is legally responsible for the population, and funds may be passed through the eligible applicant.

My organization is not a PNP or an entity of the government. Am I eligible to apply for public assistance?
Unfortunately, Public Assistance is not offered to organizations other than PNPs or those belonging to local or state governments.

I am seeking Public Assistance for telework, supporting online education, or revenue loss, and/or my PNP organization does not provide medical services. Am I eligible for Public assistance?
You are eligible for Public Assistance only for costs regarding the protection of your facility, not the services that your organization provides. With this, the services you provide may be eligible for reimbursement from your local government by way of an MOU.