

Public Assistance FAQs (As of December 2, 2020)

What is Public Assistance and how can it help?

Public Assistance is a program that provides a grant through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help with the costs incurred declared emergency or disaster situations. Through Public Assistance, FEMA will provide reimbursement for 75% to eligible organizations for eligible costs. The organization will be responsible for the remaining 25%.

Where can I find guidance on Public Assistance?

Guidance for Public Assistance can be found in our applicant briefing and our COVID-19 specific Public Assistance webpage. For presentation audio, please end the slide show presentation and hit the play button in the bottom right corner of the slides.

[Public Assistance Applicant Briefing - All Applicants](#)
[COVID-19 Information, Resources and Updates for Public Assistance](#)

Have I missed the deadline to apply for Public Assistance for COVID-19 response efforts?

Currently, there is no deadline for requesting Public Assistance. Due to the ongoing nature of this event, many of the standard deadlines have been removed.

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 you are being partially funded by CARES. You should still apply for Public Assistance even if your costs may be fully covered under CARES, in case there are costs leftover that are eligible for Public Assistance. Please note that reimbursements cannot be duplicated between different funding sources. Additionally, CARES funding can be used to offset the 25% applicant share that is not covered by FEMA Public Assistance.

Am I eligible for Public assistance if I am not an entity of the government or a Private Nonprofit Organization?

Unfortunately, only the aforementioned organizations are eligible for Public Assistance.

Who is eligible for Public Assistance and what costs can be reimbursed?

January 20th - September 14th: [Eligible Emergency Protective Measures](#)

State, territorial, tribal, and local government entities and certain private non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for Public Assistance

Eligible costs are costs that fall within 'Category B: Emergency Protective Measures. Category B items: Eliminate or lessen immediate threats to lives,

public health, or safety; OR Eliminate or lessen the immediate threats of significant additional damage to improved public or private property in a cost-effective manner.

Administrative costs are eligible if the work performed is directly related to responding to COVID-19, and the work performed is the legal responsibility of your organization. Any work performed that is outside the scope of your normal responsibilities is not eligible.

September 15th - Present: [Eligible Emergency Protective Measures \(interim\)](#)

Only organizations that are performing eligible emergency work are eligible for Public Assistance.

Only emergency protective measures used during eligible emergency work performed by an eligible organization can be reimbursed.

Are labor, hourly wages, or overtime reimbursable through Public Assistance?

Overtime pay is eligible for reimbursement only for budgeted employees of government agencies, and as long as the organization's pay policy includes overtime and precedes the incident start date (January, 20th 2020). Other supplemental pay may be eligible if the same criteria is met.

What costs are NOT eligible for Public Assistance?

The services you provide are not reimbursable through Public Assistance. However, they may be eligible for reimbursement from your local government by way of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

In addition to this, the following are not eligible for reimbursement: *Loss of Revenue, Loss of Useful Service Life, Tax Assessments, and Increased Operating Costs.*

September 15th - Present: Anything not used during eligible emergency work performed by an eligible organization.

I am an eligible organization with eligible costs, what's next?

The next step will be to register for a Grants Portal account via the following link: [Register for Grants Portal](#). All of the information on this is necessary so please fill in all blanks as accurately as possible and avoid using placeholder values.

What is Grants Portal and what does it do?

Grants Portal is a FEMA operated website which can be accessed here: [Grants Portal](#). This is where you will manage personnel, upload documentation, and submit costs for reimbursement. Once your registration is filled out and your organization's profile has been created, you will receive instructions on how to log in and set up your account.

If you already have access to Grants Portal, you can log in using the same credentials you have used in the past. If you are unable to login, email us at PublicAssistance.MEMA@Maryland.gov and we can reset your password and get you logged in.

I'm in Grants Portal, now what?

Now, it's time to submit your Request for Public Assistance (RPA). All eligible organizations will do this through Grants portal. Private Nonprofit organizations will need to upload *Proof of Insurance, Proof of Facility Ownership, Proof of Tax Exemption, Bylaws/Charter or Articles of Incorporation, and Accreditation for any academic programs* in addition to submitting an RPA.

How do I upload documentation to my RPA in Grants Portal?

Uploading documentation can be done from the 'Organization Profile' screen, under the 'Documentation' tab upon logging in. Step by step instructions on document management can be found here: [Step by Step instructions](#).

What happens after my RPA has been submitted and any applicable documentation has been uploaded?

Your RPA is now being reviewed by FEMA for eligibility. Due to the large number of organizations applying for Public Assistance, this process can take longer than usual. While you wait, continue to track and organize your costs. Periodically check back into Grants Portal to check your eligibility status within the 'Applicant Event Profile' tab. When your application status reads 'Pending Grant Completion', you are eligible for Public Assistance and may begin your application. Additionally, keep an eye on your email as FEMA may reach out to you if they have questions or need additional information.

My RPA says that I am 'Pending Grant Completion', what do I do now?

You are now able to submit projects for reimbursement. Instructions for submitting a streamlined project application through Grants Portal can be found here: [Streamlined Application Instructions](#).

I still have questions...

If you have questions, concerns, or need a hand getting things started, please reach out to us at PublicAssistance.MEMA@Maryland.gov.