

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response: Tribal Recipients

---

Based on the President's national emergency declaration for the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on March 13, 2020, tribal governments may be a Recipient or Subrecipient for FEMA Public Assistance. The following guidance supports questions related to the tribal recipient/subrecipient assistance process pursuant to the nationwide COVID-19 emergency.

## Tribal Options for Assistance

- Tribal governments do not need to request separate emergency declarations to receive FEMA assistance under this nationwide declaration.
- A tribal government may choose to be a Subrecipient under a state that has chosen to be a Recipient of FEMA assistance or choose to be a direct Recipient of FEMA.
- The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) also has funding available, including \$40 million dollars specifically identified for tribes, tribal organizations, and tribal health service providers.

## FEMA Role in COVID-19 Pandemic Response

- FEMA, in direct coordination with the [Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#), will assist state, local, tribal, territorial governments and other eligible entities with the health and safety actions they take on behalf of the American public.
- Tribal governments can express intent to seek FEMA Public Assistance by notifying the FEMA Regional Administrator in the FEMA regional office in which the tribal government seat is located.
- Each of the ten FEMA regions has Regional Tribal Liaisons to coordinate with tribes located within that respective region.
  - Regional Tribal Liaisons can connect tribes with FEMA leadership and program subject matter experts, as needed, for information, technical assistance and resources.

## Federal Assistance

- FEMA assistance as a Recipient requires execution of a FEMA-Tribe Agreement (FTA) and execution of an applicable emergency plan.
  - An FTA is submitted to the FEMA Regional Administrator and contains the understandings, commitments, and conditions under which federal disaster assistance will be provided.



**FEMA**

- FEMA regional offices can provide a draft copy to tribal governments for review. Once all parties have reviewed and made edits, a final version will be distributed for signature.
- A tribal government must confirm activation of its emergency plan to receive assistance as a Recipient. FEMA regulations do not specify legal requirements for emergency plan content; only that a tribal government has one and activates it before requesting a declaration.
- FEMA Public Assistance will be provided at a 75 percent Federal/25 percent non-Federal cost share. As direct recipients, Tribal governments, like state and territorial recipients, will be responsible for the 25 percent cost share.
- Eligible emergency protective measures taken at the direction or guidance of public health officials in response to this emergency, and not supported by the authorities of another federal agency, will be reimbursed under the FEMA Public Assistance program.
  - FEMA encourages officials to take appropriate actions that are necessary to protect public health and safety pursuant to public health guidance.
- Federal disaster assistance grant programs have additional requirements to complete before FEMA allocates and dispenses grant funds. The FEMA New Recipients of Disaster Grants Guide describes requirements for Recipients in requesting and receiving FEMA disaster assistance grant funding.
  - A tribal government needs to have a Public Assistance Administrative Plan before FEMA is able to provide assistance to the tribal government.
- Tribal governments that chose to be a Subrecipient to State(s) for FEMA Public Assistance should coordinate with the state(s).
  - The [Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide](#) combines FEMA Public Assistance policy into a single volume and provides overview of program implementation process with links to other publications and documents that provide additional process details.
- Reimbursable activities typically include the activation of State Emergency Operations Centers, law enforcement and other measures necessary to protect public health and safety.
- Recognizing some tribal governments have greater capacity than others, in order to streamline resource requests, it may be efficient to maintain close coordination with county and state officials. Tribal assistance can be provided across FEMA Regions.

## Definitions

- *Applicant*: A non-federal entity that applies to be a Subrecipient of assistance under a Recipient's federal award (e.g., local government agency, housing authority, or private nonprofit organization).
- *Subrecipient*: An Applicant that receives a sub-award from a Recipient to carry out part of a federal program.
- *Recipient*: A non-federal entity that receives an award from a federal agency (e.g., state, territorial, or tribal government) to carry out an activity under a federal program.