



**FEMA**

March 19, 2020

Dear Tribal Partners:

We have heard from many of you that the expanding Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) challenges around the world are striking close to home. I would like to provide initial information about the President's national emergency declaration on March 13, 2020, and how that declaration combined with authorities and resources from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Indian Health Service can support tribally-led health, safety and emergency management efforts.

**To answer questions about assistance available to your tribe for COVID-19 efforts, we invite you to join us on a teleconference on Friday, March 20, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. MST. Please call 1-800-320-4330 and use pin 365830.**

FEMA, 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 may be a Recipient or Subrecipient for FEMA Public Assistance to reimburse you for eligible *emergency protective measures*. Please understand the challenges we face in responding simultaneously to all areas of the country. Your best option may be to continue partnering very closely with cities, counties and states for the information and resources you need.

I have enclosed a FEMA Fact Sheet regarding the nationwide emergency declaration that discusses types of work possibly eligible for reimbursement, and information about how to request assistance are found below.

#### **Tribal Options for Assistance**

- 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.
- 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. Please let us know by April 13, 2020, through our Regional Tribal Liaison, if your tribe will choose to pursue FEMA assistance as a Recipient or Subrecipient.
- Tribal governments do not need to request separate emergency declarations to receive FEMA assistance under this nationwide declaration.

## **FEMA Assistance**

- 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.
- Reimbursable activities typically include the activation of Emergency Operations Centers, law enforcement and other measures necessary to protect public health and safety.

## **Subrecipient Process**

- Tribal governments that choose to be a Subrecipient to State(s) for FEMA Public Assistance should coordinate with the state(s). Subrecipients must submit a completed Request for Public Assistance (RPA) to the State by June 11, 2020.
  - 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.

## **Recipient Process**

- To be a direct Recipient of FEMA assistance under the nationwide declaration, the tribal chief executive must notify me in writing (either letter or email) that the tribal government has elected to be a Recipient no later than April 13, 2020. Please see contact information below for submitting this request.
- 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 assistance as a Recipient requires execution of a FEMA-Tribe Agreement (FTA).
  - The FTA contains the understandings, commitments, and conditions under which federal disaster assistance will be provided.
  - Upon request, FEMA will provide a draft copy to the tribal government for review. Once all parties have reviewed the document, a final version will be distributed for signature.
- 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.

## **Points of Contact**

- The Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs, Division of Emergency Management, is coordinating operations statewide and is supporting tribes from the State Emergency Operations Center. You or members of your team may have already been in contact with Mr. Joseph M. Urrea, Tribal Liaison. He is available at (602) 464-6516 (office), (602) 618-6467 (mobile), or [joseph.urrea@azdema.gov](mailto:joseph.urrea@azdema.gov).

- FEMA Tribal Liaisons also stand ready to receive questions and connect you with FEMA leadership and program subject matter experts, as needed, for information, technical assistance and resources. Mr. Christopher Poehlmann is the assigned lead Tribal Liaison for the COVID-19 incident. He may be reached at [Christopher.Poehlmann@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:Christopher.Poehlmann@fema.dhs.gov) or (510) 725-7958.
- Requests from the tribal chief executive electing to be a direct Recipient of FEMA assistance should be submitted to me through my Declarations Coordinator, Emily Baumgartner, at [Emily.baumgartner@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:Emily.baumgartner@fema.dhs.gov).
- Tribal governments with questions regarding the FEMA Public Assistance program may contact my Public Assistance Officer for this incident, Ms. Grace Tebarwa at [Grace.Tebarwa@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:Grace.Tebarwa@fema.dhs.gov).

Recognizing some tribal governments have greater capacity than others, and in order to streamline resource requests, I recommend you maintain close coordination with county and state officials.

Thank you for taking actions now to protect your members, tribal interests and the communities around you. We stand ready to work with you.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Fenton  
Regional Administrator  
FEMA Region IX

Enclosure