

Connecticut Moves from Response to Long Term Recovery

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Hartford, CT - Months after COVID-19 tightened its grip on Connecticut's economy and hospitals, as well as way of life for its people, the state is emerging from an unprecedented public health crisis.

Since March, FEMA has coordinated with numerous federal, state and local agencies to support communities with access to scarce resources to combat this pandemic. More than \$33.4 million in federal funding has been granted to Connecticut; as of July 20, the federal government has provided Connecticut with a significant amount of PPE, including 1 million gloves, 188,400 face shields, 523,200 surgical masks, and 2.5 million N95 respirators.

Due to this unprecedented government mobilization, as well as the health precautions implemented by its own residents, Connecticut has seen stability in new cases and stability in testing positivity since July 24. "The strong and essential assistance of our many partners, including non-profits, first responders, national guard and medical personnel have played a critical role in getting us to this point," said Captain Russ Webster, FEMA's Region 1 Administrator and Federal Coordinating Officer.

Specific programs made possible through FEMA and the state enables those in need to benefit as the recovery continues.

Crisis Counseling

Connecticut has received an extension to the Crisis Counseling grant of \$676,338 to fund the Crisis Counseling/Immediate Services Program (ISP); the state was awarded the grant on June 2. It will now continue through Aug. 28, 2020 to allow enough time for a determination to be made on Connecticut's Regular Services Program (RSP) application.



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Through short-term interventions that provide emotional support, crisis counseling, and connection to familial and community support systems, FEMA's Crisis Counseling program helps individuals and communities in their recovery from the effects of natural or man-made disasters. Due to the COVID-19 nationwide emergency and the need to protect the safety and health of all Americans, crisis counseling services will be delivered by phone, internet and social media.

Public Assistance

FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) grant program provides essential funding for communities recovering from a federally declared disaster or emergency. The Connecticut Emergency Management Agency works with FEMA during all phases of the PA program and conducts final reviews of FEMA-approved projects.

To date, more than \$431,000 in PA funding has been approved to reimburse the state and local governments, and certain types of private non-profit organizations, for costs associated with emergency protective measures including non-congregate sheltering enacted to quickly respond to COVID-19.

The federal share for Public Assistance projects is no less than 75 percent of the eligible cost. The state determines how the non-federal share of the cost of a project (up to 25 percent) is split with the sub-recipients like local and county governments.

Long-term Recovery

FEMA's role in Long Term Recovery is to increase communication and collaboration among stakeholders, support disaster recovery planning, and leveraging opportunities to recover stronger, safer and smarter.

"As we move into the Recovery phase of this pandemic, we remain committed to Connecticut should cases surge again. Our current focus, based on findings of the Long-Term Recovery Task Force, is to assist the economy by addressing the critical issues of childcare, housing, fisheries," said Webster.

The mission of the Task Force is to effectively coordinate the identification and prioritization of long-term needs of the state, and to recommend actions.



The Task Force has completed their Rapid Needs Assessment, based on the representative communities of Hamden, Hartford and Norwalk, to provide insights on the state's challenges.

Their findings will ultimately inform the state to choose which economic solutions to pursue and opens access to funding from agencies other than FEMA. Additionally, as part of Long-Term Recovery, FEMA coordinates with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environment (DEEP) and the Bureau of Marine Fisheries to identify follow-up actions to support the fisheries/aquaculture industry. There also has been significant collaboration with the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood Education and with colleagues at the Small Business Administration.

While being critically attuned to the ongoing COVID-19 recovery efforts, FEMA continues to prepare for the pending hurricane season. Webster notes Region 1 is training and cross-training staff members to build bench strength for a more robust response and management of multiple incidents. "FEMA is building in safeguards to our response capabilities and leveraging technology where possible to reduce person to person contact. Examples include damage inspections done virtually through facetime, hotels for sheltering and CAP flyovers for property damage assessments. Such information can be critical to hurricane response, as well as COVID cases."

Given the current situation with Hurricane Isaias, Webster emphasized the importance of FEMA's preparedness, "We are fully staffed to assist as needed." Webster asked that the public pay attention to weather alerts and directions from local officials because flooding and storm surge from storms like Isaias can happen quickly.

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FEMA's mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters.



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