

# Tribal Consultation on Interim Policy, FEMA Safe Opening and Operation Work Eligible for Public Assistance

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## Focus and Purpose

- [Provide an overview](#) of FEMA's interim policy, *Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic: Safe Opening and Operation Work Eligible for Public Assistance*.
- Identify what courses of action FEMA can take to ensure that the Public Assistance Program is delivered equitably to tribal nations during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Discuss unique tribal considerations that FEMA should be aware of when developing policies for this public health emergency.](#)

## Background

Under the March 13, 2020, COVID-19 nationwide emergency declaration and subsequent major disaster declarations for COVID-19, state, local, tribal, and territorial government entities, and certain private non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for assistance under FEMA's Public Assistance Program. As a result, FEMA has provided COVID-19 support to numerous tribal nations that have applied for Public Assistance as either Recipients or Subrecipients.

On January 21, 2021, President Biden issued "[Memorandum to Extend Federal Support to Governors' Use of the National Guard to Respond to COVID-19 and to Increase Reimbursement and Other Assistance Provided to States](#)," which authorizes FEMA to provide additional COVID-19 assistance to Public Assistance Applicants, at a 100% federal share, to safely open and operate eligible facilities (e.g., eligible schools, child-care facilities, non-congregate shelters, domestic violence shelters, transit systems, and other eligible applicants). In response, FEMA has developed an interim policy, *Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic: Safe Opening and Operation Work Eligible for Public Assistance*, which defines the



framework and requirements for FEMA to reimburse costs for work conducted to safely open and operate facilities from January 21, 2021 through September 30, 2021.

## **Tribal Consultation Session**

On Friday, March 19, 2021, FEMA's Recovery Directorate is hosting a teleconference session to consult with tribal nations on the draft interim policy, *Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic: Safe Opening and Operation Work Eligible for Public Assistance*, and its implementation during our continuous response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During this consultation, FEMA staff will provide a brief overview of Public Assistance Emergency Protective Measures and the draft policy. FEMA staff are particularly interested in understanding the impact the interim policy may have on tribal nations, specific constraints tribal nations face as a Recipient and/or Subrecipient of the Public Assistance Program, as well as any additional input and feedback tribal leaders have on FEMA's Public Assistance Program delivery overall.

## **Questions**

### **Policy Implementation:**

1. What unique challenges have tribal leaders faced in safely opening and operating facilities? Are there specific ways that FEMA can help in overcoming these challenges? For example, have you experienced challenges in funding personal protective equipment, COVID-19 testing and screening, and protective barriers?
2. What support would tribal leaders like to see when collaborating with FEMA on COVID-19 Public Assistance policies in general and on this interim policy, *COVID-19 Safe Opening and Operation Work Eligible for Public Assistance*, specifically?
3. What types of training and/or materials should FEMA develop to supplement Public Assistance policies in general and on this interim policy, *COVID-19 Safe Opening and Operation Work Eligible for Public Assistance*, specifically?



**Process:**

4. What unique challenges do tribal nations experience when requesting and receiving Public Assistance?
5. What barriers exist that may prevent access to or cause delays in delivering Public Assistance funding to tribal governments?
6. What additional steps or support can FEMA take to ensure tribal nations have equitable access to Public Assistance funding?
7. What unique challenges should FEMA be aware of when working with tribal nations for disaster recovery?
8. What would tribal leaders like to see in the future in collaborating with FEMA on disaster assistance?

