

FEMA Awards Over \$1.5 Million to Massachusetts for COVID-19 Call Center

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The Federal Emergency Management Agency will be sending more than \$1.5 million to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to reimburse it for the cost of operating a public information hotline during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health will receive a total of \$1,548,332 in federal funding through FEMA's Public Assistance grant program to reimburse the cost of administering expanded call capabilities for its "2-1-1" Call Center.

Between March 2020 and July 2021, the department contracted services to expand cellular communications for its Call Center, which provided real time COVID-19 information, resources, and referrals in multiple languages.

With this expanded access to 24/7 information, Massachusetts residents were able to receive critical information related to COVID-19 prevention, symptoms, treatment, testing, travel, and interpreter services.

"FEMA is pleased to be able to assist the Massachusetts Department of Public Health with these costs," said FEMA Region 1 Regional Administrator Lori Ehrlich. "Reimbursing state, county, and municipal governments – as well as eligible non-profits and tribal entities – for the costs incurred during the COVID-19 pandemic is an important part of our nation's ongoing recovery."

FEMA's Public Assistance program is an essential source of funding for states and communities recovering from a federally declared disaster or emergency.

So far, FEMA has provided more than \$1.7 billion in Public Assistance grants to Massachusetts to reimburse the commonwealth for pandemic-related expenses.

