

**DR4532 – Emergency Protective Measures
Applicant Briefing #2 Q&A – Conversation Panel**

The PowerPoint Presentation for Applicant Briefings #1 and #2 is found at:
<https://vem.vermont.gov/covid19/disaster>

Applicant Briefing #1 Q&A can be found at:
https://vem.vermont.gov/sites/demhs/files/COVID19/Applicant_Briefing_Q%26A.pdf

Q: Can you please repeat the other funding options?

A: USDA – food and feeding school lunch programs, CARES ACT – includes funding for hospitals and alternate care facilities and cultural institutions; US Dept of Labor for unemployment payments

Q: Is the \$3,300 the 100% amount or the 75% amount?

A: \$3,300 total eligible cost. An applicant must have \$3,300 in total eligible costs for FEMA to formulate a project worksheet.

Q: Can we get a copy of the slides after the webinar?

A: <https://vem.vermont.gov/covid19/disaster>

Q: When discussing the Grant Portal, Nonprofits cannot access the portal, we are being told we have to have DPS verify us and approve our admission into a different portal? can you shed some light on how this is accomplished?

A: A Private Non-Profit can create an account in the Grants Portal and then FEMA will review and change the type of organization to a PNP and then send back to the applicant to upload documents. Please select any option when you create your account, since “PNP” is not currently available in the drop-down menu. FEMA is working on fixing this glitch in the Grants Portal.

Q: Who assists non-profits with application process, if they have need assistance?

A: They should send an email with their issue; to kim.canarecci@vermont.gov . Depending on the nature of the issue, they may need to contact the Grants Portal help line at 866 337-8448

Q: Can Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) only help municipalities?

A: RPC staff can assist any prospective applicant within their jurisdiction upon request but will refer technical questions to Kim.

Q: A question from one of our towns in Addison County - Is there reimbursement for towns to continue paying employees critical for road work? (they've been told that they can only do emergency work, but the towns don't want to lay them off). [My understanding is that FEMA would only pay for overtime of town employees for COVID-19-specific work, but I wanted to pass the question along in case folks have better ideas for funding- so this may be the same answer as the one above].

A: FEMA only pays overtime for work related to COVID-19 Response efforts.

Q: Might FEMA help with pay for school bus drivers delivering food for K-12 students at home, not transporting K-12 students (which is what pre-COVID funding covered)?

A: No, this is covered under USDA funding. Only overtime labor hours are eligible under FEMA.

Q: The Agency of Education says that their funding does not cover if not transporting students.

A: See previous response. We recommend documenting all COVID-19 -related extra costs, pending final eligibility determinations by FEMA.

Q: Medicare is making direct payment to EMS/Rescue Squads. Will this be considered payment before FEMA kicks in?

A: Yes. FEMA is a funding source of last resort. Other payment sources will be deducted from FEMA eligible expenses.

Q: Will FEMA cover overtime expenses related to making up for work that isn't being completed currently? (i.e. The state has indicated that road crews cannot complete ditching projects right now. So, we will likely run a significant number of overtime hours to complete that work once the restriction is lifted). Would the overtime hours incurred after the disaster is lifted be eligible?

A: No. FEMA does not pay for budgeted labor. We recommend checking with Department of Labor. FEMA can only cover costs of work directly related to COVID-19 response activities.

Q: Will FEMA cover a regular employee's salary that was move into a disaster support role that didn't exist before the disaster?

A: From the FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG): Reassigned Employees - The Applicant may assign an employee to perform work that is not part of the employee's normal job. For example, a police officer may clear debris. FEMA provides PA funding based on the reassigned employee's normal pay rate, not the pay level appropriate to the work, because the Applicant's incurred cost is the employee's normal pay rate. Straight time of a permanent employee funded from an external source (such as a grant from a Federal agency or statutorily dedicated funds) is eligible if the employee is reassigned to perform eligible Emergency Work that the external source does not fund. FEMA must confirm that no duplication of funding exists prior to approval.

Q: If you were budgeted as a 100% federal source but the EOC work is not eligible for that federal source, can the costs be claimed to FEMA?

A: Yes, straight time of a permanent employee funded from a grant from a Federal agency can be eligible if the employee is reassigned to perform eligible emergency protective measures that the external source does not fund. FEMA must confirm that no duplication of funding exists prior to approval.

Q: If my Department back filled/double filled a position in order for a staff to work EOC can the EOC costs be claimed to FEMA?

A: From the FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG): Backfill Employees - The Applicant may need to temporarily replace an employee who is responding to the incident. Overtime costs for the backfill employee are eligible even if the backfill employee is not performing eligible work as long as the employee that he/she is replacing is performing eligible Emergency Work. 86 Stafford Act § 406(a)(2)(C), 42 U.S.C. § 5172, and 44 CFR § 206.228(a)(2)(i). 87 Stafford Act § 403(d)(1)(B), 42 U.S.C. § 5170b, and 44 CFR § 206.228(a)(2)(iii). V3.1 2018 Page 24

FEMA also provides PA funding for straight time if the backfill employee is a:

- Contracted or temporary employee; or
 - Permanent employee called in on a normally scheduled day off (weekend or other off day).
- If the backfill employee is called in from scheduled leave, only overtime is eligible.

Q: Grants portal will not allow nonprofits to access the support center also says the state needs to add nonprofits.

Also, at the end of the application you sign the application stating that representing a government when you are not, it can result in a hefty fine.

A: We encourage all private nonprofits to apply through the grants portal if they performed work defined as eligible under category B. FEMA will determine if the private nonprofit is eligible based on the information submitted.

Q: What is the grants portal URL to create a new account?

A: <https://pagrants.fema.gov>.

Q: Can you speak a bit more about eligible EOC costs? Would staff time (not overtime) spent working at the EOC be eligible?

A: Only overtime is eligible for fulltime employees. Temporary employees are eligible for regular time as well as overtime.

Q: Going back to the example about an employee that was moved into a disaster role... what if they would have been laid off had it not been for the disaster? (i.e. the organization could have laid off an employee, hired a temporary employee to fill the role and gotten reimbursed but they can't get reimbursed for simply moving someone?)

A: We will need to discuss this one with FEMA based on the specific details of the situation presented. It will depend on the hiring status of the employee(s) in question.

Q: Are private nonprofits funded directly by federal FEMA or would it be passed through the state?

A: All FEMA funds are awarded to the State Department of Public Safety, the "Recipient" agency. Vermont DPS issues and releases federal funds through subgrants agreements to eligible agencies. This question may also be asking whether individual school districts, for example, will need to be their own sub-recipients or whether we will be able to "roll up" those costs through the Agency of Education. We are currently seeking clarification from FEMA on that question.

Q: Can LogMe In and/or GoToMeeting for virtual meetings be reimbursed?

A: FEMA would need to determine eligibility for specific purchases based on justification. The costs would need to be part of at least \$3,300 of eligible costs related to COVID-19 responses.

Q: Is there any funding for compensated absences? (We are paying employees to stay home).

A: No, not from FEMA. We recommend reaching out to Department of Labor.

Ben left the Applicant Briefing early due to a let-breaking update notification from FEMA indicating the US Department of the Treasury has set a deadline of midnight tomorrow, April 17th for state/local/tribal governments to apply for CARES Act funding.

Q: Does this deadline apply to potential State, local, or tribal governments?

A: No, only the State of Vermont is required to submit a form and the State has already done so. Ben says sorry for the fire drill!