Public Housing Agency: Applying for FEMA Public Assistance

This fact sheet outlines the process Public Housing Agency (PHA) Applicants should follow to apply for FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) program. PHAs applying for PA should coordinate closely with their state, local, tribal, or territorial officials.

The graphic below depicts the FEMA PA program delivery process, specifically the steps and phases for Applicants to apply for and receive a PA award.
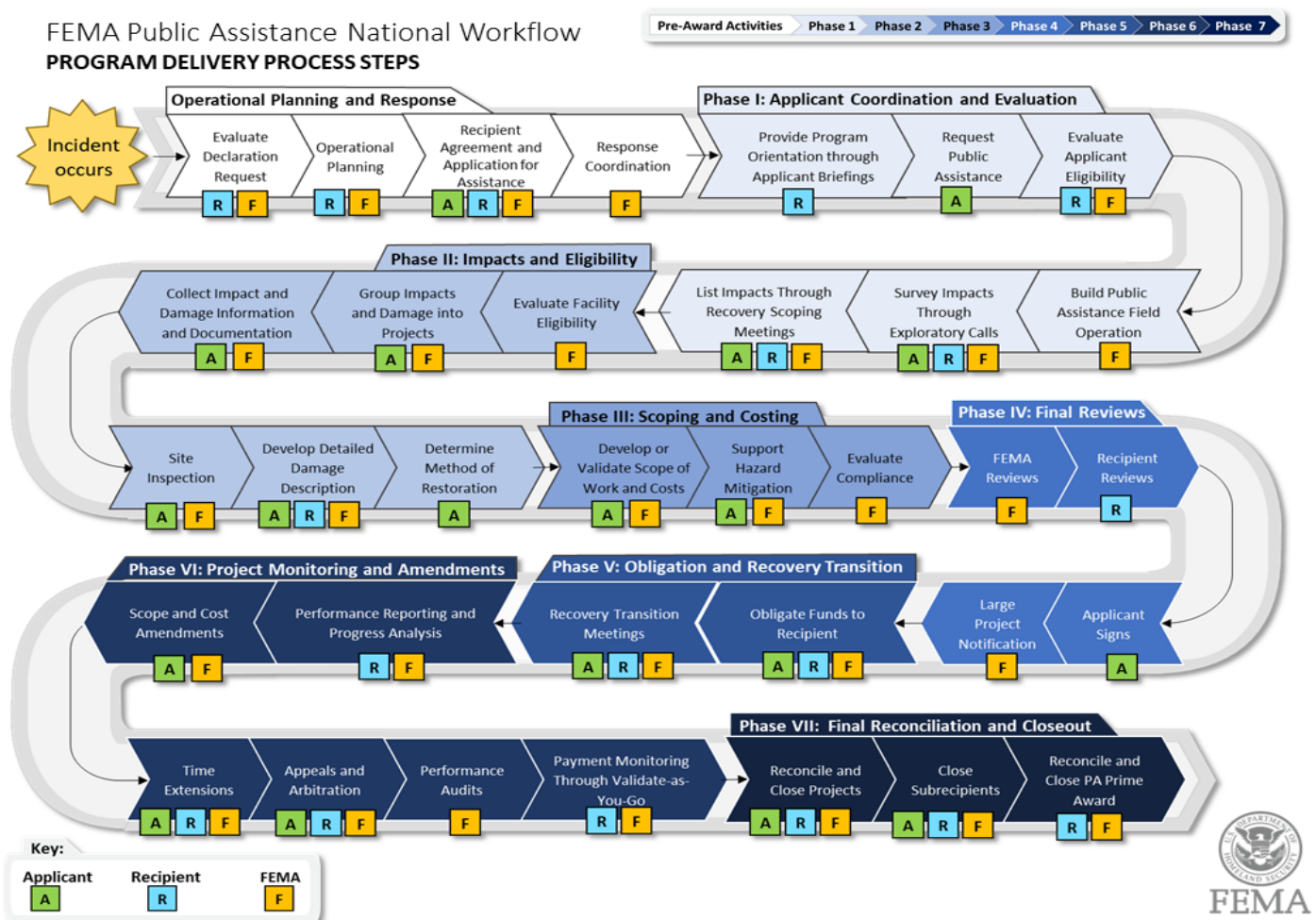

Figure 1. FEMA Public Assistance Program Delivery Process Steps for Applicants

Getting Started

Prior to applying for PA, the PHA should contact their state, local, tribal, or territorial emergency management office to assess preliminary damages. The PA application process begins with the submission of a Request for Public Assistance (RPA) through the Grants Portal system. Refer to the Grants Portal Account and Request for Public Assistance Guide for further step-by-step instructions. Throughout the process, Applicants can view the status of their PA applications in Grants Portal.

Terminology

Applicant: State, local, tribal, or territorial government or eligible private nonprofit entity submitting a request for Public Assistance under the Recipient's Public Assistance award.

Recipient: State, tribe, or territory that receives and administers the Public Assistance award.

Eligibility Considerations for Public Housing Agency Applicants

A PHA Applicant may be eligible for reimbursement for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and public infrastructure restoration. FEMA is legally prohibited from duplicating benefits that an Applicant may receive from other sources. If the Applicant receives funding from another source for the same work that FEMA funded, FEMA reduces the eligible cost or de-obligates funding to prevent such duplication of benefits.

Once an RPA is submitted via Grants Portal, the Recipient must review and approve it prior to submitting the RPA to FEMA for review and approval. Applicants will receive a notification email confirming their eligibility as a PA Applicant in Grants Portal. This confirmation is of eligibility of the Applicant only; it does not guarantee reimbursement of costs. Cost eligibility is determined later in the process.

Applicant Impact Survey and Recovery Scoping Meeting or Video

Once an Applicant's RPA is approved, the Applicant completes the Applicant Impact Survey and participates in the first substantive meeting of the PA grant delivery process, the Recovery Scoping Meeting. In some cases, the Applicant may watch a Recovery Scoping Video in lieu of a formal meeting. The meeting or video begins the 60-day timeline to disclose to FEMA all disaster-related damage and emergency work activities. This process is required prior to completing a project application.

Submitting a Project Application

The Applicant completes and submits its project application(s) in Grants Portal. The project application contains detailed information about the activities or impacts for which an Applicant is requesting funding and includes documentation to support the Applicant's request. Many damaged sites will require a virtual or physical inspection, which involves a FEMA Site Inspector and the Applicant viewing the site together.

Depending on the cost of the project, it will be categorized as either small or large. For small projects, FEMA accepts certification in lieu of cost documentation and may process the projects based on estimated costs even if all work

has been completed. Regardless of whether the project is small or large, the Applicant must retain all documentation related to the work completed.

For large projects where the work is completed and fully documented, Applicants will be asked to provide information and documentation on:

- Applicant labor used
- Applicant-owned and purchased equipment
- Leased equipment
- Supplies, both purchased and from stock
- Contract costs, including procurement information

For large projects where work is not completed and costs have not been fully incurred and documented, Applicants will be asked to provide an itemized estimate of project costs, broken down by type of resource (e.g., contracts, labor, equipment, materials and supplies) and an estimated completion timeframe.

After the project application is submitted, FEMA and the Recipient review and validate the project application to ensure completeness, eligibility, and compliance with federal laws and regulations on matters such as contracting and environmental and historic preservation.

> **PA Categories of Work Most Applicable to PHAs** (*not an exhaustive list*)
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> **Category A (Debris Removal):** Removing sand, mud, vehicle wreckage, downed trees, etc.
>
> **Category B (Emergency Protective Measures):** Blocking off areas of neighborhood for safety or security
>
> **Category E (Public Buildings and Contents):** Restoring structural and non-structural components

Receiving the Public Assistance Award

After FEMA and the Recipient approve the project application, the Applicant reviews all terms and conditions in the project application and signs the project, certifying an agreement to the funding terms, including requirements for reporting on project work progress and completion.

Once final reviews are complete, the project application is awarded. The award is granted to the Recipient, which then disburses the funds to the Applicant. For projects awarded before work is competed or fully documented, the Applicant provides full documentation as work is completed to verify actual costs and expenditures of Public Assistance funds. Upon completion of work, the Applicant coordinates with the Recipient to formally close projects. The Applicant must retain all project-related documentation.

Other Helpful Resources

- FEMA PA Grants Portal - Grants Manager YouTube Channel
- FEMA's PA Grants Portal Hotline for technical and training support: (866) 337-8448
- Resources on the FEMA project thresholds
- Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide V.4 (PAPPG)
- Additional resources in the Grants Portal include quick guides, job aids, and other information.