

Disaster Recovery Public Assistance (PA) Financial Administration Training

FY 2023 - 2024

Course Overview

This course is broken into 3 modules highlighting the pre-disaster, post-disaster, and long-term recovery aspects of managing the Public Assistance process at the local government level. It was built to support the North Carolina Association of Regional Councils of Government (NCARCOG) in service of local government disaster preparedness activities.

Funding for this training was provided by the State of North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management in conjunction with the Department of Public Safety and the Office of Emergency Management.



Module 1: Pre-Disaster Conditions

Unit 0: Welcome and Administrative Items



Welcome to the Course

This course builds local government capacity to effectively secure FEMA Public Assistance (PA) disaster recovery funds and ensure those funds address local and regional priorities.

- Provides local government staff with the tools to build and/or maintain the necessary financial systems and staff support needed to administer and report on the utilization of disaster recovery funds efficiently and effectively.
- Allows for the local government staff in a pre-disaster setting to incorporate recovery staffing and business practices into day-to-day financial administration operations.
- Ensures federal, state and local taxpayer dollars invested into public assets are properly protected and managed when a FEMA declared disaster event occurs.



Introductions



- Sponsor introductions
- Instructor introductions
- Supporting staff introductions
- Participant introductions

Administrative Orientation



Emergency Exits



Classroom Etiquette



Inclement Weather



Phone Etiquette



Breaks & Lunch



Communication Rules



Restrooms

Module 1 Overview

- Unit 0: Welcome and Administrative Items
- Unit 1: Introduction to Public Assistance
- Unit 2: Government Roles in Disaster Recovery
- Unit 3: Roles and Responsibilities of Local Government
- Unit 4: Pre-Disaster Planning, Policies, and Best Practices
- Unit 5: Identifying Risks
- Module 1 Summary
- Experiential Learning Activity



Module 1 Terminal Learning Objective

Terminal Learning Objective

By the end of this Module, participants will be able to explain how pre-disaster preparedness and planning can prepare a municipality to make the most effective use of Public Assistance after a disaster strikes, and best practices and approaches for engaging with the Public Assistance process.



Module 1 Key Takeaways

Enabling Learning Objectives:

- Participants will be able to define the terms and concepts of the Public Assistance (PA) Program and define their roles and responsibilities within the PA process.
- Participants will be able to discuss the roles that different levels of government play in disaster recovery and distribution of Public Assistance.
- Participants will be able to develop language to embed disaster recovery financial administration responsibilities into finance department job descriptions.
- Participants will be able to identify the internal policies and procedures, such as procurement, contracting, and payroll, to ensure compliance for eligible cost reimbursement and subsequent audit reviews.
- Participants will be able to demonstrate effective pre-disaster planning coordination and financial administration of federal, state, and local disaster recovery funding.
- Participants will be able to identify risks within their operations that could affect their ability to lessen timing and to optimize reimbursements.
- Participants will be able to outline pre-disaster preparedness activities they will make actionable in their community.



Module 1: Pre-Disaster Conditions

Unit 1: Introduction to Public Assistance



Module 1: Unit 1 Overview

- Disaster Recovery Overview
- The Public Assistance (PA) Program
- Roles and Responsibilities in the PA Process
- Roles and Responsibilities in Local Disaster Recovery
- Pre- vs. Post-Disaster Recovery Plans
- Transitioning from Response to Recovery
- Resources and Policies
- Unit 1 Summary

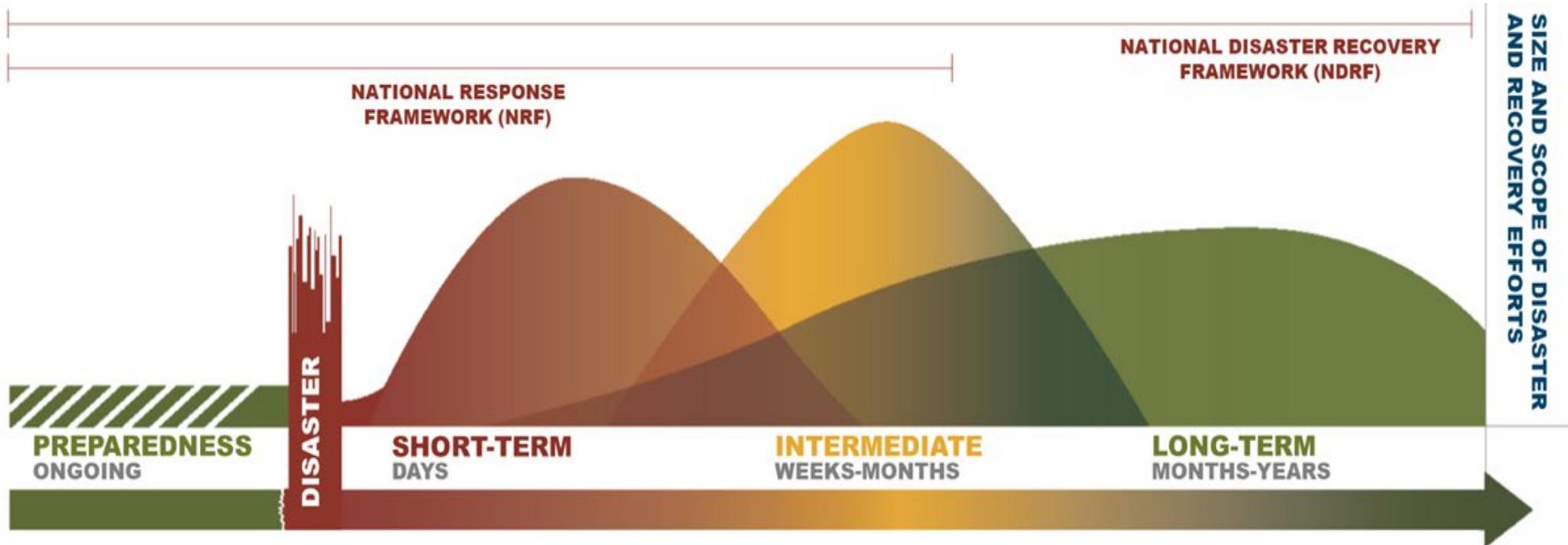


Disaster Recovery Overview (1 of 3)



Disaster Recovery Overview (2 of 3)

Phases of the NDRF Continuum



Disaster Recovery Overview (3 of 3)



Financial Assistance is necessary for communities to carry out disaster response and recovery plans.



The Public Assistance (PA) Program

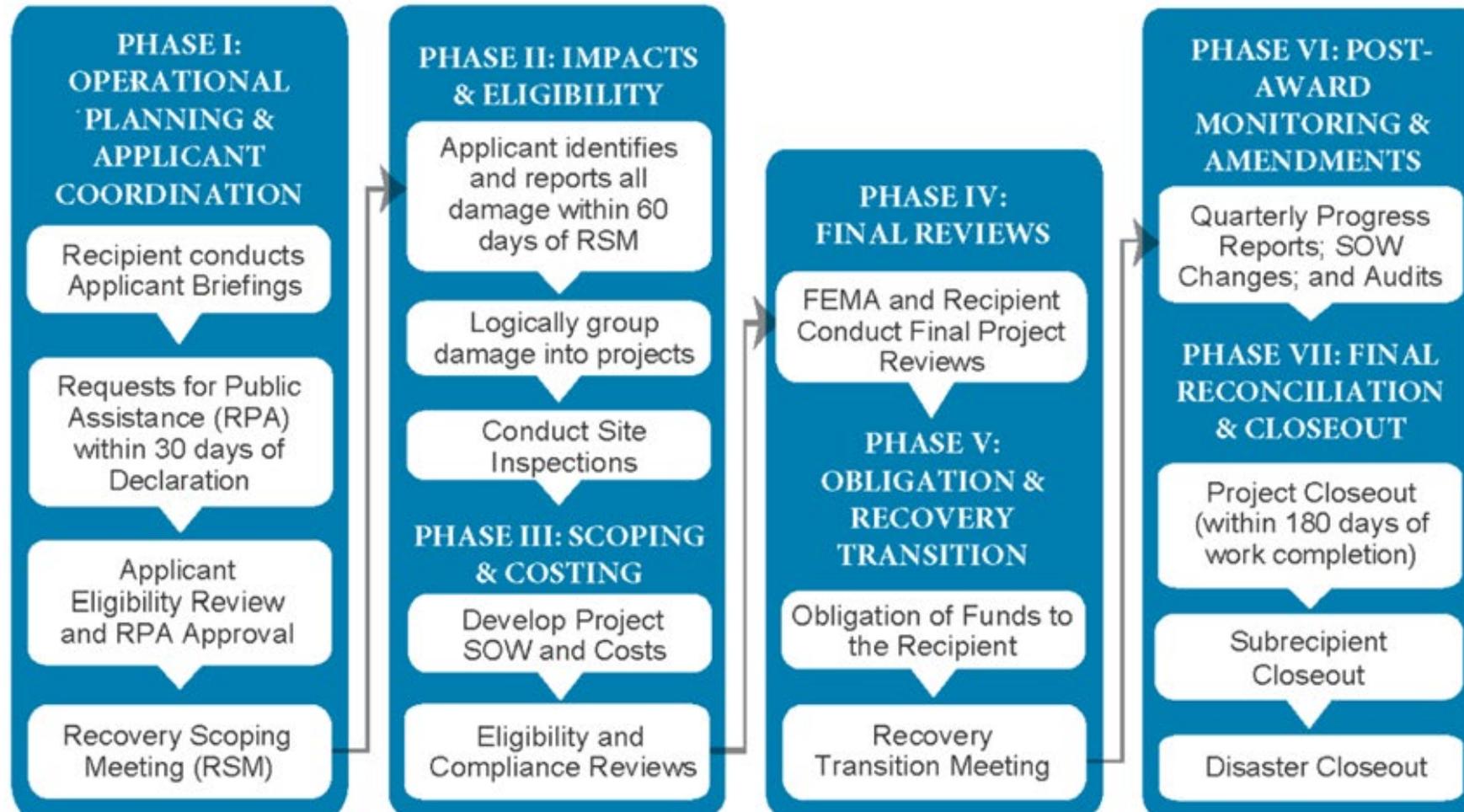


FEMA

- FEMA's largest grant program
- **REIMBURSEMENT** program following a federally declared disaster
- PA Grants are managed by North Carolina Emergency Management (NCEM)

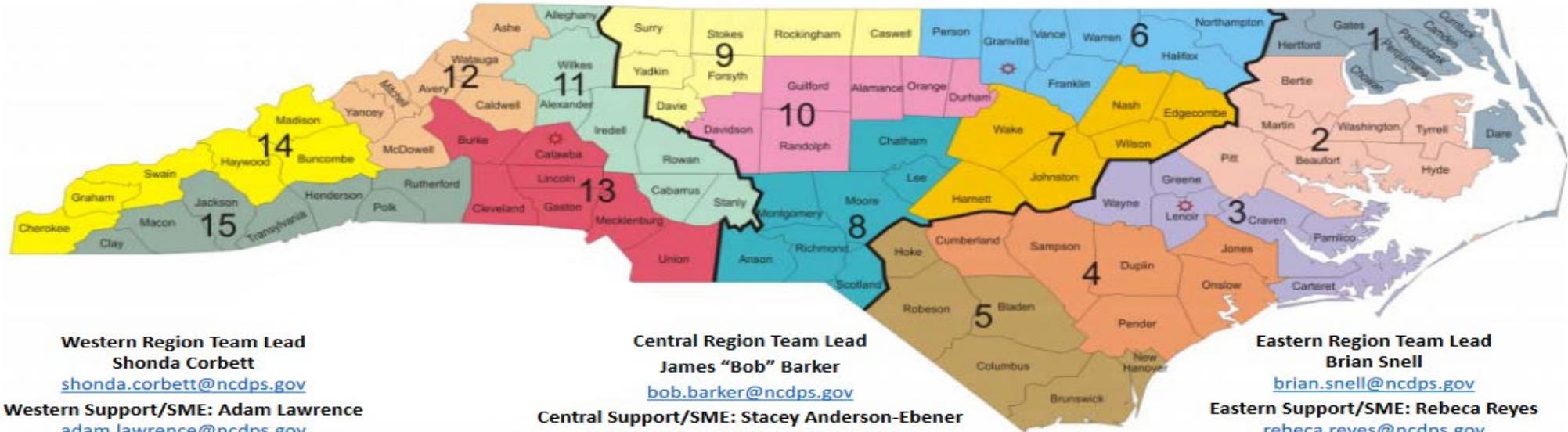


Public Assistance Program Delivery Process





NC Division of Emergency Management
Public Assistance Team Contact Info
 Grants Managers, Team Leads, Program Support



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- 5: Thomas Bennett thomas.bennett@ncdps.gov



Roles and Responsibilities in the PA Process



FEMA



Federal Agency

State/Recipient/Applicant

Subrecipients/Sub-Applicants

Manages and awards PA funding; determines eligibility

Receives the federal award; manages and disburses award to Subrecipients

Receives a subaward from the Recipient

These entities **MUST** work together to ensure efficient delivery of the PA Process.



Knowledge Check 1.1

As a member of a local government, which description best describes the role within the PA Process that you will fulfill?

- A. Recipient/Applicant
- B. Subrecipient/Sub-applicant
- C. Subrecipient/Applicant
- D. Author/Reviewer



Roles and Responsibilities in Local Disaster Recovery



Leadership and Administration

Provide direction and communication

Infrastructure Recovery

Restore infrastructure systems



Community Outreach

Communicate recovery efforts to volunteers and stakeholders



Policy and Oversight

Advise leadership on the direction of recovery

Funding and Financial Management

Manage financial records



Review your organization's Emergency Operations Plan or speak to your Emergency Management Coordinator to understand the roles you are expected to fulfill during an emergency!

Pre- vs. Post-Disaster Recovery Plans

Before the disaster occurs:

- Establishing post-disaster roles
- Determining recovery priorities
- Mitigation tasks

After the disaster occurs:

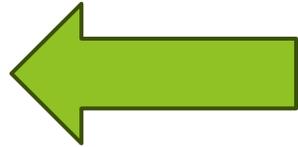
- Assessing disaster-related damages
- Debris removal, emergency repairs
- Financial recovery



Transitioning from Response to Recovery

Before and after a disaster, it is important to identify individuals with transferable capabilities to meet specific disaster-related needs.

Pre-Disaster
Accounting,
auditing, contract
management,
procurement
policy



Post-Disaster
Managing Public
Assistance
financial records,
emergency
procurement, and
contracts

Pre-Disaster actions taken now will pay dividends once disaster strikes!

Resources and Policies

Statutes, regulations, and policies that allow the PA process to function include:

**Robert T. Stafford
Disaster Relief and
Emergency
Assistance Act (The
Stafford Act)**

**The Code of Federal
Regulations (CFR)**

The Davis Bacon Act

**The Public
Assistance Program
and Policy Guide
(PAPPG)**



Module 1: Unit 1 Summary

- The general process of disaster recovery
- Overview of the Public Assistance program
- Key roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the Public Assistance process
- Key roles and responsibilities of community stakeholders during disaster recovery
- Actions to take when transitioning from pre- to post-disaster
- Actions to take when transitioning from disaster response to recovery
- Resources and policies that enable federal Public Assistance and outlines of policies and procedures to follow



Module 1: Pre-Disaster Conditions

Unit 2: Government Roles



Module 1: Unit 2 Overview

- Government Roles in the Public Assistance Process
- Federal Disaster Funding Programs
- State Government as the Recipient
- Public Assistance Eligibility
- Unit 2 Summary



Government Roles in the Public Assistance Process



Federal Government

- President declares major disasters
- FEMA manages PA Program



State Government

- Serves as the Applicant/Recipient
- Disburses PA award to eligible Subrecipients



Local Government

- Serves as the Subrecipients
- Requests assistance, performs disaster repairs

Federal Disaster Funding Programs

US Small Business Administration (SBA)

Provides low-interest disaster loans to homeowners, renters, and businesses

US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) grant funding for cities, counties, and states for disaster relief

FEMA Individual Assistance

A FEMA program that provides assistance to individuals for disaster-related costs

FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)

A FEMA program that provides local, state, tribal, and territorial governments with funding for mitigation

USDA Rural Communities Program

The USDA provides financial resources and support for rural communities, residents, and business impacted by disasters

US Economic Development Administration (EDA)

Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) program funding for local and regional governments



Take the time to become familiar with your town's Hazard Mitigation Plan *before* the next disaster!
Your HMP affects how PA is administered!

State Government as FEMA Recipient



Disbursing and managing grants for Subrecipients

Providing technical assistance to Subrecipients

Ensuring compliance from Subrecipients

Assisting with project closeout

Knowledge Check 1.2

What organization manages Public Assistance in the state of North Carolina?

North Carolina Emergency Management

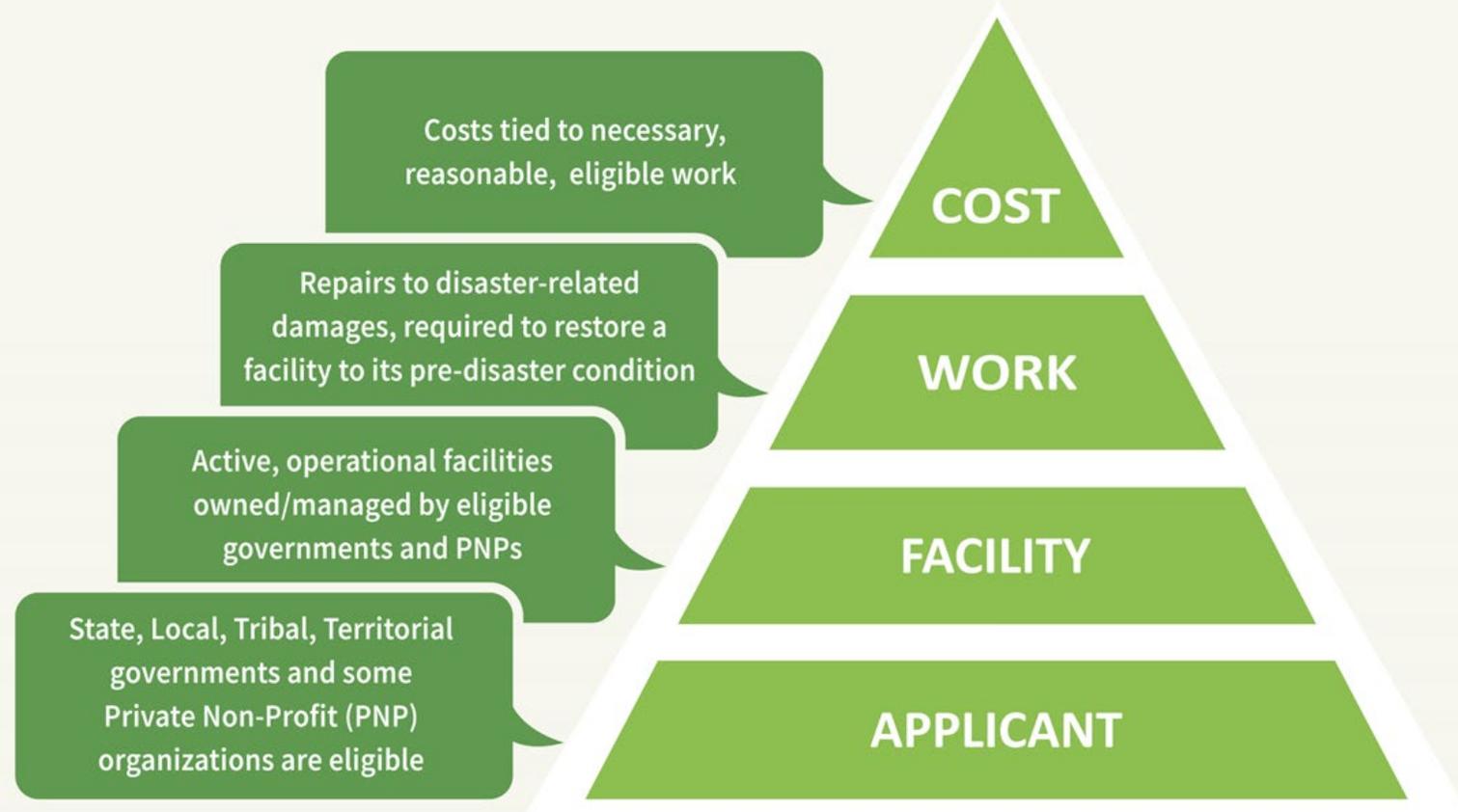


Public Assistance (PA) Eligibility

FEMA determines PA eligibility.

Applicant eligibility is determined first, eligibility is assessed at each level moving up the pyramid.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY PYRAMID



Public Assistance Applicant Eligibility

Public Assistance funding is ONLY available to eligible Applicants:

**All State and
Territorial
Governments**

**Federally
Recognized
Tribal
Governments**

**Local
Governments
(Cities,
Municipalities,
Councils of
Government)**

**Private Non-
Profit
Organizations**



Examples of Eligible Private Non-Profit (PNP) Organizations

Critical Services

Education



Emergency Services



Medical Care



Utilities



Essential, Noncritical Services

Community Centers/Houses
of Worship



Food Banks



Museums



Child/Adult Care



Knowledge Check 1.3

Which of the following is NOT an example of a Private Nonprofit (PNP) critical service?

- A. Water treatment plant
- B. Fire department
- C. Local Boy Scout Troop
- D. K-5 elementary school



Public Assistance Facility Eligibility

Facilities are deemed eligible for Public Assistance when:

They have been damaged by the declared disaster

Physically located in the declared disaster area

Are the legal responsibility of the Subrecipient



Public Assistance Work Eligibility

The minimum criteria for work to be eligible:

It must be required to be completed to address disaster damage

It must be located within the declared disaster area

It must be the legal responsibility of the Subrecipient

Work will be further classified as emergency or permanent work



Public Assistance Cost Eligibility

Costs are eligible for reimbursement when:

**They are
directly tied
to eligible
work**

**They are
adequately
documented**

**They are
necessary
and
reasonable**



Module 1: Unit 2 Summary

- The roles of each level of government in the Public Assistance process
- Additional federal programs that provide funds for disaster recovery
- Responsibilities of the state as the Recipient in the Public Assistance process
- The elements of Public Assistance eligibility
- The criteria for Applicant, Facility, Work, and Cost eligibility in the Public Assistance process



Module 1: Pre-Disaster Conditions

Unit 3: Roles & Responsibilities of Local Government



Module 1: Unit 3 Overview

- Local Governments and the Public Assistance Process
- Roles and Responsibilities in Local Disaster Recovery
- Building Capacity for Disaster Recovery
- Unit 3 Summary



Local Governments and the Public Assistance Process

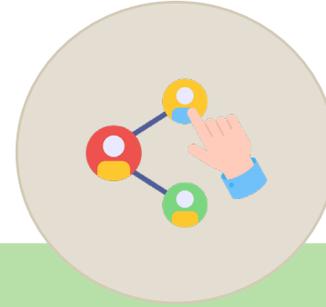
The role of local government in the PA Process is to:



Complete
disaster-related
repairs



Provide necessary
documentation for
reimbursement



Allocate aspects
of the PA Process
to individuals with
necessary
capabilities



Ensure accurate
management of
expenses and
documents

Roles and Responsibilities in Local Disaster Recovery



Leadership and Administration

Specific Roles: Disaster Recovery Manager, Mayors, Administrative Staff, Records Manager

Economic Recovery

Specific Roles: Economic Recovery Coordinator, Payroll Staff, Business Case Manager



Community Outreach

Specific Roles: Volunteer Coordinator, School District Emergency Management Coordinators



Funding and Financial Management

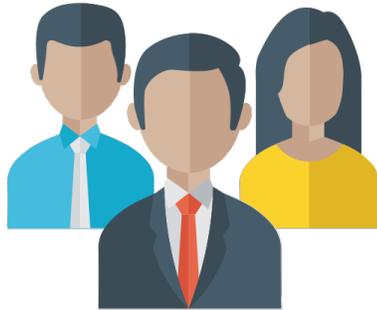
Specific Roles: Public Assistance Coordinator, Contracts Manager, Payroll Staff, Finance Director

Infrastructure Recovery

Specific Roles: Debris Manager, Public Works Department Staff, Roads and Bridges Department Staff



Building Capacity for Disaster Recovery



The increased capacity that occurs during disaster periods should be documented, introduced, and referenced in a role's detailed job description. They can be written in as such:

Abides by organizational standards for document naming conventions and management

Coordinates with FEMA Program Delivery Manager to ensure compliance of all rules and regulations

Coordinates with other agencies on reimbursement documentation (this documentation may vary based on role)

Monitors auditing, contract management, and document management of all Public Assistance activities

Examines financial records to ensure compliance with both local organizational and state/federal policies

Knowledge Check 1.4

Which of the following phrases would be best suited to add to a job description to represent financial administration responsibilities?

- A. Implements and monitors awarded funds
- B. Coordinates with appropriate entities for disbursement of funds
- C. Follows and maintains financial policies to ensure compliance with funding rules and regulations
- D. All of the above



Module 1: Unit 3 Summary

- The role of local governments in the Public Assistance process
- Local government duties related to Disaster Recovery and Public Assistance
- Financial administration responsibilities that increase employee capacity to fulfill Public Assistance-related tasks



Module 1: Pre-Disaster Conditions

Unit 4: Planning, Policies, and Best Practices



Module 1: Unit 4 Overview

- Essential Policies and Procedures for Public Assistance
- Federal Procurement Policies and Procedures
- State Procurement Policies and Procedures
- Aligning Federal and State Criteria for Funding
- Reviewing Compliance Criteria
- Key Concepts for Effective Financial Administration
- Local SMEs and Best Practices Pre-Disaster
- Necessary/Required Processes from Inception through Closeout
- Identifying Pre-Disaster Procedures for Information and Documentation Collection
- Unit 4 Summary



Essential Policies and Procedures for Public Assistance

It is important local governments have policies and procedures in place that address:



Mutual-Aid



Procurement
and contract
requirements



Payroll and
fringe
benefits



Insurance



Disaster-
specific
emergency
procurement



Taking these steps now can help ensure your town is ready for a disaster!

Federal Procurement Policies and Procedures

Service, bidding requirements, and evaluation criteria outlined in writing

Micro-purchases not subjected to competitive bidding requirements

Publicly advertised Requests for Proposals (RFP) required for contracts >\$250,000

Small purchases must obtain quotes from at least three sources



State Procurement Policies and Procedures

Competitive bids not required for small purchases

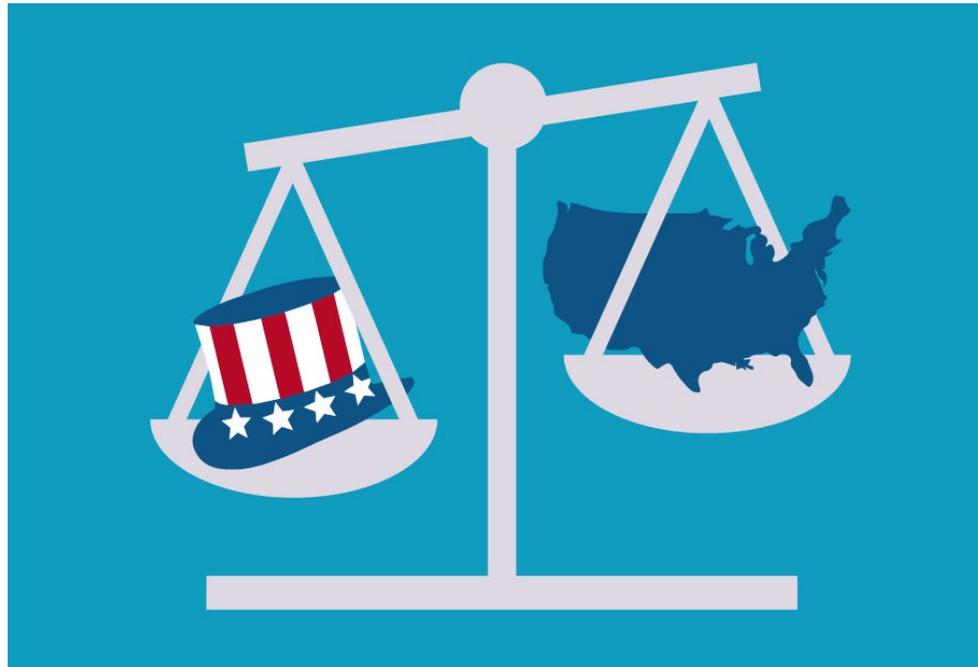
Quotes or bids must be obtained from at least three sources for informal purchases

Sealed bidding is required for formal purchases

Purchasers can negotiate with vendors to quickly acquire goods for emergency purchases



Aligning Federal and State Criteria for Funding



When dealing with multiple sources of funding, local governments should align their policies to whichever has the most stringent requirements between the federal and state.

Knowledge Check 1.5

A state policy states that purchases of goods/services up to \$20,000 are not subjected to competitive bidding requirements. The federal policy states that purchases up to \$10,000 are not subjected to those requirements.

Which policy should a local government adopt, and why?

The local government should adopt the federal policy when mixing funding sources, since it is the most restrictive.



Reviewing Compliance Criteria

It is important to create processes to ensure continued compliance

Best practice: an annual review process for compliance criteria



Key Concepts for Effective Financial Administration (1 of 2)

Successful disaster financial management requires multiple areas of knowledge and capability. Critical members of the team often include:



Emergency Managers

Coordinate disaster operations



Recovery Managers

Organize recovery preparations and operations



Finance Managers

Oversee cash flow and financial accounting



Grants Managers

Navigate legal requirements of funding programs

Best Practice: Fund a Recovery Manager using FEMA Management Costs

Key Concepts for Effective Financial Administration (2 of 2)



A Recovery Manager can help handle financial paperwork pre- and post-disaster.

Project/Portfolio Management

- Define and execute the steps necessary to meet recovery goals
- Accurately manage the disaster budget to ensure all bills are paid
- Outline and complete activities before, during, and after the disaster

Local Subject Matter Experts and Best Practices Pre-Disaster (1 of 2)



Work with FEMA and NCEM to create a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

Plan for the involvement of volunteers in the pre-disaster period

Involve local emergency management officials, as well as state partners, when creating a disaster plan

Local Subject Matter Experts and Best Practices Pre-Disaster (2 of 2)

Best practices for pre-disaster activities:

Document all processes and create backups

Create a Disaster Recovery Plan

Ensure jurisdictional policies are flexible enough for a disaster

Review state and federal policies

Ensure there are emergency management authorities in the jurisdiction

Discuss finance policies with finance staff



Necessary/Required Processes from Inception through Closeout

Have an internal plan for document sharing

Consider a system that determines access management

Any field documentation should be uploaded to shared organizational drives

Think about how different departments report relevant information

Files should be organized in a clear file system in the drive

Identify the disaster team and appoint back ups points of contact

Put these plans and processes in place before the next disaster!



Identifying Pre-Disaster Procedures for Information and Documentation Collection

Documentation required for financial recovery:

- Activity logs
- Equipment logs
- Maintenance logs
- Photographs and blueprints
- Timesheets
- Disaster response plan
- Evacuation plan



Put these plans and processes in place before the next disaster!

Knowledge Check 1.6

Why is it important to provide several forms of documentation for financial recovery?

Documentation enables Applicants to validate damage.



Module 1: Unit 4 Summary

- The essential Public Assistance processes to create policies to ensure compliance
- Federal procurement and contracting policies
- State procurement policies
- How to align local policies to federal and/or state policies
- The importance of reviews for compliance
- Best practices for effective disaster financial management
- The importance of utilizing SMEs for pre-disaster planning
- Necessary/required processes for documentation
- Documentation that can validate damage following a disaster



Module 1: Pre-disaster Conditions

Unit 5: Identifying Risks



Module 1: Unit 5 Overview

- How Risks Impede the Public Assistance Process
- Risks That Threaten Public Assistance Funding
- Mitigating Operational Risks During Recovery
- Unit 5 Summary



How Risks Impede the Public Assistance Process

Actions that can impact obligation of PA funding:



Improper Documentation

Not meeting deadlines, or inappropriate document submission



Disaster Validation Issues

Cannot validate that damages were a result of the disaster



Improper Business Continuity

Not having documented policies and procedures

Knowledge Check 1.7

Which of the following actions may help speed up the Public Assistance funding process?

- A. Timely submission of documentation
- B. Validation of disaster damages with photos
- C. Organization-wide procedures for document submission
- D. All of the above



Risks To Public Assistance Funding



Lack of established policies and procedures →
Can result in the delay of grant awards

Lack of procurement policies →
Can result in ineligible costs or de-obligation
of funding



Lack of documentation →
Can result in grant penalties or legal action

Failure to conduct reviews during PA process →
Can result in the delay of grant awards



When in doubt about a policy, procedure, or best practice during an unusual circumstance, contact NCEM or another SME for guidance before proceeding. Try to get all guidance and determinations in writing and document your decision-making rationale and process.

Mitigating Operational Risks During Recovery

- Ensuring capacity to manage grants
- Building effective staffing
- Following state and federal procurement requirements
- Maintaining financial records
- Ensuring whole-process compliance



Module 1: Unit 5 Summary

- Common errors that can impact PA funding
- Specific examples of behaviors that risk or delay funding
- Best practices to minimize the chance of risk during financial recovery



Module 1 Pre-Disaster Conditions Summary

- The general process of disaster recovery
- Overview of the Public Assistance program
- Key roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the Public Assistance process
- How local governments and local government officials interface with the Public Assistance process
- The roles of each level of government in the Public Assistance process
- Essential policies, procedures, and best practices related to the Public Assistance process
- Risks that can threaten effective recovery and ways to avoid them



Module 1 Experiential Learning

Activity Scenario (1 of 2)

You are a government employee in the fictional town of Paro, North Carolina. Paro recently elected a new mayor, and several key figures in town leadership have retired. The new town administration is eager to ensure that Paro is prepared for the upcoming hurricane season and has assembled a task force to address gaps in pre-disaster responsibilities and preparedness.

You have been assigned to this task force and asked to present an action plan to town leadership prior to the start of hurricane season. Town leadership is especially interested in ensuring that proper policies and procedures are in place to make use of PA if it becomes necessary.



Module 1 Experiential Learning

Activity Scenario (2 of 2)

There are a few areas of concern that have already been identified including:

Timesheet Tracking System: The system is electronic only and running on outdated software. Town management is concerned that in addition to the risk of failure during blue skies, an issue with time tracking during and after a disaster could have major impacts.

Facility Documentation: Records and photos of existing facilities and town properties are largely outdated. Most of the facilities have had upgrades and improvements since they were constructed, but high-quality photos do not exist for most locations.

File Sharing and Backups: The town does not have a clearly defined documentation method. Some files are stored digitally, some are stored physically, and most do not have backup copies.

Disaster Response Plan: The Paro Disaster Response Plan was written 15 years ago and needs major updates to account for the town's growth, new technologies, and revised regulations.



Module 1 Experiential Learning

Activity Instructions

Review the scenario and work in your group to determine the steps needed to address the known issues in Paro.

Remember that there may be other areas of concern that the town has not yet identified. What else should be reviewed?

Consider potential preparedness activities beyond what has already been identified. Use your action plan template to outline what steps are needed to address identified issues, who should be responsible, what resources are needed, and how changes will impact preparedness. Be prepared to brief out your plan once completed.



Wrap-Up and Questions





**SOUTHWESTERN COMMISSION
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

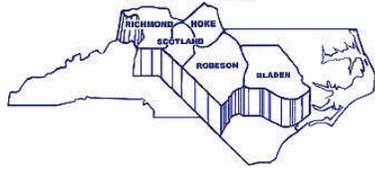


**CENTRALINA
REGIONAL COUNCIL**



**UPPER COASTAL PLAIN
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

Lumber River Council of Governments



**CENTRAL PINES
REGIONAL COUNCIL**



**PIEDMONT TRIAD
REGIONAL COUNCIL**



Contact your regional Council of Government to schedule training and to access more information about Public Assistance!

