

Stafford Act and COVID-19 Reimbursement Fact Sheet

Updated: June 9, 2020

Overview

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1988, and updated in 2016, is the federal law that authorizes the United States Government to provide supports to states and localities based on disasters and emergencies. When the President issues a federal declaration of a disaster or emergency, the Stafford Act provides states and localities with reimbursement funds to defray some of the costs in response to that disaster. On March 13, 2020, President Trump issued an [emergency declaration](#), opening access to these reimbursement funds for COVID-19 response efforts.

Key Points

- Stafford Act applications for reimbursement are supported through the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA).
- The period of availability for funds extends back to January 20, 2020, and will continue until the President/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) set an end date to the emergency declaration.
- Reimbursements cover 75% of expenses incurred, and the local share of the 25% may not be covered by other federal funds, including CARES Act grants.
- School districts are eligible to file for reimbursements on expenses related to COVID-19 response and mitigation that are deemed *reasonable and necessary* to protect the public. TEMA can assist in determining whether the FEMA is likely to approve a proposed reimbursement request.
- School districts may file through their county emergency management agency (EMA) or request to set up an account to apply directly for reimbursements.
- Questions on becoming an applicant, accessing the Grants Portal, and eligible expenses may be directed to COVID.PA@tn.gov.

Period of Availability

The Stafford Act generally opens up access to funds for the period from the start of the emergency until the end date. However, given the evolving challenges of combatting the COVID-19 pandemic, federal emergency aid has been made available for the state of Tennessee to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the areas affected by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic beginning on January 20, 2020 and continuing. While this bears continued monitoring, the declaration currently allows for reimbursement of eligible expenses related to COVID-19 preparation, response, and mitigation starting January 20th continuing until such time the President and FEMA clarify an end date for the emergency declaration.

Eligible Expenses

Costs potentially eligible for reimbursement under this declaration are those expenses that fall

under the FEMA Category B, Emergency Protective Measures expense category. Additional guidance on eligible expenses may be found by viewing [FEMA's Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Pandemic: Eligible Emergency Protective Measures fact sheet](#). Below are listed some potential eligible expenses provided they meet the necessary and reasonable thresholds..

- Labor/supply costs associated with your response to COVID-19
- Measures taken to protect students and staff from the potential spread of COVID-19
- Overtime paid to employees preparing for and responding to COVID-19
- Costs of PPE associated with COVID-19
- Costs for contractors performing emergency protective work related to COVID-19
- Other costs related to COVID-19 the organization would not normally incur during regular operations

Please reach out to TEMA utilizing the contact information on the last page of this document for further clarification on eligible expenses and submitting claims.

Submitting Claims

For claims to be submitted, an applicant must have an account in the Grants Portal and then file a specific reimbursement application.

Within the [Grants Portal](#), school districts may opt to either a) leverage their respective county's account in the Grants Portal in collaboration with local EMAs (contact information included below), or b) apply to set up their own account. Please note that while all counties have existing accounts, school districts would only have existing accounts if they have applied for public assistance previously.

- County Accounts: If working with existing county accounts, school districts may need to complete the [Applicant Agent Form](#) to have access to the Grant Portal to load reimbursement applications.
- New Accounts: To create their own accounts and submit a reimbursement request, districts should follow the [Applicant Quick Guide Grants Portal Account and RPA](#). New applicants should also complete the [Applicant Agent Form](#) and send to COVID.PA@tn.gov.

Once a district has access to the portal, log into the Grants Portal and follow the link at the top of the page to submit your Request for Public Assistance.

Application and Grants Portal Guidance, Tennessee Emergency Management Agency

- [Applicant Quick Guide Grants Portal Account and RPA](#)
- [Applicant Quick Guide Completing and Submitting a COVID-19 Project Application](#)
- [FEMA Job Aid Requests for Information](#)
- [FEMA Job Aid COVID-19 Process Overview](#)
- [COVID-19 Streamlined Project Application](#)
- [Completing and Submitting a COVID-19 Project Application](#)
- [Applicant Quick Guide COVID-19 Process Overview](#)
- [FEMA Job Aid-Expedited Funding for COVID-19](#)
- [Public Assistance Medical Care Policy for COVID-19](#)
- [Clarification on Eligible Public Assistance Program Labor Costs for COVID](#)

For more information on submitting claims, please see the TEMA's [COVID-19 Guidance Federal Assistance Guidance for Emergency Managers](#) and related resources available online.

Contacts

The contacts below from TEMA provide a range of supports in becoming an applicant, submitting requests, and general technical assistance questions. Districts may also contact the COVID.PA@tn.gov email address for any other questions.

- *Establishing Yourself as an Applicant / Getting in the Grants Portal / Submitting the Request for Public Assistance*
Michael Cavett, 615.741.3785, Michael.Cavett@tn.gov
- *Working in the Grants Portal / Creating Projects / Working on the Streamlined Application*
Kim Sekol, 315.520.3228, Kim.Sekol@tn.gov
- *Eligibility Questions*
Kim Sekol, 315.520.3228, Kim.Sekol@tn.gov
Terri Tanner, 615.351.7445, Terri.Tanner@tn.gov

Emergency Management Contacts

- [East Tennessee Local Emergency Management Office Contacts](#)
- [Middle Tennessee Local Emergency Management Agency Contacts](#)
- [West Tennessee Local Emergency Management Agency Contacts](#)

Resources

- [A Guide to the Disaster Declaration Process and Disaster Assistance](#), Federal Emergency Management Agency
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Pandemic: Eligible Emergency Protective Measures](#), Federal Emergency Management Agency
- [President Donald J. Trump Approves Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Tennessee](#), Federal Emergency Management Agency
- [COVID-19 Guidance: Federal Assistance Guidance for Emergency Managers](#), Tennessee Emergency Management Agency
- [Exercise Starter Kit for Preparedness in a Pandemic](#), Federal Emergency Management Agency
- [Grants Portal: How to Submit a Streamlined Project Application Video](#), Federal Emergency Management Agency: training videos FEMA has developed to assist applicants through the streamlined application process.
- [COVID-19 Procurement User Guide](#), Federal Emergency Management Agency: Procurement Under Grants during Periods of Emergency or Exigency: This new 36-minute online tutorial will help participants understand how to properly contract during emergency or exigent circumstances.