



TDEM COVID-19 FAQ Sheet

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Question 1: What is a DSO?

Answer: Disaster Summary Outlines (DSO) help TDEM assess the impact of a disaster and provide a snapshot of statewide costs. Local jurisdictions share estimated damage costs with us by entering incurred costs at the line item level into the online form on the TDEM web site. This process is key during the COVID-19 response.

Question 2: Who submits the DSO?

Answer: Counties should submit a DSO for the county and the unincorporated areas in that county. Cities should coordinate with their counties to ensure their costs aren't already being captured. Emergency Service Districts, Public Improvement Districts, Water Districts – all special districts – must check with their county to determine if that district's costs are already being captured in the county DSO. If not, the district should submit their own DSO.

Question 3: Where can I find the DSO link?

Answer: On the TDEM.TEXAS.GOV website under the Recovery tab

Link - <https://dso.soc.texas.gov/>

Question 4: What is the incident PIN number for this event?

Answer: When entering the DSO the COVID-19 event is identified as: **20-0003**

Question 5: Can I receive a copy of the TDEM Applicant Briefing?

Answer: A copy of the TDEM Applicant Briefing is located from the TDEM shared drive.

Link – <https://tdemstorage.dps.texas.gov/file/fsdownload/MHU61GCja/DR-4485%20PA%20Training>



Question 6: Who is an eligible applicant?

Answer: On the TDEM.TEXAS.GOV website under the Recovery tab, please utilize the FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG) as a reference for applicant eligibility questions; Chapter 2 Public Assistance Policy, II. Applicant Eligibility (Link below) –

FEMA PAPPG Link - https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1525468328389-4a038bbef9081cd7dfe7538e7751aa9c/PAPPG_3.1_508_FINAL_5-4-2018.pdf

Question 7: Should a local entity claim their costs and have the county act on their behalf?

Answer: All local entities claiming costs that are their responsibility and not the counties should apply for assistance separately from the county

Question 8: If I haven't declared yet, should we?

Answer: You are not required to declare to receive FEMA Public Assistance. The Governor's Declaration covers all cities, counties, and municipalities in the State of Texas however, you may do so if you choose.

Question 9: Where do I register for the FEMA Grants Portal site?

Answer: If you DO NOT have an account in the FEMA Grants Portal, please send an email to TDEMRecovery.RPA@tdem.texas.gov to request an account. Provide the primary contact name, jurisdiction/potential applicant, phone number and email address. You will then receive an automated email invitation from the FEMA Grants Portal. After the account activation is completed you will be requested to submit a Request for Public Assistance (RPA) form for COVID-19 (DR-4485).

Question 10: How do we know if we have a FEMA Grants Portal account?

Answer: A jurisdiction/applicant that hasn't participated in a federally declared disaster event since 2017 in all probability will not have an account.

Question 11: FEMA's Grant Portal, how many users can be assigned?

Answer: Only one point of contact should be listed but the applicant can assign multiple users. It is best practice to keep applicant account users to a minimum.



Question 12: How quickly will we be granted access to the Grants Portal after applying?

Answer: Access should be granted within 24-48 hours. Please check your junk mailbox as invitations sometimes appear there.

Question 13: What is Force account labor?

Answer: FEMA refers to the Applicant's personnel as "force account." FEMA reimburses force account labor based on actual hourly rates plus the cost of the employee's actual fringe benefits. FEMA calculates the fringe benefit cost based on a percentage of the hourly pay rate. Because certain items in a benefit package are not dependent on hours worked (e.g., health insurance), the percentage for overtime is usually different than the percentage for straight-time.

Useful resource - FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG) as a reference for applicant eligibility questions; Chapter 2 Public Assistance Policy, IV. Applicant (Force Account) Labor

FEMA PAPPG Link – https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1525468328389-4a038bbef9081cd7dfe7538e7751aa9c/PAPPG_3.1_508_FINAL_5-4-2018.pdf

Question 14: From what date should I begin tracking costs for this incident?

Answer: The COVID-19 incident start date is January 20, 2020

Question 15: What is Category B – Emergency protective measures and what is eligible?

Answer: (Category B) Emergency protective measures are conducted before, during, and after an incident and are eligible if the measures:

- Eliminate or lessen immediate threats to lives, public health, or safety
- Eliminate or lessen immediate threats of significant additional damage to improved public or private property in a cost-effective manner

Helpful links: **Eligible Emergency Protective Measures Fact Sheet** - <https://tdem.texas.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID-19-Eligible-Emergency-Protective-Measures-Fact-Sheet-FINAL3.19.20.pdf>

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FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG) - https://tdem.texas.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/PAPPG_3.1_508_FINAL_5-4-2018.pdf

Question 16: Where can we get contracting and procurement information from FEMA?

Answer: Please see – Procurement and Contracting Requirements outlined in the FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG) – Under Chapter 2: Public Assistance Policy, Section V Cost Eligibility, 1. Procurement Standards, and 2. Contracts. *FEMA’s Procurement Guidance for Recipients and Subrecipients Under 2 C.F.R. Part 200 (Uniform Rules) provides additional details regarding Federal procurement and contracting requirements*

FEMA 2018 PAPPG Link - https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1525468328389-4a038bbef9081cd7dfe7538e7751aa9c/PAPPG_3.1_508_FINAL_5-4-2018.pdf

Also, The Procurement Disaster Assistance Team (PDAT) has created and compiled the resources below to help you avoid common mistakes when procuring with federal disaster grant funds.

Procurement Disaster Assistance Team - <https://www.fema.gov/procurement-disaster-assistance-team>

Hands-On Resources:

- [2018 PDAT Procurement Compliance Checklist for Public Assistance Applicants](#)
- [2019 PDAT Contract Provisions Template](#)
- [Modelo de Disposiciones Contractuales \(2019 PDAT Contract Provisions Template in Spanish\)](#)

Question 17: Where can I get Donated Resource information?

Answer: Please see FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG) – Under Chapter 2: Public Assistance Policy, Section V. Costs Eligibility, Subpart L. Donated Resources

Value of Resources. 44 CFR 13.24 addresses how donated resources are to be valued. The following instructions are based on that part of the CFR:

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1. Volunteer Labor: The value of volunteer labor is discussed in 44 CFR 13.24 (c) (1). The rate placed on volunteer labor should be the same rate (plus reasonable fringe benefits) ordinarily paid for similar work within the applicant's organization. Premium rates will not be used. If the applicant

does not have employees performing similar work, the rate should be consistent with those ordinarily performing the work in the same labor market. To determine the value of volunteer labor, the labor rate should be multiplied by the total number of volunteer labor hours. Credit may be given for volunteer labor in any field reasonably required for emergency work, including the work of volunteer equipment operators.

FEMA 2018 PAPPG Link - https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1525468328389-4a038bbef9081cd7dfe7538e7751aa9c/PAPPG_3.1_508_FINAL_5-4-2018.pdf

Question 18: Should I follow my local, state or federal procurement requirements?

Answer: It is recommended to utilize whatever is the most stringent between your local, state and federal procurement requirements. Insure you are documenting what method is being utilized for procurement and the reasoning in which it was chosen.

Please see FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG) – Under Chapter 2: Public Assistance Policy, Section V. Costs Eligibility, Subpart G. Procurement and Contracting Requirements

FEMA 2018 PAPPG Link - https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1525468328389-4a038bbef9081cd7dfe7538e7751aa9c/PAPPG_3.1_508_FINAL_5-4-2018.pdf

Question 19: Are exempt employees eligible for reimbursement under category B work?

Answer: This is not typically an eligible expense. It is important to review and defer to your internal pay policy that was in-place prior to the event.

Please see FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG) – Under Chapter 2: Public Assistance Policy, Section V. Costs Eligibility, Subpart A. Applicant (Force Account) Labor, 2. Eligibility Criteria Based on Type of Employee and Work Performed, *Supervisors*

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FEMA 2018 PAPPG Link - https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1525468328389-4a038bbef9081cd7dfe7538e7751aa9c/PAPPG_3.1_508_FINAL_5-4-2018.pdf

Question 20: If we previously registered for the Grants Portal but lost our login/password, how should we proceed?

Answer: There is a ***Forgot your Password*** at the login screen and you would use your e-mail for a password rest. If you know you have an account but cannot remember your login then you should send an email to TDEMRecovery.RPA@tdem.texas.gov and they can assist further.

Question 21: Why am I submitting a DSO if we don't have a threshold to meet?

Answer: Disaster Summary Outlines help TDEM assess the impact of a disaster and provide a snapshot of statewide costs. This process is key during the COVID-19 response.

The DSOs don't have to be perfect, but all costs should be reported and it is a best practice to update the information in a DSO as additional costs are identified.

We suggest you include costs as they are identified so they aren't forgotten. Real-time cost collection is mission-critical. It is important to both establish a single coordination point for document collection and, if possible, to have the same person or people to manage the data, develop reports, enter data into the DSO form.

Below is a video with some useful guidance on DSO submission for the COVID-19 event.

YouTube

<https://youtu.be/43fxRSF9SdA>

Vimeo

<https://vimeo.com/texasemergencymanagement/covid19dso>

Question 22: Are Private Non-Profits eligible under this disaster?

Answer: Private nonprofits (PNPs) can be eligible under this disaster. To see if you qualify, refer to applicant eligibility information in the FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG) – Under Chapter 2: Public Assistance Policy, Section II. Applicant Eligibility, Subpart D. Private Nonprofit Organizations

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FEMA 2018 PAPPG Link - https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1525468328389-4a038bbef9081cd7dfe7538e7751aa9c/PAPPG_3.1_508_FINAL_5-4-2018.pdf

Question 23: What is a Project Worksheet (PW)?

Answer: A tool used by the Applicant and FEMA to develop projects. The PW (FEMA Form 90-91) is the primary form used to document the location, damage description and dimensions, scope of work, and cost estimate for each project.

Question 24: Should a public school apply for funds if they are already going through the state of Texas Education Agency (TEA) for claims, funds and reimbursement?

Answer: Yes, but be aware that it is important to disclose that you are applying for funding through other sources including state and federal agencies and there is no duplication of funding occurring.

Common FEMA terminology: *Duplication of Benefits* (DoB) is funding received from two sources for the same item of work.

Question 25: Purchasing cooperatives, can we use them?

Answer: TDEM/FEMA suggest that eligible applicants not utilize purchasing cooperatives. While using a cooperative contract reduces the administrative burden of purchasing and expedites the purchasing process. Cooperative contracts provide a price ceiling, but not always the most competitive price. While cooperative contracts nearly always save time, running a new solicitation might yield a lower unit price. Exceptions may include *exigent circumstances*.

Video for Procurement Protocols: The Exigent and Emergency Conditions Exception
<https://vimeo.com/266778209>

Question 26: The Grants Portal has several forms for submitting expenditures. Are we required to use these specific forms, or may we use our own format, as long as we provide all requested data elements?

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Answer: As an applicant, you are not required to utilize FEMA's specific forms for capturing cost/data. However, utilizing the online forms supplied by FEMA in the Grants Portal may expedite the awarding of your project worksheet/grant.

Question 27: Is there a deadline for submitting a Request for Public Assistance (RPA)?

Answer: Yes, if a subrecipient/applicant wishes to seek PA funding, it must first submit a Request for Public Assistance (RPA) to FEMA, through TDEM, within 30 days of the after the end of the declaration of the Public Health Emergency.

Question 28: Can reimbursement requests be submitted on an ongoing basis or is it one time after incident period has ended?

Answer: A subrecipient/applicant should submit costs as they accrue. Delaying submission of eligible costs can delay project development and delay the funding process.

Question 29: Can you explain Federal Cost Share?

Answer: The assistance FEMA provides through its PA Program is subject to a cost share. The Federal share is not less than 75 percent of the eligible costs. For example, a total cost for a project is \$100,000, then the federal share is \$75,000 and the local match responsibility is \$25,000.

Question 30: Where can we register for TDEM's Grant Management System?

Answer: Please click the link below and select Register on the Home page.
<https://grants.tdem.texas.gov/index.cfm>