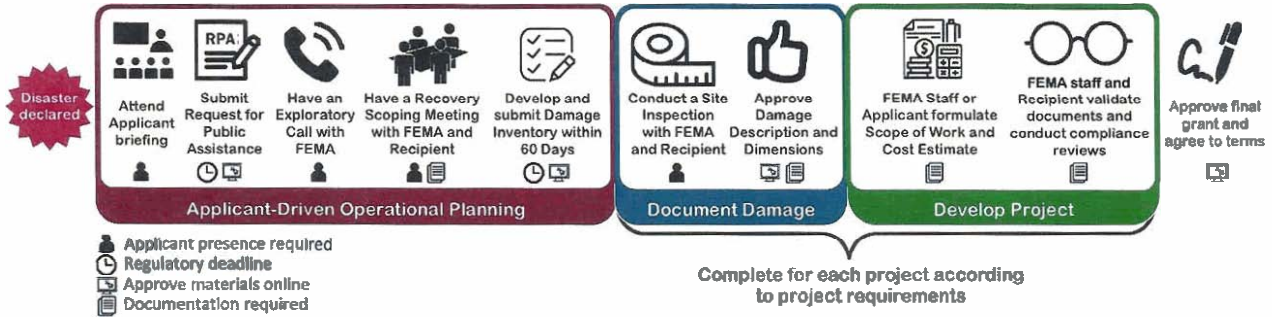


# The Public Assistance Award Process Explained

The Public Assistance Program provides federal grant assistance to help communities quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies declared by the President. An **Applicant** is a non-Federal entity (a local, State, Tribal, or Territorial government or eligible private non-profit) submitting an application for assistance under a Federal award given to a **Recipient** (a State, Tribe, or Territory for whom a disaster declaration was made). This document provides an overview of the grant delivery process.



**Applicant Briefing:** Recipient-led meeting after a disaster declaration to discuss grant deadlines and requirements with potential Applicants.

**Request for Public Assistance:** Official mechanism by which a potential Applicant requests and is approved to receive Public Assistance funding from FEMA through the Recipient. Applicants submit requests through the online Grants Portal system within 30 days of the disaster declaration. The Request for Public Assistance will be reviewed by the Recipient and FEMA staff, who then assign a **Program Delivery Manager**, a programmatic advisor who serves as an Applicant’s customer service agent and manages project processing.

**Exploratory Call:** Brief introductory phone call that the Program Delivery Manager will set up to introduce the program and discuss, at a high level, the nature and extent of the damage the Applicant has sustained. The Program Delivery Manager should initiate the call within 7 days of an Applicant’s assignment to a Program Delivery Manager.

**Recovery Scoping Meeting:** First substantive meeting of the grant delivery process that should be conducted within 21 days after Applicant assignment to Program Delivery Manager. An Applicant’s specific situation will be discussed in detail, including incident-related damage, emergency activities performed, related costs, and their plan for overall recovery.

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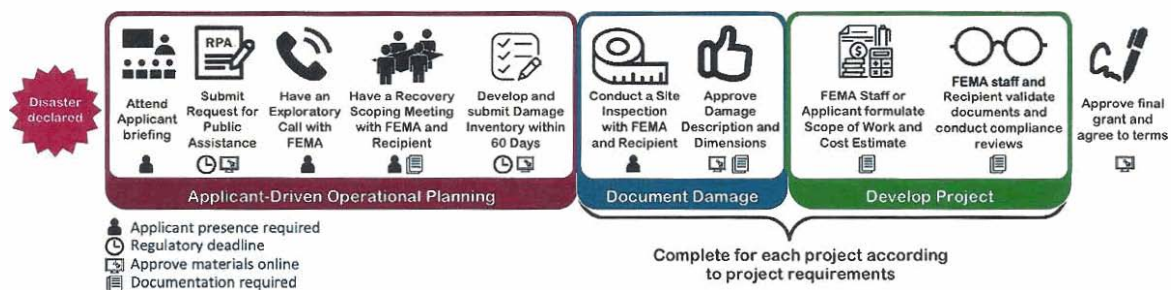
**Damage Inventory:** List of all emergency work performed and facilities, roads, and other infrastructure damaged by the disaster. This is the basis of Public Assistance projects. An Applicant must work with the Program Delivery Manager to identify and report all disaster-related damage and emergency work activities to FEMA within 60 days of the Recovery Scoping Meeting.

**Site Inspection:** Visit by FEMA staff to evaluate damaged infrastructure and collect information about the nature and dimensions of damage. Most damaged sites will require a physical inspection, which involves a FEMA site inspector and the Applicant (or Applicant’s point of contact).

**Damage Description and Dimensions:** Description of information obtained from the site inspection. This is the foundational element of a FEMA subgrant document (called a Project Worksheet). Applicants must approve the Damage Description and Dimensions through Grants Portal.

**Scopes of Work and Cost Estimates:** Portions of the Project Worksheet that describe the work to be done and amount it will cost. Scopes of work and cost estimates are based on the Damage Description and Dimensions and may include efforts to reduce future damage. They can be developed by FEMA or Applicant staff.

**Compliance Reviews:** Validation by FEMA staff of documentation and information submitted by an Applicant to ensure compliance with Federal regulations regarding insurance, contracts, permits, and environmental and historical preservation. Additional information may be requested. Once all reviews are complete, an Applicant agrees to the funding terms, signs off on the grant and monitors project progress through closeout. Audits and appeals processes exist to review environmental and historic preservation, contract, and insurance matters.



## Developing a Damage Inventory

This Quick Guide explains how Applicants identify and report disaster-related damage and why a Damage Inventory is important to the success of FEMA Public Assistance grant development.

### What is a Damage Inventory?

A Damage Inventory is a detailed list of debris removal, emergency work activities, and damaged facilities for which an Applicant is seeking Public Assistance reimbursement. Federal regulations require that all debris removal, emergency work activity, and disaster-related damage must be identified and reported within 60 days of the Recovery Scoping Meeting to be reimbursed.

#### The Public Assistance Program Delivery Process



### Why is a Damage Inventory important?

A Damage Inventory is the basis for Public Assistance grants. A FEMA Program Delivery Manager uses the Damage Inventory to logically group damage line items into Public Assistance projects, schedule site inspections for incomplete work, and determine what supporting documents an Applicant will need to provide. FEMA cannot continue the grant development process until items have been entered in the Damage Inventory.

An Applicant has up to 60 days after the Recovery Scoping Meeting to identify and report disaster-related damage and emergency work activities. A Program Delivery Manager will work with an Applicant throughout the 60-day period to draft, develop, and finalize their Damage Inventory.

**Applicant**  
 State, local, tribal, or territorial government or eligible private non-profit entity submitting a request for assistance under the Recipient's Federal award

**Project**  
 A logical grouping of disaster damage, the scope of work an Applicant will complete to address the damage, and the estimated funding.

### How does an Applicant create a Damage Inventory?

Applicants begin recording damage in the Damage Inventory template, an Excel spreadsheet that can be downloaded from Grants Portal or provided by the Program Delivery Manager. Applicants are encouraged to start documenting items in the spreadsheet as soon as possible, even if damage is still being identified. Applicants bring a draft Damage Inventory to the Recovery Scoping Meeting to discuss and develop it with their Program Delivery Manager. Once finalized, within 60 days of the Recovery Scoping Meeting, the Damage Inventory must be uploaded to Grants Portal.

Grants Portal will prompt an Applicant to sign the Damage Inventory at day 61 after the Recovery Scoping Meeting. Any changes after 60 days need to be approved by FEMA field leadership.

### What information should be included in a Damage Inventory?

Each line item in a Damage Inventory should contain the following information:

#### Name of the Damage:

A clear and distinctive title, indicating the type of facility and uniquely identifying it (example: "Mills Road" rather than "Damaged Road" and "Smith Creek Culvert" rather than "Culvert").

#### Location:

Address, City, State, ZIP code and latitude/longitude coordinates for the facility.

#### Description of Damage in Line Item:

A summary of the damage and/or work performed, including:

- o Type of facility
- o Damaged component(s) of the facility and what caused the damage
- o Extent of damage to the facility (example: *if affected by flooding, include the length of time the facility was underwater*)
- o Work completed (example: *temporary repairs, items removed from facility*).

*Example: 10,000 square foot, 2 story brick building. HVAC in basement was impacted by floodwaters. Up to 4 feet of floodwater throughout the facility. Building remained flooded for 2 days. Flooring, carpet, and drywall were removed to prevent molding.*

#### Primary Cause of Damage:

Type of event that caused the damage (e.g. hurricane, flood, severe storm, tornado).

#### Approximate Cost:

Estimate of how much the anticipated work or repairs will cost. Unless work is complete, this may be a rough estimate.

#### Category of Work:

The category of work that has been or will be completed. FEMA regulations define seven categories of eligible work:  
 Category A – Debris removal  
 Category B – Emergency protective measures  
 Category C – Roads and bridges  
 Category D – Water control facilities  
 Category E – Buildings and equipment  
 Category F – Utilities  
 Category G – Parks, recreational, other facilities.

#### Type of Labor:

How will repairs be completed: by a contractor, by an Applicant's own employees (also called Force Account labor), through a Mutual Aid Agreement, or using Donated Resources?

#### Additional information includes:

- o Whether an Applicant has received Public Assistance funding to restore the facility in the past
- o Estimated percentage of work that has been completed already
- o Level of priority the Applicant assigns to restoring the facility.

The Quick Guide series is a set of documents that explain the roles and responsibilities of Recipients and Applicants in key steps in FEMA's Public Assistance Program delivery process. The Public Assistance Program provides Federal grant funding to help communities quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies declared by the President. Read more about Public Assistance Program delivery in other Quick Guides, the [Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide](#), and resources available on [Grants Portal](#).