

For additional information, please visit the [Texas Department of Emergency Management](#) and [FEMA](#) websites.

FEMA-Related Issues FAQ: Section Topics

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FEMA Reimbursement Process for School Districts and Open-Enrollment Charter Schools

1. **How do I get my Emergency Protective Measures expenses incurred reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)?** Last updated April 20

FEMA only accepts applications with expenses greater than \$3,300.

On March 13, 2020, the President issued a nationwide emergency declaration for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The FEMA designation for this is DR-4485. This opens up funding through FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) program for reimbursement for emergency protective measures only. FEMA has simplified the [process](#) to support eligible governmental entities. Private non-profits (charter schools) need to follow a different registration process as explained in Step 3. Both processes for school districts (government) and charter schools (private non-profits) are explained in the slides located at <https://tdemstorage.dps.texas.gov:5001/fsdownload/nS9igOvKF/DR-4485%20PA%20Training> Select Targeted PA Training, then Grants Portal Training.

You will need to take the following steps to start this process:

1. Participate in a virtual applicant briefing that will provide vital information on this process.
 - Applicant briefings are scheduled on Wednesdays at 1 pm through May 6.
 - Visit this link to register for an applicant briefing:
<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/uJEld--qpsiUVuuiiMU134mnCH3CuMp7g>
2. Submit a Request for Public Assistance (RPA) – You can complete this step prior to participating in the applicant briefing. For School Districts:
 - **If you DO have an existing FEMA account** (from a previous disaster) in the [FEMA Grants Portal](#) (<https://grantee.fema.gov/>), please login, and you will be asked if you want to submit an RPA for DR-4485.

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- If you **DO NOT** have an account in the FEMA Grants Portal, please go to <https://grantee.fema.gov> to request an account. Under the Sign In button is a blue link that says “Register Your Organization and Request Public Assistance.” You will need to provide the primary contact name, name of jurisdiction/potential applicant, phone number and email address. You will then receive an automated email invitation from the FEMA Grants Portal after your account is approved by TDEM.
 - Please watch this [video](#) for instructions on how to create an account for registering your organization and submitting an RPA.
 - If you have any issues, please call the Grants Portal Hotline at (866) 337-8448.
3. Private Non-Profit Applicants that **do not already have** Grants Portal accounts should send the following information to TDEMRecovery.RPA@tdem.texas.gov for an invitation to create a FEMA Grants Portal Account:
- Primary Contact Name
 - Name or Jurisdiction/Potential Applicant
 - Phone Number
 - Email Address

Once your Grants Portal account is established, you can submit the Request for Assistance. Private non profits are required to submit documents that are uploaded to the Portal as described in the RPA process explained in the slides located at <https://tdemstorage.dps.texas.gov:5001/fsdownload/nS9igOvKF/DR-4485%20PA%20Training> Select Targeted PA Training, then Grants Portal Training.

2. How do I know which expenses will be reimbursed? Last updated April 20

FEMA has launched a [website](#) that lists the eligible expenses for this disaster under Public Assistance Category B Emergency protective measure. Most increase in operating expenses will NOT be considered eligible by FEMA. Distance learning efforts are not eligible. These are some possible eligible expenses:

- Extra hand sanitizers are eligible for prevention of spreading the disease.
- Cleaning and sanitizing schools (these are the only extra costs that are FEMA eligible);
- Overtime related to the above expenses may be eligible but only if there is a pay policy for overtime in existence prior to the start of the incident period (January 20, 2020).
- Over budgeted Medical Staff related expenses
- Over budgeted Security Staff related expenses

Included below are the other FEMA-related expense categories:

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FEMA CATEGORIES AND EXAMPLES OF COMMON ELIGIBLE WORK

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Debris Removal	Emergency Protective Measures	Roads & Bridges	Water Control Facilities	Buildings & Equipment	Utilities	Parks, Recreation, & Other
Debris removal must be in the public interest and necessary to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate immediate threats to lives, public health & safety; Eliminate immediate threats of significant damage to improved public or private property Trees and Woody Debris Building Components Sand, Mud, Silt, & Gravel Removal of Temporary Levees	Search & Rescue Security Emergency Pumping Sandbagging Detour & Warning Signs EOC Activation Emergency & Temporary Repairs Overhead Power Lines Emergency Medical Facilities Emergency Evacuations Activities undertaken before, during and following a disaster to save lives, protect improved property	Roads <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surfaces Bases Shoulders Ditches Drainage Structures Low Water Crossings Bridges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decking & Pavement Piers Girders Abutments Slope Protection Approaches Slope Failures	Dams and Reservoirs Levees Engineered drainage Channels Canals Aqueducts Sediment Basins Shore Protective Devices Irrigation Facilities Pumping Facilities	Buildings Structural Components Interior Systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electrical Mechanical Contents 	Water Treatment Plants Power Generation & Distribution Facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Gas Systems Wind Turbines Generators Substations Power Lines 	Playground Equipment Swimming Pools Bath Houses Tennis courts Boat Docks Piers Picnic Tables Golf Courses Fish Hatcheries Mass Transit Facilities

3. What if my costs are not in the above question 2? Last updated April 20

Since there may be other sources of funding available in the future, we still recommend you track these costs for other possible sources

We recommend that you track ALL costs related to COVID-19, including staff time, such as:

- Distance learning expenses, including purchasing electronic devices and communications infrastructure;
- Additional online learning and communication platform licenses;
- Communication and public information costs;
- Curriculum development;
- Supplies for paper distance learning packets and delivery costs (where online learning is not feasible); and
- Expenses to continue food assistance program services

These expenses are considered an increase in operating expenses and will NOT be covered by FEMA for Public Assistance, but other funding streams may be created through the CARES Act and other future funding allocations. It is best to track and document costs now, then to do so months after the fact.

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4. When can I apply for funding? Last updated April 3

FEMA is still developing guidance and processes related to how it will accept standard projects for COVID-19. In the meantime, the FEMA [Job Aid](#) may be helpful in collecting your costs. Most applicants will not be assigned a FEMA point of contact (known as a Program Delivery Manager) and will have to submit their applications independently through Grants Portal for processes.

5. How much of my incurred eligible expenses will FEMA cover? Last updated April 3

The federal cost share is 75%, and the share for a district or charter school is 25%.

6. Do I need to document my expenses? Last updated April 3

Yes! Applicants must maintain records sufficient to detail the history of a procurement. While FEMA approval is not required for noncompetitive procurement under the emergency or exigency exception, you must document and provide justification for the use of the exigent or emergency exception. Additionally, you will be expected to follow your own procurement policy. Document everything you spend time and money on, including:

- Force account labor
- Force account equipment (regular time and overtime)
- Force account materials
- Rentals
- Contracts
- Procurement documentation
- Donated resources

7. What is the deadline for applying for FEMA reimbursement? Last updated April 9

Currently, there is not a deadline to submit a Request for Public Assistance(RPA). That said, we recommend you submit your RPA as soon as possible. When a deadline is set, it is easier to withdraw a Request for Public Assistance than submit a late Request for Public Assistance.

8. Where else can I find information about the FEMA reimbursement process? Last updated April 3

- Send an email to the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) at TDEMRecovery.RPA@tdem.texas.gov with questions
- FEMA COVID-19 Fact Sheet: <https://www.fema.gov/news-release/2020/03/23/coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic-public-assistance-simplified-application>
- TDEM's website: <https://tdemstorage.dps.texas.gov:5001/fsdownload/nS9igOvKF/DR-4485%20PA%20Training>

School Board Policy to Support FEMA Reimbursement

Important Note: Some school districts and charter schools consider offering premium pay during disasters, while others do not. TEA does not have a position regarding this matter, but, if a school district or charter school wishes to offer premium pay during disasters, there are compliance issues that should be considered. See the following questions and answers for some guidance on this topic.

- 9. If a district has a DEA(LOCAL) policy that lacks a premium pay provision, will it qualify for FEMA Public Assistance reimbursement for overtime expenses incurred as a result of COVID-19? Last updated April 1**

FEMA requires that a premium pay (overtime) policy be in place before a disaster, per page 23 of the most recent version of its [Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide](#). Note also that premium pay would only be eligible for employees performing eligible tasks under Public Assistance Category B Emergency Protective Measures.

- 10. Would a district be eligible for FEMA reimbursement for premium/overtime expenses incurred post-policy adoption, if the policy was adopted after the disaster was declared? Last updated April 20**

No, not under FEMA requirements.

For additional reference, there may be other sources of federal reimbursement unrelated to FEMA that are not subject to the same constraint of requiring pre-disaster adoption of a premium pay policy.

- 11. If my district wants to adopt a DEA(LOCAL) policy that addresses premium pay, are there examples to model from? Last updated April 1**

Yes. TASB has created and has agreed to share with TEA and the education field a [template policy version](#) that addresses pay during closures and premium pay during disasters.