



**RON DESANTIS**  
GOVERNOR

March 22, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Through: Gracia B. Szczech, Regional Administrator  
FEMA Region IV  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
3003 Chamblee-Tucker Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30341

RE: Request for Major Disaster Declaration  
COVID-19

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C §§5121-5207 (the "Stafford Act"), as implemented by 44 C.F.R. §206.36, I request that you declare a Major Disaster for the State of Florida to include certain programs under Individual Assistance: *Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Crisis Counseling, Community Disaster Loans and the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Program* as a result of COVID-19 Response for the Incident Period beginning January 20, 2020 for all sixty-seven (67) counties. This request is timely under 44 CFR §206.36(a). FEMA Form 010-0-13 is included with this request.

On March 1, 2020, I issued Executive Order 20-51, directing Florida's Surgeon General and State Health Officer to declare a public health emergency due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Florida's Surgeon General declared a public health emergency on the same day. On March 7, 2020, I directed the Director of the Division of Emergency Management to activate the State Emergency Operations Center to Level 2 to provide additional coordination and response to COVID-19. On March 9, 2020, I issued Executive Order 20-52 declaring a State of Emergency for the entire state of Florida due to COVID-19.

On March 13, 2020, you declared the ongoing Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant an Emergency Declaration for all states, tribes, territories, and the District of Columbia pursuant to section 501(b) of the Stafford Act. In accordance with the Emergency Declaration for COVID-19, eligible emergency protective measures taken to respond to the COVID-19 emergency at the direction or guidance of public health officials may be reimbursed under Category B of the agency's Public Assistance Program. Reimbursable activities typically include emergency protective measures, such as the activation of

State Emergency Operations Center, National Guard costs, law enforcement, and other measures necessary to protect public health and safety. FEMA assistance will be provided at a 75-percent Federal cost share.

At this time, I am requesting that you include the following Individual Assistance Programs in your Declaration: Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Crisis Counseling, Community Disaster Loans, and the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Program. The foregoing analysis supports the inclusion of these Individual Assistance Programs in a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Florida.

### ***Factors for the Individual Assistance Program***

Per 44 C.F.R. 206.48(b), the factors FEMA will consider to measure the severity, magnitude, and impact of the disaster and to evaluate the need for assistance to individuals under the Stafford Act include the following:

1. State Fiscal Capacity and Resources Availability;
2. Uninsured Home and Personal Property Losses;
3. Disaster Impacted Population Profile;
4. Impact to Community Infrastructure;
5. Casualties; and
6. Disaster-Related Unemployment.

Given the nature of this event and constantly changing information, the State of Florida offers the following data to support its request and to make a showing of the presence of the above factors.

#### **1. State Fiscal Capacity and Resources Availability**

The State has currently allocated all available resources to the effort to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and is in direct support of response efforts, while experiencing significant impact to the economy of Florida. Current projected State coordination and response actions total more than \$208,778,682 in services and materials and supplies, not including direct expenses of local political subdivisions or supporting private entities. Resources of local governments and supporting private entities are strained and financial resources that were reasonably expected to be at the State's disposal to respond are being affected by the impact to the economy of the State. Business revenue and tax receipts are suffering and without supplemental federal assistance, the State's ability to sufficiently respond to and recover from this event will be severely impacted.

The State's efforts to address this shortfall include the allocation of \$50,000,000 to the Emergency Bridge Loan Program that will provide interest-free, short-term loans to small businesses that experienced a financial impact from COVID-19. On March 15, 2020, I requested a Small Business Administration (SBA) Declaration authorizing the Economic Injury Damage Loan Program for the COVID-19 response. This request was granted on March 18, 2020. As of March 20, 2020, 6,617 business have reported negative impacts to the State Department of Economic Opportunity with many reporting closures and severe reductions in sales and income. The SBA determined this was necessary and appropriate given the showing of substantial economic damage to Florida's businesses.

## **2. Uninsured Home and Personal Property Losses**

The State is not requesting the activation of the Individuals and Households Program; therefore, the requested Home and Personal Property Loss data is not applicable.

## **3. Disaster Impacted Population Profile**

One of the key demographics of interest during this event is the age of the State's population. Florida is proud of its large elderly population, as according to the US Census Bureau, persons 65 years and over make up roughly 20.5% of Florida's population. Florida's elderly population is expected to grow, more so than any other age demographic. Early reports and guidance about COVID-19 references disproportionate impacts of the virus to this demographic. This event is anticipated to have a wide-reaching impact on the fiscal health of our State's healthcare infrastructure. Seniors citizens are particularly significantly impacted by the COVID-19 virus and to this point, the State estimates 16% of persons under the age of 65 are without health insurance.

The State has seen an increase in COVID-19 cases at nursing homes and assisted living facilities (ALF) with 109 cases under investigation in these facility types and 21 cases reported. Although the State has been instituting strict measures to prevent further infections, it is extremely likely COVID-19 will continue to spread and impact the elderly population statewide.

## **4. Impact to Community Infrastructure**

COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, a drastic effect on community infrastructure. Hospitals, medical facilities, and first responders are facing challenges rarely experienced before. The process of triaging and isolating potentially affected individuals is significantly disrupting lifesaving and life-sustaining services. Additionally, the insufficient medical resources and capacities of medical facilities, and the already limited number of qualified medical personnel will only continue to rapidly deplete as the impacts of COVID-19 continue to spread.

## **5. Casualties**

As of March 22, 2020, the Florida Department of Health has 13 casualties as a direct result of the COVID-19 virus. While the State is doing everything in its power to prevent further casualties, more are expected.

## **6. Disaster-Related Unemployment**

On March 12, 2020, I activated the Florida Business Damage Assessment Survey, an online platform for all businesses to report economic damage incurred by COVID-19. In this survey, businesses shared current economic losses, anticipated economic losses, as well as how many employees that the business had already laid off and how many employees the business anticipated to lay off. Of the previously referenced 6,617 businesses that have completed the survey, more than half of those businesses reported that employees have been laid off due to the negative impact that COVID-19 has had on its business. Those businesses report having to lay off a total of 40,438

persons; 31,246 temporarily and 9,192 permanently. New businesses are inputting data on a daily basis.

During this unprecedented time, states are experiencing a high volume of calls and applications for Reemployment Assistance and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) is seeing historic increases in filings. Last week, DEO received 5,325 applications for Reemployment Assistance, whereas they saw 4,853 applications in the prior week. Call volume to DEO for the past Monday – Thursday was more than 130,000 calls whereas last week they had approximately 28,000 calls for the entire week.

For these reasons, I ask that you include Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Crisis Counseling, Community Disaster Loans, and the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Program in a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Florida.

### ***Additional Assistance Requested***

In addition to the FEMA Individual Assistance Programs referenced above (Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Crisis Counseling, Community Disaster Loans, and the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Program), the State requests the following of FEMA:

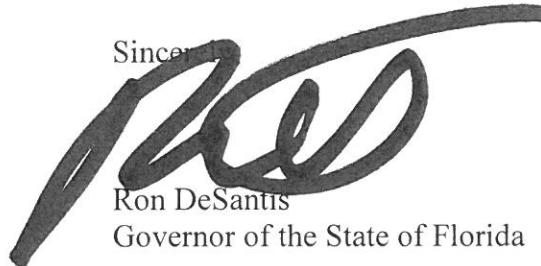
- Increase the small project threshold for FEMA Public Assistance to \$250,000 and authorize the ability to amend outside of the limited circumstances outlined in the Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide as needed.
- Extend the application deadline for an additional 90 days for the Homeland Security Grant Program, Non-Profit Security Grant Program, and the Emergency Management Grant Program as state and local partners are fully dedicated to the current mission of responding to the COVID-19 impacts.
- Suspend appeal deadlines for the FEMA Public Assistance Program for 90 days to allow for resources that are currently dedicated to responding to COVID-19 to remain engaged in that task without negatively impacting their appeal opportunities. This includes suspending appeal decisions concerning timeliness of appeals for both Recipients and Subrecipients.
- Suspend deadlines for all pending and current Requests for Information (RFI) for the FEMA Public Assistance Program to allow for resources that are currently dedicated to responding to COVID-19 to remain engaged in that task without negatively impacting their ability to respond timely.
- Suspend the issuance of new determination memos for the FEMA Public Assistance Program for failure to respond to any RFIs or submit any other documentation as requested due to response efforts for COVID-19. This request also includes suspending issuances of determination memos finding costs or Applicants ineligible for FEMA Public Assistance funding.

- Extend periods of performance, to include time extensions, for the completion of all projects under the FEMA Public Assistance Program.

### ***Conclusion***

The State is requesting the activation of the following FEMA programs: *Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Crisis Counseling, Community Disaster Loans, and the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Program*, and the relief from regulatory burdens outlined in the bullets above. For administrative processing purposes, all information that would be included in required Enclosure A (Individual Assistance) has been incorporated into the cover letter. Further, I have designated Jared Moskowitz, Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management, as the State Coordinating Officer for this emergency. He is authorized to provide further information, assurances, requests, or justification on my behalf.

Sincerely,

A large, bold, handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "Ron DeSantis". The signature is written over the word "Sincerely," and the name "Ron DeSantis".

Ron DeSantis  
Governor of the State of Florida

Enclosures:  
FEMA Form 010-0-13



10. Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment\*

☒ Individual Assistance      Dates Performed    **Requested** Jan 20, 2020    **Start** Jan 20, 2020    **End** \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Assistance Accessibility Problems (Areas that could not be accessed, and why)

Not Performed.

☒ Public Assistance      Dates Performed    **Requested** Jan 20, 2020    **Start** Jan 20, 2020    **End** \_\_\_\_\_

Public Assistance Accessibility Problems (Areas that could not be accessed, and why)

Previously authorized under EM 3432- no PDAs performed

11. Programs and Areas Requested

Individual Assistance ☐ N/A    ☐ Individuals and Households Program    ☒ Crisis Counseling Program    ☒ Disaster Unemployment Assistance

☐ All    ☐ Disaster Case Management    ☐ Disaster Legal Services    ☒ Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Assistance

For the following jurisdictions, specify programs and areas (counties, parishes, independent cities; for Indian tribal government, list tribe(s) and/or tribal area(s)) If additional space is needed, please enclose additional documentation).

Please see Cover Letter for details.

For States, identify Federally-recognized Tribes in the requested counties (if applicable).

According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Tribal Land Map, the Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes are located in the requested counties.

Please see **Enclosure A: Supplemental Information for Individual Assistance** for additional information in support of this request\*.

*\*Not Required for Emergency Declaration Request*

## 11. Programs and Areas Requested (Continued)

Public Assistance ☐ N/A ☐ Debris Removal (Category A) ☒ Emergency Protective Measures (Category B) ☐ Permanent Work (Categories C-G)\*  
(not available for Emergency Declaration Requests)

For the following jurisdictions, specify programs and areas (counties, parishes, independent cities; for Indian tribal government, list tribe(s) and/or tribal area(s)). If additional space is needed or your request includes different categories of work for different jurisdictions; please enclose additional documentation.

Please see Cover Letter for details. Previously authorized under EM 3432, however, reiterating the need.

For States, identify Federally-recognized Tribes included in the requested counties (if applicable).

According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Tribal Land Map, the Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes are located in the requested counties.

Please see **Enclosure B: Supplemental Information for Public Assistance** for additional information in support of this request\*.

**Indemnification for Debris Removal Activity**

☒ I do not anticipate the need for debris removal.

I anticipate the need for debris removal, which poses an immediate threat to lives, public health and safety. Pursuant to Sections 403 and 407 of the Stafford Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5170b & 5173, the State or Indian tribal government agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the United States of America for any claims arising from the removal of debris or wreckage for this disaster. The State or Indian tribal government agrees that debris removal from public and private property will not occur until the landowner signs an unconditional authorization for the removal of debris.

**Request for Direct Federal Assistance**

☐ I do not request direct Federal assistance at this time.

☒ I request direct Federal assistance for work and services to save lives and protect property, and:

a. I request the following type(s) of assistance:

Previously authorized under EM 3432, however, reiterating the need. Medical supplies, personal protective equipment for medical personnel, and support, etc.

b. List of reasons why State and local or Indian tribal government cannot perform, or contract for, required work and services.

The resources of State and local governments have been severely strained as a result of this pandemic that is affecting the entire country.

c. In accordance with 44 C.F.R. § 206.208, the State or Indian tribal government agrees that it will, with respect to direct Federal assistance: (1) Provide without cost to the United States all lands, easements, and rights-of-ways necessary to accomplish the approved work; (2) Hold and save the United States free from damages due to the requested work, and shall indemnify the Federal Government against any claims arising from such work; (3) Provide reimbursement to FEMA for the non-Federal share of the cost of such work in accordance with the provisions of the FEMA-State or FEMA-Tribe Agreement ; and (4) Assist the performing Federal agency in all support and local jurisdictional matters.

**Request for Snow Assistance**

☒ N/A ☐ I request snow assistance.

Snow assistance for the following jurisdictions (Specify counties, independent cities or tribes and/or tribal areas).

Please see **Enclosure D: Historic and Current Snowfall Data** for additional information in support of this request\*.

\*Not Required for Emergency Declaration Request

## 11. Programs and Areas Requested (Continued)

Hazard Mitigation\* ☒ Statewide

OR

For the following specific counties, parishes, independent cities or tribes and/or tribal areas.

## 12. Mitigation Plan Information\*

a. Mitigation Plan Expiration Date 8/24/2023

b. Type of Plan

☒ Enhanced☐ Standard

## 13. Other Federal Agency Programs

☐ I do not anticipate requirements from Other Federal Agencies☒ I do anticipate requirements from Other Federal AgenciesPlease see **Enclosure C**: Requirements for Other Federal Agency Programs for additional information in support of this request\*.

## 14. Findings and Certifications

☒ I certify the following:

a. I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and the affected local government or Indian tribal government and that supplementary federal assistance is necessary.

b. In response to this incident, I have taken appropriate action under State or tribal law and have directed the execution of the State or Tribal Emergency Plan on Mar 9, 2020 in accordance with the Stafford Act.

c. The State and local governments, or Indian tribal government will assume all applicable non-Federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act.

## 15. List of Enclosures and Supporting Documentation

☒ Cover Letter ☒ Enclosure A (Individual Assistance)\*☒ Enclosure B (Public Assistance)\*☐ Enclosure C (Requirements for Other Federal Agency Programs)☐ Enclosure D (Historic and Current Snowfall Data)☒ Additional Supporting Documentation See Cover Letter in lieu of Enclosure A and B

Governor's or Tribal Chief Executive's signature

Date

If anyone except the Governor or Tribal Chief Executive signs this document, please provide the documentation that establishes that this individual has the legal authority to act on behalf of the Governor or Tribal Chief Executive.

\*Not Required for Emergency Declaration Request