

March 23, 2020

Briefing Sheet

The purpose of this letter is to request a major disaster declaration from the President for the activation of certain Individual Assistance Programs and relief from current administrative requirements.

The State is requesting that the following programs to assist individual survivors be activated:

Disaster Unemployment Assistance

DUA benefits are generally paid for up to 26 weeks beginning with the first week following the date the major disaster began and ending with the 26th week following the date the major disaster is declared by the President. DUA will not be paid for any period of unemployment that occurs prior to the date of incident nor for any period of unemployment which begins subsequent to the end of the disaster assistance period.

DUA provides temporary financial assistance and reemployment services to eligible individuals. The weekly DUA benefit amount will be based on the gross wages of the individual. If the individual is self-employed, the weekly benefit amount will be based on the net earnings (income) from self-employment. Generally, benefits are calculated using the same formula used for state UI benefits. However, the minimum weekly benefit amount payable can be no less than half (50%) of the average UI benefit amount in the state, with certain exceptions for part-time workers.

Crisis Counseling

DUA provides temporary financial assistance and reemployment services to eligible individuals. The weekly DUA benefit amount will be based on the gross wages of the individual. If the individual is self-employed, the weekly benefit amount will be based on the net earnings (income) from self-employment. Generally, benefits are calculated using the same formula used for state UI benefits. However, the minimum weekly benefit amount payable can be no less than half (50%) of the average UI benefit amount in the state,¹⁷⁴ with certain exceptions for part-time workers.

Community Disaster Loans

CDL provides operational funding to help local governments that have incurred a significant loss in revenue, due to a major disaster, that has or will adversely affect their ability to provide essential municipal services.

Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Program

The Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) gives food assistance to low-income households with food loss or damage caused by a natural disaster.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS) must approve states to operate D-SNAP in a disaster area. The President must declare Individual Assistance for the disaster area and your state must request FNS approval to operate D-SNAP.

If approved for D-SNAP benefits, individuals will get an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card to access them. Individuals use it just like a debit card to buy food at most local grocery stores.

The requests for relief from current administrative requirements include:

- Increasing the small project threshold for FEMA Public Assistance to \$250,000 with 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.