

COVID-19: Rhode Island Recovery Efforts Begin

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REGION 1 – As residents throughout New England adjust to life with COVID-19, the state of Rhode Island and federal partners coordinated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency continue to work together to help communities recover from the burden of Coronavirus.

As of July 28, more than \$30.2 million in federal funding has been granted to the state; the federal government has also provided crucial supplies including 507,426 gloves, 511,303 surgical masks and 470,320 N95 respirators. Federal partners like the U.S. Small Business Administration have approved over \$442 million in Economic Injury Disaster Loans to help businesses statewide, and the state received nearly \$34.5 million from the US. Department of Housing and Urban development to prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless due to hardships caused by COVID-19.

Today, FEMA continues to support their state partners as they progress down the road to recovery. FEMA's Recovery grant programs will help the state, tribal, and local governments, and certain types of private non-profit organizations, defray the costs of responding to the pandemic. FEMA's partnerships and expertise will help the Ocean State meet its long-term recovery goals and recover stronger, safer and smarter.

"FEMA's role in Long-Term Recovery is to support disaster recovery planning by increasing or fostering communication and collaboration among stakeholders," said Regional Administrator and Federal Coordinating Officer Captain Russ Webster, who oversees FEMA's operations in Rhode Island. "The process allows states to access technical assistance and funding from a variety of federal agencies, in addition to FEMA's grant funding, to help fill gaps in recovery."

Providing for the people of Rhode Island during these stressful times, FEMA, in close coordination with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration, has provided \$209,979 through the Crisis Counseling Immediate Services



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Program (ISP) to help counsel victims of COVID-19. This program helps people recover and rebuild their lives after a disaster and provides survivors with the tools needed to understand their current situation and reactions. Counseling services can be provided via phone, internet, or social media and can help survivors reduce stress and find emotional support; develop coping strategies and connect with other people and agencies who can help them in their recovery process.

Rhode Island received an extension through Sept. 27, 2020 to its ISP grant to continue developing a crisis counseling program during the Regular Services Program (RSP) application review process.

FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) grant program provides essential funding for communities recovering from a federally declared disaster or emergency. The Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency works with FEMA during all phases of the PA program and conducts final reviews of FEMA-approved projects.

To date, more than \$216,931 in PA funding has been approved to reimburse local governments for costs associated with emergency protective measures enacted to quickly respond to COVID-19.

The federal share for Public Assistance projects is no less than 75 percent of the eligible cost. The state determines how the non-federal share of the cost of a project (up to 25 percent) is split with the sub-recipients like local and county governments.

The Long-Term Recovery process begins with a Rapid Needs Assessment. The state has chosen representative communities (Providence, Newport and North Kingstown) for in-depth interviews and identification of recovery needs. The sectors of interest are hospitality, tourism and fisheries.

While FEMA's COVID-19 response and recovery efforts continue, the Agency is preparing for hurricane season, building response capacity and leveraging technology where possible to reduce person to person contact. "These capabilities include damage inspections done virtually through facetime, hotels for sheltering and Civil Air Patrol (CAP) flyovers for property damage assessments. Such information can be critical to hurricane response, as well as COVID cases," said Webster, who also noted FEMA Region 1 is training and cross-training staff members to build a more robust response and management to respond to multiple



incidents.

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FEMA's mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters.



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