



FEMA

Public Assistance
Standard Operating Procedures
For
Project Specialist Transition
at Joint Field Offices

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Public Assistance Program

Mission

The mission of the Public Assistance Program is to assist communities in recovering from the devastating effects of disasters by providing technical assistance and financial grants in an efficient, effective, consistent and customer-friendly manner. We will accomplish the mission by having experienced, trained, knowledgeable and friendly staff; well-documented, easy-to-understand and accessible policies and procedures; timely and transparent decision-making; and a strong partnership with the states. We will continuously seek and identify opportunities to improve program delivery.

Public Assistance Transition Procedures

This Standard Operating Procedure describes the actions the incumbent Public Assistance *Project Specialist* must take to ensure an efficient and effective transfer of the respective positional responsibilities to incoming Public Assistance *Project Specialists* assigned to replace the incumbent Public Assistance *Project Specialist* at the Joint Field Office (JFO). The incumbents are referred to in this SOP as the **outgoing** staff and the new employees who are replacing the incumbent staff are referred to as the **incoming**.

The *Project Specialist* position requires a five (5) day transition period to ensure the proper transfer of responsibilities at the JFO between the incoming and outgoing employee. These procedures will help to maintain Public Assistance operations at the JFO and ensure uninterrupted service to the applicants in all major disasters and emergency events. The outgoing and incoming staff is responsible for documenting that an effective transfer of responsibilities occurs.

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A. Project Specialist: Checking- in the JFO

Upon arrival at the Joint Field Office (JFO), incoming Project Specialists **MUST** check-in and complete the following administrative functions:

- Locate the JFO Human Resource Office and obtain the following documents:
 - a. Time sheet
 - b. Travel voucher
 - c. Travel authorization form
 - d. ACH payment notification and direct deposit sign-up form
- Call the Automated Deployment Database (ADD) and submit the following information to the representative:
 - a. The designated JFO arrival location
 - b. An authorized disaster code
 - c. Your business and personal telephone numbers
 - d. Your emergency contact (i.e. family member, friend, etc.)
- **Initiate the Transition Process** with the outgoing Project Specialist and PAC Crew Leader by:
 - a. Meeting with the outgoing Project Specialist and gaining an understanding of JFO responsibilities as they pertain to the PA mission.
 - b. Receiving the situational reporting status from the outgoing Project Specialist.
 - c. Asking questions and gaining an understanding of applicants, project worksheets, and the PA Program process from the incumbent PAC Crew Leader and outgoing Project Specialist.

B. Project Specialist: Checking- out of the JFO

Before departing the JFO for rotation or end of deployment, outgoing Project Specialists **MUST** check-out and complete the following administrative functions:

- a. Meet with the Resource Coordinator or Authorized Personnel
 - Present a copy of the **completed** transition checklist (see Appendix A)
 - Provide contact information should there be pending or remaining issues
- b. Return any equipment (i.e. laptops, telephones, GPS, cameras, etc.) and office supplies, including files and car keys.
- c. Submit the following administrative documents to the JFO HR Office
 - Signed time sheets
 - Travel Authorization form

- Travel voucher and the following receipts for:
 - Lodging
 - Car rental
 - Fuel for rental car
 - POV mileage
 - Airline, train, or bus tickets
 - M&IE allowance
 - Misc. expenses
 - National Travel fee

- Call the Automated Deployment Database (ADD) and submit the following information to the representative:
 - a. The designated JFO departure location
 - b. An authorized disaster code
 - c. The JFO person that released you or your positional duties

A. Transition Point: PAC Crew Leaders Responsibilities

The outgoing Project Specialist will inform the *PAC Crew Leader* of the need for transition. The need to transition can be a result of the Project Specialist completion of deployment, unplanned or extenuating circumstances, or poor performance. If the outgoing Project Specialist has a significant amount of work yet to be completed, the *PAC Crew Leader* will request a replacement for the Project Specialist through the JFO. If a replacement is required, the *PAC Crew Leader* will immediately coordinate a meeting with both incoming and outgoing Project Specialists and explain the transition plan and processes. All PAC Crew Leaders will utilize the Transition Checklist (see Appendix A) to document the transition process. The purpose of this checklist is to outline the transition plan to include performance measures, expectations, applicant information, and *formally* begin the transition. The PAC Crew Leader and incoming and outgoing Project Specialists will discuss the applicants' completed and not-completed work projects in terms of eligibility, project worksheet development, and required documentation. Specifically:

The *PAC Crew Leader* **MUST provide** the following information to the incoming Project Specialist during this initial meeting:

- a. An overview of the JFO operational procedures, situational awareness, and time sensitive issues and deadlines.
- b. Specific instructions and bulleted notes, if possible, necessary to perform daily applicant tasks and project worksheets.
- c. An update of scheduled meetings that include the applicants, state agencies, localities, contractors, and other various stakeholders. This should include the points of contact and telephone numbers
- d. Guidance necessary to assist with the development or formulation of projects and project worksheets.
- e. Information that specifies if there are special considerations (i.e. historical, environmental, insurance, floodplain and hazard mitigation) relating to a particular project.
- f. The names and contact information of Technical Specialist(s) and their involvement in the projects, such as inspections of:
 - Special considerations
 - Roads and bridges
 - Infrastructure – buildings, facilities, etc.
 - Debris removal and disposal
- g. Information regarding mitigation measures within the Hazard Mitigation Programs (HMP) 404 or 406 if they are proposed or implemented within a project.
- h. Information regarding any applicants that are approved for Immediate Needs Funding (INS) to expedite payments for debris removal and/or emergency protective measures.
- i. Information regarding any complex Public Assistance (PA) issues.
- j. Any additional guidance and instruction

The PAC Crew Leader **MUST review** the following information with incoming Project Specialist during this initial meeting:

- a. Applicant status, project worksheets, essential reports, and operational objectives.
- b. Procedures necessary to provide guidance or training to ensure only signed, cancelled checks, official invoices, and/or signed force account labor summary sheets are used to document actual costs.
- c. Projects and cost estimates in accordance with applicable disaster, State, and local laws, regulations, and policies such as the:
 - Stafford Act
 - 44 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR)
 - FEMA Policies

The PAC Crew Leader is the **POC** for all problematic issues, such as:

- a. Project eligibility
- b. Complicated projects
- c. Uncooperative applicants
- d. Difficulties with federal, state, or local stakeholders
- e. Time management of project worksheets
- f. Any issue that prevents the Project Specialist from performing the job task.

***The PAC Crew Leader is required to complete, to the greatest extent possible, the transition of both Project Specialists and the work assignments.**

B. Incoming Project Specialist Primary responsibilities:

The incoming Project Specialist should plan to arrive at the JFO at least five (5) days before the outgoing Project Specialist is scheduled to leave to shadow the PAC Crew Leader or the outgoing Project Specialist to learn the positional responsibilities. Primary responsibilities during this period include:

- a. Check-in at the JFO and complete required administrative functions
- b. Complete the transition process (i.e., outgoing Project Specialist to incoming Project Specialist) utilizing the Transition Checklist, sub-grantee Transition Worksheet, and the sub-grantee Document Control Form to ensure all transitional elements are addressed (see Appendices A, B, and C)
- c. Complete Transition Meeting with the PAC Crew Leader and outgoing Project Specialist by completing the Transition Checklist with signatures.

C. Incoming Project Specialist: Check-in Joint Field Office:

The incoming Project Specialist will contact the PAC Crew Leader upon arrival at the JFO. The PAC Crew Leader will introduce the incoming Project Specialist to the outgoing Project

Specialist. The outgoing Project Specialist and/or the PAC Crew Leader will introduce the incoming Project Specialist to the applicants.

The incoming Project Specialist should attend all kickoff meetings and/or briefings with either the outgoing Project Specialist or the PAC Crew Leader as part of the transition process.

D. Sub-grantee Project Reviews: Outgoing Project Specialist Responsibilities:

To ensure the transition provides accurate and current information to the incoming Project Specialist, there are two parts to the transition process that relate directly to project review. Part I addresses the appropriate transition of sub-grantee information (i.e., a discussion of project elements and verification of supporting documentation). Part II provides the incoming Project Specialist the opportunity to visit the site with the outgoing Project Specialist to discuss and view applicant status and confirm project elements and supporting documentation for permanent work projects.

The outgoing Project Specialist coordinates project review meetings with the applicants and the incoming Project Specialist. These meetings include the following:

Part I: Sub-grantee Transition

Sub-grantee Project Review Meeting Participants:

- FEMA PAC Crew Leader
- State PAC Crew Leader
- Outgoing Project Specialist
- Incoming Project Specialist
- Applicant Representative(s)

Sub-grantee Transition Meeting Agenda:

- Applicant recovery progress report by FEMA and State PAC Crew Leader
- Confirmation of projects in progress and to be completed
- Identification of pending action items
- Discussion of issues
- Confirmation of documentation requirements
 - Documentation provided
 - Documentation remaining to be provided

Sub-grantee Transition Meeting Documentation Verification:

It is critical that the incoming Project Specialist is **provided** and briefed on all current and pending documentation. There are two required folders (i.e., sub-grantee and PAC Crew Leader). The outgoing Project Specialist **MUST** ensure that all received and pending documentation are accounted for and that both the incoming Project

Specialist and PAC Crew Leader, as well as the applicant, are aware of any issues relating to documentation. The folders should include the following:

Sub-grantee Folder:

- Kick-Off meeting reference document
- Documentation Control Form(s)
- Reference Documents
- Forms

PAC Folder:

- Copy of RPA
- Log of Assigned Personnel
- Kick-Off meeting reference document
- Documentation Control Form(s)
- Reference Documents
- Forms
- Transition Checklists
- Kick off meeting Agenda
- Meeting sign-in sheet(s)
- Other relevant information
- Exit Briefing Form

Sub-grantee Transition Meeting Deliverables (*to be placed in both folders*):

- Completed Sub-grantee Transition Worksheet (see Appendix B)
- Completed Sub-grantee Documentation Control Form (see Appendix C)
- Meeting Report (Memo to PAC Crew Leader from outgoing Project Specialist)

Sub-grantee Follow up Actions:

- Scan Transition Checklist to Case Management File (CMF)
- Scan Sub-grantee Transition Worksheet to the CMF (see Appendix B)

The purpose of the Site Visit transition is to ensure the continuity of project development and customer service by providing the incoming Project Specialist the opportunity to visit the site with the outgoing Project Specialist to discuss and review applicant status, submitted and requested documentation, and eligibility issues. Transitional site visits are *required* when the

outgoing Project Specialist is in process of completing permanent work project worksheets and needs to transition the work to an incoming Project Specialist. If the meeting cannot occur with the outgoing Project Specialist and incoming Project Specialist, the PAC Crew Leader must conduct the visit with the incoming Project Specialist.

E. Transition Meeting with the PAC Crew Leader

The purpose of the Transition Meeting with the PAC Crew Leader is to **finalize the transition** of the incoming Project Specialist from the outgoing Project Specialist. The Transition Checklist will be completed at this meeting. All pertinent information including Sub-grantee Checklists, Sub-grantee Documentation Control Form, and outstanding issues will be presented at this meeting. This transition meeting will include the following:

Participants:

- FEMA PAC
- State PAC
- Outgoing Project Specialist
- Incoming Project Specialist

Agenda:

- Overview of Applicant Status
- Project Worksheet status
 - Documentation requirements
 - Requested information
 - Pending Actions
 - Projected completion dates
 - Requirements for technical experts
- Issues resolved or identified with plan for resolution
- Reporting requirements

Deliverables:

- Transition Checklist Finalized
- Sub-grantee Transition Worksheets verified and confirmed
- Documentation Control Forms verified and confirmed
 - Pending Documentation Requests
 - Documentation Submitted

F. Outgoing Project Specialist Checking- out of the JFO

Project Specialist(s) must meet with the PAC and review the following:

Participants:

- PAC Crew Leader
- Outgoing Project Specialist

Agenda:

- Completed projects reviewed and discussed with PAC Crew Leader
- Follow-up issues resolved or identified with plan for resolution

Deliverables:

- Performance Appraisal
- Credentialing Information

Project Specialist(s) must complete the following items:

- a. Ensure projects that have begun are approximately 90% complete prior to demobilization to include the obligation process.
- b. Ensure the Assessment Record is completed, signed, and submitted to the PAC Crew Leader.
- c. Ensure the JFO evaluation is completed and submitted to the PAC Crew Leader.

