

# Public Assistance Assessment – Recommendations and Implementation Summary

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Effective January 17, 2023, the “PA Assessment” findings and recommendations are now available ([link](#)).

## PA Assessment Recommendations and Implementation Summary

The purpose of the assessment was to determine if the PA National Delivery Model and the establishment of the Consolidated Resource Centers were meeting the original design intent (2017) to standardize PA program delivery, and increase accuracy, efficiency, and simplicity, as well as improve timeliness and accessibility, for processing grants for States, Locals, Territories, and Tribal Nations. A contract to conduct the assessment was secured in early 2022. A PA Taskforce was established to support the assessment by ensuring data from 2018 to July 2022 was readily available to the contractor in addition to supporting the collection of extensive internal and external stakeholder feedback from April to July 2022 for analysis.

The foundation of recommended changes results from extensive stakeholder feedback including contacting all 50 states, five territories, and nine tribes, conducting 1,009 interviews, and surveying 1,272 respondents at all levels within the PA Program. The independent report will aid in the agency’s commitment to simplifying and streamlining program requirements, reducing the burden on stakeholders/applicants, and expanding access to Public Assistance grant funding.

### PA Assessment Key Findings

- The PA National Delivery Model has increased transparency and accuracy in the execution of the PA Program.
- The obligation of over \$50 billion in almost three years in response to COVID-19 compared to an average of \$5-8 billion per year outside of COVID-19 events may not be possible without the PA National Delivery Model.

### PA Assessment Recommendations

- Build more flexibility into the delivery of the PA Program through re-evaluating existing Consolidated Resource Center operating procedures and increase FEMA staff deployments to partner with stakeholders.
- Institute an approach for the PA Program to identify and elevate risk discrepancies for resolution and adjust the current policy development and publication process to reduce confusion for internal and external stakeholders.



- Apply a unified risk-based approach to delivering the PA Program to streamline program requirements and promote consistency.
- Increase training opportunities, including a focus on building targeted skills sets for those that execute the PA Program to enhance customer service.
- Consistently engage FEMA Regions, applicants, and recipients when updating PA Program policy or processes to support effective change management.

FEMA's efforts to address recommendations from the PA Assessment will be ongoing throughout 2023 and beyond, and are well underway, including:

### **Program Delivery Modifications**

- Institute PA Navigator Teams to provide in-person technical assistance to applicants and recipients at critical junctures in project development. Recently in Puerto Rico, for example, a team consisting of Region II, Consolidated Resource Center, Joint Recovery Office, Mitigation and Environmental and Historic Preservation subject matter experts convened to expedite environmental reviews of energy projects. Work will continue this year to formalize a concept of operations.
- Continue to deploy Consolidated Resource Center staff to improve customer service and maintain momentum for project progression. Bridge, beach, and water subject matter experts were deployed to various states to provide timely, in-person input during project development.
- Re-evaluate Consolidated Resource Center project lanes.

### **Consistency and Risk Tolerance Approaches**

- Utilize the Consolidated Resource Centers (CRCs) as “Centers of Excellence” to identify issues, hold stakeholder forums to address pre-identified challenges, and elevate risk discrepancies for resolution.
- Establish a routine schedule, for example, twice a year, for the publication of PA Program policy to promote transparency and consistency.
- Update the PA Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG) with a focus on the use of plain language and clarify information to ensure communities can access all funding they're eligible to receive. The next version of the PAPPG will be open for public comment in early Spring 2023 and publication is targeted for before the end of the calendar year.
- Better position field and Consolidated Resource Center staff to perform critical thinking and apply risk management in day-to-day work.

### **Enhance PA Program Leadership and Employee Development**

- FEMA is institutionalizing the 3-week PA Leadership Academy by hosting two in 2023 versus one in 2022. Planning is underway to increase the number of future Academies to four per year as well as making content available to State, Local, Territorial, and Tribal (SLTT) stakeholders.
- Provide training that enhances the knowledge base and skill set for Program Delivery Managers to better serve recipients and sub-recipients.
- Position Consolidated Resource Center staff to support applicants striving to be resilient.



## Communication and Change Management

- Issue memorandums to outline activities that had an immediate impact on end users, including but not limited to; instituting sampling to minimize the burden on SLTTs; clarifying project determinations and communication; removing the 90-day documentation deadline for completed projects; waiving the requirement for small projects to be prepared based on actual costs; extending the deadlines for closeout; and streamlining administrative categorization of power-restoration work.
- Re-establish the PA Steering Committee comprised of internal and external stakeholders to provide a regular forum to discuss mutual areas of interest and ensure feedback contributes to continuous improvement. Two meetings were held in 2022 and the new year will begin with the first meeting of 2023 in January.
- Develop and socialize a PA Program Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles to provide a nationwide, mutual understanding of how and why FEMA implements the program. Internal and external stakeholders have provided feedback on draft versions and the Agency plans to publish this updated information in early 2023.

If you have any questions, please contact FEMA Office of External Affairs:

- Congressional Affairs at (202) 646-4500 or at [FEMA-Congressional-Affairs@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-Congressional-Affairs@fema.dhs.gov).
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