

FEMA Updates the Tribal Declarations Guidance to Strengthen Tribal Communities



In consultation with Tribal Nations, FEMA has released the 2024 Tribal Declarations Interim Guidance.

Based on Tribal Nation requests and feedback, FEMA has updated the 2017 Tribal Declarations Pilot Guidance. The 2024 Tribal Declarations Interim Guidance updates will help Tribal Nations better navigate pathways to receive a Presidential disaster declaration and obtain assistance for tribal community members when they need it most. Changes go into effect for disasters declared on or after Dec. 3, 2024.



Key Improvements included in the Tribal Declarations Interim Guidance:

Embracing Flexibility

- **Cost Share Adjustment:** FEMA will recommend a **98%** cost share adjustment for the Public Assistance Program when the Public Assistance actual federal obligations reaches **\$200,000**. This cost share adjustment will provide more certainty around the non-federal cost share to Tribal Nations.
- **Helping Tribal Nations Build Back Stronger:** FEMA will provide a **98%** cost share adjustment for Public Assistance projects when a Tribal Nation recipient completes an eligible Hazard Mitigation Proposal where the total cost is equal to or greater than **20%** of the eligible cost of that project.
- **Holistic Assistance:** FEMA recommends a streamlined approach for approving Individual Assistance for Tribal Nations. This approach is activated when the President approves Public Assistance, the Tribal Nation requests Individual Assistance, and it is evident that tribally-and individually-owned homes have sustained major damage or have been destroyed.
- **Streamlining Information:** By clarifying procedures and consolidating essential data, the guidance supports Tribal Nations navigating the complex landscape of disaster response and recovery, ensuring they can more effectively manage and apply for necessary assistance.

Increasing Accessibility

- **Decreasing Minimum Damage Amount:** FEMA introduces simplified standards for Tribal Nations seeking Stafford Act assistance, notably by reducing the Public Assistance minimum damage amount from **\$250,000 to \$100,000**. This change makes it more accessible for Tribal Nations to qualify for assistance, thereby reducing federal programmatic hurdles and expediting the disaster recovery process.
- **Extending Deadlines to Meet Tribal Nation Needs:** Updates in the guidance actively broaden access to FEMA programs for Tribal Nations, with policy adjustments such as extending deadlines for major disaster declaration requests from **30 to 60 days** and the Hazard Mitigation Plan from **30 to 90 days**.
- **Defining Tribal Community Members:** FEMA defers to Tribal Nations to define who is a tribal community member during an Individual Assistance disaster declaration to make sure their full community is served. This respects the sovereignty of Tribal Nations, giving Tribal Nations the authority to determine who is included in their community and may be eligible for assistance.