

# President Donald J. Trump Directs FEMA Support Under Emergency Declaration for COVID-19

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The federal government continues to take aggressive and proactive steps to address the COVID-19 threat as the health and safety of the American people remain a top priority.

Today, President Trump declared a nationwide emergency pursuant to Sec. 501(b) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5121-5207 (the “Stafford Act”). This increases federal support to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in its role as the lead federal agency for the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic response. As a result of the President’s decisive, unprecedented action, FEMA is directed to assist state, local, tribal, territorial governments and other eligible entities with the health and safety actions they take on behalf of the American public. Today’s declaration does not make direct financial assistance available to individuals.

The emergency declaration does not change measures authorized under other federal statutes and HHS remains the lead federal agency directing the federal response to COVID-19. FEMA actions will be in support of HHS and in coordination with state, tribal and territorial governments. Eligible emergency protective measures taken at the direction or guidance of public health officials in response to this emergency, and not supported by the authorities of another federal agency, will be reimbursed strictly under the FEMA Public Assistance program. FEMA assistance will be provided at a 75 percent Federal cost share. Reimbursable activities typically include emergency protective measures such as the activation of State Emergency Operations Centers, National Guard costs, law enforcement and other measures necessary to protect public health and safety.

# COVID-19 Emergency Declaration

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**Emergency Rental Assistance to Ohio Low Income Residents impacted by Covid19**

for all states, tribes, territories, and the District of Columbia pursuant to section 501 (b) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5121-5207 (the “Stafford Act”). State, Territorial, Tribal, local government entities and certain private non-profit (PNP) organizations are eligible to apply for Public Assistance.

In accordance with section 502 of the Stafford Act, eligible emergency protective measures taken to respond to the COVID-19 emergency at the direction or guidance of public health officials’ may be reimbursed under Category B of the agency’s Public Assistance program. FEMA will not duplicate assistance provided by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or other federal agencies. This includes necessary emergency protective measures for activities taken in response to the COVID-19 incident. FEMA assistance will be provided at the 75 percent Federal cost share

This declaration increases federal support to HHS in its role as the lead federal agency for the federal government’s response to COVID-19. The emergency declaration does not impact measures authorized under other Federal statutes.

FEMA assistance will require execution of a FEMA-State/Tribal/Territory Agreement, as appropriate, and execution of an applicable emergency plan. States, Tribal and Territorial governments do not need to request separate emergency declarations to receive FEMA assistance under this nationwide declaration.

FEMA encourages officials to take appropriate actions that are necessary to protect public health and safety pursuant to public health guidance.

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## **Emergency Rental Assistance to Ohio Low Income Residents impacted by Covid19**

### **Options for distribution of Funds made available through section 502 of the Stafford Act, eligible under Category B of the agency's Public Assistance program**

From FEMA web site :“Emergency Protective Measures (Category B) FEMA can also help pay for Rescue, evacuation, transportation, care, *shelter, and essential needs for humans affected by the outbreak and spread of an influenza pandemic* “ (Italics added for emphasis) FEMA assistance will be provided at the 75 percent Federal cost share

### **Rationale**

Maintaining stable and sustainable housing during the Covid19 pandemic is an essential element of addressing “care, shelter and essential needs” as contemplated by Category B of the FEMA handbook.

Low income Ohioans are especially susceptible to economic disruptions stemming from Covid 19. Even if evictions are temporarily suspended the hardship of not having funds to pay rent will continue after the moratorium is lifted. Also the financial burden on owners of affordable housing will be significant if tenants cannot pay rent when due.

### **Rental Assistance to owners of affordable rental housing.**

- HUD and OHFA have databases that list every “Subsidized Affordable Housing Property” (SAHP) in Ohio. SAHP is defined as housing supported by federal state or local subsidies: LIHTC, Section 8, HUD funds etc.
- Properties include: Family Properties, Senior Properties and Permanent Supportive Housing (homeless).
- Rental Assistance will be paid to non profit and for profit SAHP owners to reimburse for residents that are unable to pay rent or share of subsidized rent if resident is unemployed due to illness or quarantine or hospitalized or otherwise cannot pay rent directly or indirectly related to Covid19
- Rental Assistance support will continue for 90 days unless extended by the Governor
- Funds will be administered by the Ohio Housing Finance Agency or other appropriate state agency

### **Rental Assistance to residents that do not live in SAHP**

- Low Income residents (to be defined) can obtain funds to pay rent if resident is unemployed due to illness or quarantine or hospitalized or otherwise cannot pay rent directly or indirectly related to Covid19.
- Payments will also be available to tenants that reside in SAHP properties but the owner of the property do not participate in the program
- Payments will be made directly to lessor/landlord
- Funds will be administered by OHFA or Jobs and Family Services



