



FEMA

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Intergovernmental Affairs Division
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Intergovernmental Affairs Advisory

February 26, 2015

Numerous Impacts Likely for State, Local, and Tribal Governments Resulting from a Lapse in Appropriations

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) remains hopeful Congress will act this week to avoid a lapse in Department of Homeland Security (DHS) appropriations. However, without an annual appropriation, impacted FEMA staff will only be able to provide services that apply to the safety of human life or the protection of property.

To prepare for this possibility, we are working to update our contingency plans for executing an orderly shutdown of activities that would be affected by a lapse in appropriations. During a lapse in appropriations, the impacts to our stakeholders will be as follows:

DISASTER ASSISTANCE

FEMA will acknowledge, but cannot process, requests from governors or tribal leaders for a presidential declaration for a major disaster or emergency, unless the request is determined necessary for the protection of life and property, such as Direct Federal Assistance and Individual Assistance.

There will be no Preliminary Damage Assessments to assist state or local governments determine if federal support is needed for Public Assistance projects, including those for permanent disaster recovery work.

The assistance provided to communities through the Public Assistance program will cease. The FEMA staff that approves Public Assistance project worksheets or obligates payments will be furloughed.

FEMA's Individual Assistance program would continue to provide financial services and resources to support individuals and households that have been deemed eligible for assistance.

Some disaster assistance for individuals, such as case management and crisis counseling, are funded by FEMA grants to states, tribes and local governments. If a state or municipality already received approved funds for these programs, the assistance can continue uninterrupted. However, new programs or changes to existing programs that require a review or approval from a furloughed employee will not be possible.

GRANTS

All FEMA Grant Programs Directorate (GPD) Federal staff will be furloughed.

Fiscal Year 2015 Preparedness Grant funds yet to be appropriated must be awarded prior to Sept. 30, 2015. A lapse in appropriations reduces the amount of time FEMA has available to complete all the required actions associated with awarding these funds.

The following required steps or actions needed for FEMA to award most FY2015 Preparedness Grants will be impacted or halted:

- Completion of Funding Opportunity Announcements
- Departmental review and clearance process
- Required Secretarial decisional briefings
- Congressional briefings
- Allocation announcements
- Opening of application period
- Grantee application submissions
- Final allocation determinations (competitive programs)
- Award processing

Grantees will have no access to FEMA staff for technical assistance or answers to grant questions. There will be no support for grantees to process grant amendments, apply for extensions, conduct budget and Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) reviews, or seek additional grant-related assistance.

There will be no headquarters or regional program staff available to provide assistance with new reporting requirements recently announced in the FY14 preparedness grant awards. There will be no staff available to resolve rejected payment requests, problems related to holds, missing reports, or to reset passwords.

Most grantees may continue to draw down awarded grant funds managed in the FEMA Response, Recovery, Mitigation, National Preparedness and GPD divisions (but not the Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response (SAFER), Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG), or Fire Prevention & Safety grants).

Because AFG program office staff must manually approve all payment requests, SAFER, AFG and Fire Prevention and Safety program grantees will not be able to draw down funds during a lapse in appropriations.

Processing of incoming applications for FY14 Assistance to Firefighters Grants and SAFER awards, impacting thousands of fire departments around the country, will be delayed.

Manual (paper) requests for other grant reimbursements will also not be processed during the shutdown as there will be no one available to process them. Some jurisdictions, such as the U.S. Virgin Islands and American Samoa, are currently under a manual draw down process for their preparedness grants, which will halt during a lapse in appropriations.

In general, ongoing grant-funded projects for which funding has been awarded, obligated, and released by FEMA will not be affected by a lapse in FY 2015 appropriations. If no other hold has been placed, work on these projects can proceed unimpeded by the lack of FY 2015 appropriations.

TRAINING

FEMA's Emergency Management Institute will be unable to deliver the more than 40 resident (on-site), field based, and virtual training programs provided on average each week.

The Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, Alabama, which trains first responders from across the nation in uniquely specialized skills, will be unable to deliver trainings. The facility hosts more than 4,000 students each month including training programs for other Federal agencies, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Disaster Medical Assistance Teams, and the Department of Veterans Health Affairs.

FEMA training courses for first responders and the emergency management community are consistently filled to capacity. Any resident courses cancelled due to a lapse in Appropriations may not be rescheduled because training facility classrooms are already booked for future classes.

EXERCISES

FEMA also supports the design and delivery of exercises that test the Nation's readiness for disasters, radiological emergencies, and other incidents. A lapse in FY 2015 appropriations will result in cancellation or delay of approximately a dozen exercises, impacting more than 5,000 federal, state, local, and regional emergency managers and community partners.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact FEMA's Intergovernmental Affairs Division at (202) 646-3444 or at FEMA-IGA@fema.dhs.gov.

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

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