

# PUBLICATION

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## FEMA: Extension of Full Federal Funding for Pandemic Costs; Expansion Coming for "Safe Opening and Operation" Policy

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**On August 17, President Biden ordered FEMA to maximize its support for state, local, tribal, and territorial governments' COVID-19 response and recovery. The president authorized FEMA to continue funding otherwise eligible COVID-19-related costs at 100 percent federal cost share through December 31, 2021. The directive will also allow states to receive 100 percent federal reimbursement for costs associated with the "safe opening and operation" of public facilities dating back to January 20, 2020.**

FEMA released an [advisory update](#) on August 17 confirming implementation of President Biden's directive. The expanded support is specifically for COVID-19 emergency and major disaster declarations through FEMA's Public Assistance program. President Biden had approved 100 percent federal funding earlier this year for otherwise eligible costs incurred through September 30, 2021. The directive issued on August 17 will allow FEMA funding at 100 percent federal cost share for otherwise eligible costs incurred through December 31, 2021, providing critical support for state, local, tribal, and territorial governments as well as eligible private non-profits that are working feverishly to address what is now predicted to be the largest surge in cases since the pandemic began.

President Biden also directs FEMA to expand funding to eligible entities to support the "safe opening and operation" of public facilities, including coverage of costs that date as far back as the beginning of the pandemic, or January 20, 2020. FEMA initially advised that it would issue an updated policy to implement this directive and on September 8th released "[Safe Opening and Operation Work Eligible for Public Assistance](#)" Version 2, confirming FEMA's commitment to provide much needed funding for costs, including:

- Purchase and distribution of face masks, including cloth face coverings, and personal protective equipment (PPE);
- Cleaning and disinfection, in accordance with CDC guidance or that of an appropriate public health official available at the time the work was completed, including the purchase and provision of necessary supplies and equipment in excess of the applicant's regularly budgeted costs;
- COVID-19 diagnostic testing;
- Screening and temperature scanning, including, but not limited to, the purchase and distribution of hand-held temperature measuring devices or temperature screening equipment;
- Acquisition and installation of temporary physical barriers, such as plexiglass barriers and screens/dividers, and signage to support social distancing, such as floor decals; and
- Purchase and storage of PPE and other supplies listed in this section based on projected needs.

Eligible entities should stay tuned for further developments. For more information about FEMA's Public Assistance program and other resources potentially available to assist with response efforts to the COVID-19 pandemic, please contact [Wendy Huff Ellard](#) or any member of [Baker Donelson's Disaster Recovery and Government Services Team](#).