

Request For Information

Public Assistance FEMA Job Aid



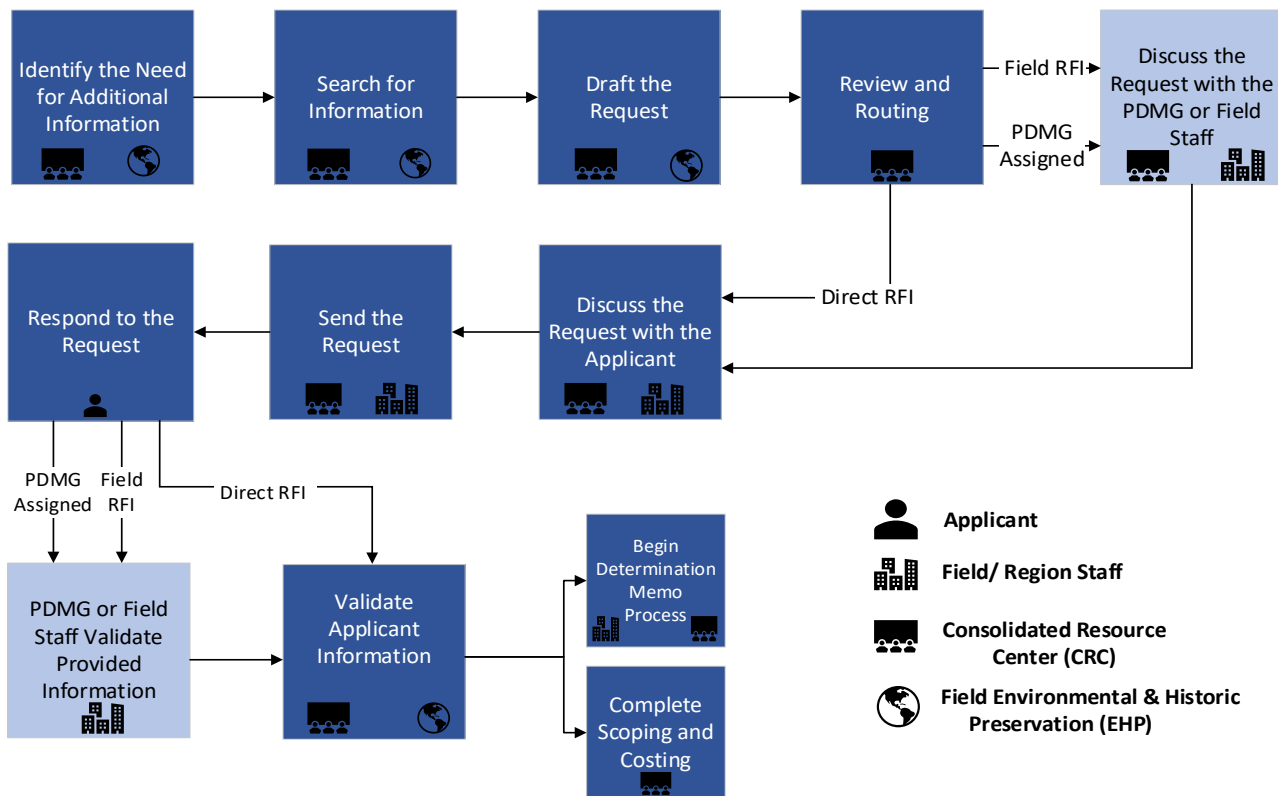
FEMA

FEMA generates requests for information (RFIs) when a project does not contain all the necessary information to confirm eligibility, develop a scope of work and cost estimate, and determine applicable project conditions. This Job Aid describes how FEMA will request additional information from Applicants.

In general, an RFI is initiated when staff at a Consolidated Resource Center (CRC) or a field Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) Specialist requires more information to finish developing or reviewing a project. The requests are discussed with and sent to Applicants based on the impact and capacity of the Applicant:

- If the Applicant is high-impact or low-capacity as defined in [COVID-19 IBD and PAGES Position Assist Addendum, Appendix C: PDMG Staffing Considerations](#), they should have been assigned a Program Delivery Manager (PDMG). The RFI will route to the PDMG for discussion with the Applicant.
- If a PDMG is not assigned, the Infrastructure Branch Director (IBD) will determine whether RFIs are routed through field for discussion with the Applicant or directly discussed between the Applicant and the CRC.

Once an Applicant responds to the RFI, either the project proceeds with the new information or begins a determination memo process to notify the Applicant of ineligibility.



The *Job Aid* series is a set of documents that explains roles and responsibilities in key steps in FEMA's Public Assistance Program delivery process. Read more about Public Assistance Program delivery in the [Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide](#), and other resources available on [Grants Portal](#).



Version History

Version	Date	Description of Changes
2.0	12/11/2019	Updated to reflect changes in Delivery Model
3.0	5/15/2020	Updated to reflect routing options and CRC interactions with Applicants for direct application including eliminated the 48-hour Draft RFI
<i>Note: Use 1.0 for major changes (to document format, process or content) and 1.1 for minor document edits.</i>		

Pre-Requisite: Define Routing for Direct Application

When an event is authorized for direct application (the process through which an Applicant may proceed with project development on their own and not wait to be assigned a PDMG), the IBD must decide how RFIs will be handled when a PDMG is not assigned. Either:

- **Field RFI:** CRCs route RFIs to the PAGS who review, discuss the RFI with the Applicant, ensure it is responded to and send the RFI back to the CRC; or
- **Direct RFI:** CRCs route RFIs directly to the Applicant for discussion and response.

IBDs should consider the following when selecting the RFI routing option:

- Field office capacity to manage and coordinate response to RFIs
- Volume of Applicants who might submit applications needing additional information
- Relationship considerations including whether the Recipient prefers to see RFIs *prior* to FEMA sending them to Applicants (Recipients are always *notified* of the RFI)

IBDs or PAGS must document this decision the Event Settings portion of Grants Manager

Step 1: Identify the Need for Additional Information

As the CRC Specialists develop and review the project the project, they will identify and keep a running list of issues that prevent the application from moving forward. These issues require additional explanation or documentation from the Applicant. Issues may include:

- lack of documentation to support eligibility for a facility, work, or cost,
- missing details to complete the scope of work or cost estimate, or
- information required to complete compliance reviews and define grant conditions.

Examples of missing information:

- The Applicant submits a project application asking for \$150,000 reimbursement for the completed purchase of Personal Protective Equipment but does not include relevant invoices and receipts needed to validate the cost. An RFI should request the missing invoices or receipts.
- The Applicant is claiming force account labor but fails to provide all the timesheets needed to validate a sample of their claim. An RFI should request the missing timesheets.
- The Applicant submits a project application asking for \$25,000,000 reimbursement for purchasing laptops but does not explain the necessity and use of the laptops. An RFI should request what the underlying work was that the purchase supported, how the work is directly related to the declaration, how the applicant is legally responsible for the work, and how the work addressed an incident-caused threat.



Step 2: Search for Information

CRC Specialists review the application and search all locations within Grants Manager including in the Applicant-level documents for missing information or documentation before proceeding with requesting information or documentation. The Specialist should review:

- Project Application, see Appendix B for a list and description of sections
- Project Application supporting documentation. **The specialist should take extreme caution to review all documentation and ensure information is not contained there before proceeding.**
- Applicant profile document section
- Sections within the project:
 - Documents
 - Request for Information
 - Insurance Profile
 - EHP Profile
 - Subgrant Conditions

If the information needed is not found, proceed to Step 3: Draft the Request.

When Field EHP Specialists cannot identify the information needed from the prior review, they should follow the guidance in [EHP – PA Joint RFI and Rework Memo 3-30-20](#).

Step 3: Draft the Request

The CRC Specialist drafts an RFI explicitly describing the information or documentation missing from the project application. The RFI must directly reference the specific section of the project application that the information or document is related to and the reason FEMA needs the information to continue processing the application.

If the project was reworked from EHP review, the Field EHP RFI lead will coordinate with the CRC Lane Manager to ensure the needed information is correctly communicated to the Field or the Applicant.

Step 4: Review, Discuss, and Route

CRC Specialists routes the RFI to their assigned CRC Lane Manager. The CRC Lane Manager will review the RFI ensuring that it:

- clearly asks for necessary information; and
- is based on valid issue that prevents the application from moving forward.

The CRC Lane Manager will make necessary adjustments and cancel the RFI if it is not based on valid missing information.

The CRC Lane Manager will route the RFI for discussion with the Applicant:

- For Field RFIs or when a PDMG is assigned, the CRC Lane Manager (or designee) calls the PDMG or PAGS to explain the RFI. The PDMG or PAGS then calls the Applicant to discuss.
- For Direct RFIs, the CRC Lane Manager (or designee) calls the Applicant to discuss the RFI.

Phone calls or meetings discussing RFIs should be conducted as follows:



- If the Applicant is unavailable, the requestor leaves a voicemail message explaining the RFI and providing contact information for the Applicant to discuss. Then proceed to step 5.
- If the Applicant is available, the requestor will discuss the RFI with them and:
 - If the Applicant provides necessary information, update the project in Grants Manager and close the RFI.
 - If the Applicant understands the information needed but cannot quickly respond, proceed to step 5.
- When the CRC calls the Applicant directly, and the conversation indicates that the Applicant may have challenges understanding the information needed and a PDMG is not assigned, proceed to step 5 and the requestor's CRC Deputy Director or EHP Advisor (EHAD) should be contacted to discuss with the IBD a potential need for a PDMG to be assigned.

Step 5: Send the Request

The request is reviewed and submitted to the Applicant in Grants Manager by the PDMG if assigned or by the PAGs for Field RFIs. CRC Lane Manager sends the RFI via Grants Manager to the Applicant for Direct RFIs. Applicants are provided 15 calendar days to respond (unless a longer timeframe is warranted and defined in the request based on the type or amount of information required).

Step 6: Respond to the Request

The Applicant receives notification of and responds to the RFI in Grants Portal. If the Applicant needs to further discuss the RFI they may reach out to the individual that sent the RFI.

Step 7: Validate Provided Information

Once completed by the Applicant, the RFI response will be sent to the requestor that submitted the RFI in Step 6. The requestor reviews the response to the RFI within one business day of receiving the response, verifying that the documentation or explanations provided satisfy the RFI.

- If the Applicant has provided the required information, the requestor routes the project application to the next step in the project application review process.
- If the Applicant does not provide all requested information by the date identified in the RFI, the requestor will begin the determination memo process.

Begin Determination Memo Process

If the Applicant does not respond to the RFI within the deadline stated in the request or the information is not enough to resolve the issue, the requestor will initiate the determination memo process. draft an eligibility determination based on the information available and route the determination to the IBD for signature.



Appendix A: Sample Request for Information Notification

Subject: FEMA PA Notification – REQUEST FOR INFORMATION - Project [55555] - [Applicant] (55-5555-55) (Disaster - [5555DR])

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reviewed the application for [Applicant], including all supporting documentation. Upon review of the information provided, FEMA requires the following additional information to complete the review:

- [RFI Type] requested for:** FEMA Project [#], [Applicant Project Title]
Application Schedule Needing Additional Information: [Schedule]
Request Details: [Plain language write-up detailing the information needed, reason it is needed, and why—without that information—FEMA cannot proceed.]
Request Classification: [Determination Memo Categorization]
- [RFI Type] requested for:** FEMA Project [#], [Applicant Project Title]
Application Schedule Needing Additional Information: [Schedule]
Request Details: [Plain language write-up detailing the information needed, reason it is needed, and why—without that information—FEMA cannot proceed.]
Request Classification: [Determination Memo Categorization]
- [[RFI Type] requested for:** FEMA Project [#], [Applicant Project Title]
Application Schedule Needing Additional Information: [Schedule]
Request Details: [Plain language write-up detailing the information needed, reason it is needed, and why—without that information—FEMA cannot proceed.]
Request Classification: [Determination Memo Categorization]

You may review additional details for this Request for Information [RFI-PRJ-55555] in Grants Portal. Please respond to the request by logging into your Grants Portal account and provide the missing information or documentation within [15] calendar days of receipt of this request. If FEMA does not receive a response to this request within this timeframe, FEMA will issue a written eligibility determination based on the information and documentation.

If you have questions regarding this request, contact [Sender Name] at [Phone number] and [email].

RFI Line Item Examples

Informative RFI Line Item

Information requests should be specific. For Streamlined project applications the RFI should be specific to which Schedule the missing information is applicable.

- [CRC] requested for:** FEMA Project [#123], [Placeville Capacity Preparation for COVID-19]
Application Schedule Needing Additional Information: [Schedule B Completed Work Estimate]
Request Details: Purchased equipment



In Part 1 Project Cost & Cost Eligibility, the total cost of equipment claimed on the project application was \$800,000. In FEMA Form 009-0-127 Force Account Equipment Summary costs for 12 particle respirators were claimed for 2,016 hours of use at a total of \$292,320. No other equipment costs were provided. Please submit equipment information to support the additional \$507,680 claimed using FEMA Form 009-0-127 or FEMA Form 009-0-125. For additional equipment claimed please upload invoices and receipts if purchased or rental agreements, invoices, and receipts if rented. Please also provide a rental vs. purchase comparison.

FEMA provides funding for the use of Applicant-owned equipment based on hourly rates. If an Applicant does not have sufficient equipment to effectively respond to an incident, FEMA may provide funding for purchased or leased equipment. Costs are eligible if the Applicant performed an analysis of the cost of leasing versus purchasing the equipment. FEMA funds the least costly option. See PAPPG at pp.26-28

Request Classification: [Determination Memo Categorization]

Uninformative RFI Line Item

Information requests should not be general to the point of being unactionable for someone with limited Public Assistance experience.

1. **[CRC] requested for:** FEMA Project [#123], [Placeville Capacity Preparation for COVID-19]
Application Schedule Needing Additional Information: [Schedule B Completed Work Estimate
Request Details: Purchased equipment

The total cost of equipment claimed on the project application was \$800,000. In FEMA Form 009-0-127 Force Account Equipment Summary costs for 12 particle respirators were claimed for 2,016 hours of use at a total of \$292,320. Please submit documentation for additional claims.

Request Classification: [Determination Memo Categorization]



Appendix B: COVID-19 Project Application Outline

Application Sections

Section I – Application Information

Section II – Scope of Work: Activities reported here trigger the need to answer some additional eligibility/scope questions and EHP schedule)

Section III – Cost and Work Status Information: Here, the Applicant is instructed to complete one schedule for cost (depending on work status and cost) as well as for additional scope/eligibility questions for large applications

Section IV – Application Certifications: Applicant signs and certifies for whole application (including no duplication of benefits

Additional sections (only as applicable):

SCHEDULE A – Expedited Funding Estimate

SCHEDULE B – Completed Work Estimate

SCHEDULE C – In progress Work Estimate

SCHEDULE D – Large Application Eligibility Questions

1. General Eligibility (this section must be answered for all large applications)
2. Purchase of supplies or equipment
3. Purchase of land or buildings
4. Purchase and distribution of food, water, ice, or other commodities
5. Purchase of Meals for Emergency Workers
6. Prepositioning or movement of supplies, equipment, or other resources
7. Emergency Medical Care
8. Sheltering
9. Establishment of temporary facilities

SCHEDULE EZ – Small Application Estimate (2 pages)

SCHEDULE F – EHP Questions (only for certain activities reported in Section II) (5 pages)

1. Staging resources at an undeveloped site
2. Storage of human remains or mass mortuary services
3. Medical waste disposal
4. Decontamination systems
5. Establishment of temporary facilities (pages 29-32)

Schedules Required

Cost	Funding Request Type	Work Status	Cost Basis	Schedules Required					
				A	B	C	D	EZ	F*
Less than \$131,100	Small	Any	Any					X	X
Equal to or greater than \$131,100	Large Expedited	Any	Applicant-Provided Information	X					X
	Large Regular	Complete	Actual Costs		X		X		X
		In-progress	Actual Costs & Applicant-Provided Information			X	X		X
		Not started	Applicant-Provided Information			X	X		X

*May be required based on specific activities.