

Accessible Public Service Announcements Category B: Emergency Protective Measures

On Friday, March 13, 2020 President Trump declared a nationwide emergency pursuant to *Sec. 501(b) of the Stafford Act*¹. Pursuant to this declaration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, in coordination with the Department of Health and Human Services, is assisting state, local, tribal and territorial governments, and other eligible entities, with the health and safety actions they take on behalf of the American public. All 50 states, the District of Columbia, five territories and one tribe are working directly with FEMA under the Nationwide Emergency Declaration for COVID-19.

Under the national emergency, state, local, tribal, and territorial government entities and certain private non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for assistance for eligible activities as indicated in the [Fact Sheet: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Pandemic: Eligible Emergency Protective Measures](#). These include critical actions to save lives and protect public health and safety². The Fact Sheet clarifies FEMA's policy as articulated in Chapter 2 of the Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG)³.

The COVID-19 pandemic affects the entire nation, and access to communication is critical for all individuals, including persons with disabilities with rights to accessible communication. Under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all state, local, tribal and territorial governments are required to take steps to ensure that their communications with people with disabilities are as effective as communications with others.⁴

ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION THROUGH CATEGORY B EMERGENCY PROTECTIVE MEASURES

Under Category B of FEMA's Public Assistance Program, state, local, tribal, and territorial entities can request assistance for providing communications of general health and safety information to the public. Expenses associated with making those communications accessible and effective for the whole community, including people with disabilities, people with limited English proficiency, and others with access and functional needs, may also be eligible for assistance as Category B emergency protective measures.

Dissemination of information to the public to provide warnings and guidance about health and safety hazards using various strategies, such as flyers, public service announcements, or newspaper campaigns are listed as eligible costs under [Emergency Protective Measures \(Category B\)](#)⁵. Costs associated with providing effective

¹Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, *Procedure for Declaration* (§42 U.S.C. 5191)

² Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide FP 104-009-2 / April 2018, Page 57

³ Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide FP 104-009-2 / April 2018, Page 9

⁴ Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 28 C.F.R. [§35.160(b)(1)]

⁵ Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide FP 104-009-2 / April 2018, Page 58



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communication⁶ through the provision of auxiliary aids or services such as qualified sign language interpreters, Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART), Braille, or large print materials can be eligible costs for reimbursement if the costs are directly tied to the performance of eligible work and adequately documented⁷.

For more information, visit the following websites:

1. [Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide](#)
2. [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Response \(FEMA\)](#)
3. [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) (CDC)

⁶ Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 28 C.F.R. [§35.160(b)(1)]

⁷ Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide FP 104-009-2 / April 2018, Page 21