

## Financial Matters (Continued)

We have been fielding questions lately about the many financial resources that are here, or are coming, to help with COVID expenses. Below is a brief description of each program and how you can find more information on each.

- FEMA: Since this incident has become a federally declared disaster under the [Stafford Act](#), municipalities and non-profit organizations are eligible for 75% reimbursement of expenses they incurred related to COVID response. [Eligible costs](#) include such items as:
  - emergency operation center costs
  - disinfection of eligible public facilities
  - emergency medical care, transport, and medical waste disposal
  - medical sheltering
  - purchase and distribution of food, water, ice, medicine, and other consumable supplies, including PPE
  - security and law enforcement
  - risk communications
  - staff overtime and contractors

When it comes to personnel expenses, FEMA reimbursement can only be used to pay for the hours a staff member goes above and beyond their normal job. For example, if you have a public health nurse who normally works 40 hours/week, but they worked 60 hours/week to respond to the pandemic, you may claim that extra 20 hours/week. If they normally work 20 hours/week, but worked 30 to respond, you may claim that extra 10. If they are salaried, and you allow for compensatory time to accrue during normal operations, you may claim those comp time hours that are related to the response.

Donations and volunteer hours may be counted toward your total, which will increase the amount of funds for which FEMA will reimburse you. In essence, they will count toward your 25% match.

All of this, of course, requires good bookkeeping and documentation. FEMA now requires reimbursement requests to be filed online through their [Grants Portal](#). Someone in your municipality must apply for a [Grants Portal](#) account. You can download a copy of the FEMA cost tracking spreadsheet to start using it for tracking purposes [here](#).

For more information, go to [MEMA's website](#).

- CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act: The CARES Act established a \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund, \$139 billion of which is reserved to be distributed between states and local governments. Funds may only be used for “necessary expenditures” related to COVID-19, incurred 3/1/20 – 12/30/20, that were not already be accounted for in your FY20 budget. The [U.S. Treasury](#) and the [National League of Cities](#) have more details on their websites.
- State COVID-19 Emergency Response Funding for Local Boards of Health: Near the end of March, the Baker-Polito Administration allocated \$9M to local public health departments for COVID-19 response. Funds in Franklin County are awarded to the regional health districts and, through the

FRCOG to the few towns that are not in the regional health districts. [Eligible costs](#) for this funding stream include such items as:

- Public health epidemiological investigation activities, such as public health nurses and data management
- Risk communication support, including call center staffing
- PPE for local public health staff (not for police, fire or EMS)
- Support for those in isolation and quarantine, such as housing, behavioral health support, cleaning and waste removal (not food or other sundries)

For more information, contact [Phoebe Walker](#).

- Public Health Emergency Preparedness Funds: The Centers for Disease Control has provided funding to municipalities across the nation for over a decade to help them prepare to respond to public health emergencies, such as pandemics. In Franklin County, those funds flow through the FRCOG and are overseen by the Mohawk Area Public Health Coalition (MAPHCO). MAPHCO allocates most of its funding to pay for a full-time planner to help them write and exercise their emergency dispensing site plans. These funds may only be used for *planning*, not for response. So, while the MAPHCO Steering Committee is working on purchasing vaccine refrigerators and carriers for the eventual dispensing of a COVID vaccine, it is not able to reimburse municipalities for expenses incurred during response. For more information, contact [Tracy Rogers](#).
- Cooperative Public Health Services: The FRCOG provides a combination of services to 14 of our 26 towns, which can include public health nursing and/or a regional health agent. These services are paid for by member towns through an annual assessment. The funds support response in the sense that they pay for nurses and health agents to assist towns during an event. The assessments are not set at a level necessary to provide PPE or other medical equipment to local boards of health. For more information, contact [Phoebe Walker](#).