

Emergency Relief Funds for Transit Systems Affected by Major Declared Disasters in CY 2018

Transcript of a webinar presented December 18, 2019

A recording of the webinar is available online at
<https://connectdot.connectsolutions.com/pzbv6qdpethc/>

A copy of the presentation slides in PDF format is available at
<https://cms.fta.dot.gov/funding/grant-programs/emergency-relief-program/webinar-emergency-relief-funds-2018-disasters>

>>Tom Wilson, Emergency Relief Program Manager, FTA:

[Slide 1: ER for 2018 Presentation]

Thank you for joining us today. This is a webinar that will provide you with information about FTA's Emergency Relief Program and the requirements necessary to apply for funding under the Notice of Availability of Emergency Relief Funding that was published in the Federal Register on December 3rd, 2019. We refer to that notice as a "NAERF" for short, and it makes available \$10.5 million to assist transit systems damaged in any one of 61 major declared disasters that occurred in calendar year 2018 in the United States and its territories. The deadline to apply is January 17, 2020 -- so forty-five days from the time the NAERF was published. Information from this webinar today will be made available afterward on FTA's website if you'd like to review it or share it with your colleagues who were unable to attend.

Before we get into the meat of the presentation, I want to point out a few things for the interface for Adobe Connect, which is the platform we are using. In the bottom left-hand corner is a file sharing box that contains a PDF of the NAERF itself as well as a PDF of this presentation. Above that you will see on the left-hand side a Q&A box; that is your opportunity to ask questions. You may ask questions throughout the presentation. We are going to answer those toward the end. So if you ask those questions while you're thinking about them, that's fine they will be held in the queue and when we have the opportunity to answer them we will do so.

The last thing about the interface I want to point out to you is the window that has the presentation in it. If you are someone that does not need to see the captioning, you can hover over that screen and you will see a toolbar there at the top that shows up and you can use the button that has four arrows on it and that will expand the presentation to full screen. At any time if you have difficulty hearing, let us know.

[Slide 2: Agenda]

So the agenda today. I'm Tom Wilson the Emergency Relief Program Manager at the Federal Transit Administration and I'm located at our headquarters in Washington DC. Today I will

give you an overview of FTA's Emergency Relief Program, talk about the requirements of the current NAERF, the funding I was speaking about that's available for transit systems affected by major declared disasters that occurred in calendar year 2018. And my colleague Walt Mokey will discuss how to apply for the funding through the grants.gov website. And lastly, we'll answer any questions you may have.

[Slide 3: FTA Website Resources]

First, I want to let you know that many of the resources I'll be talking about today can be found on the FTA's website at transit.DOT.gov. You can find those pages by clicking on *Funding* at the top and going to the *Grant Programs* page, but I find it easiest to use the search function in the top right of each FTA webpage. So we have that indicated there on this screenshot of the webpage so you know where that's at. If you type "Emergency Relief Program" into that search bar and hit search you will get a list of program pages and resources with the main Emergency Relief page linked at the top that looks similar to the second screenshot on the right. You will also see a link to the Emergency Relief Manual and I'll refer to that document throughout my presentation. It is an exhaustive resource that may answer many of the questions you have later on, specifically about expenses that are eligible and ineligible under the Emergency Relief Program. There's also a webpage specifically for 2018 disasters that has the full list of eligible disasters grouped by FTA region and linked to the corresponding FEMA page for that disaster. So that's in a number of tables and you will see the name for each disaster is linked. Click on that to go to the FEMA page which will show you a map that has the exact counties that were affected by that particular disaster.

[Slide 4: Emergency Relief Program overview]

FTA's Public Transportation Emergency Relief Program provides grants in two categories: capital projects to protect, repair, reconstruct or replace equipment and facilities of a public transportation system that is in danger of suffering or has suffered serious damage as a result of an emergency; and also emergency operating costs of public transportation equipment and facilities in areas directly affected by an emergency. This program was authorized in 2012 and has not received a permanent or annual appropriation to date. It's funded when Congress sees a need and historically in response to specific events, for example, the first appropriation was \$10.9 billion for hurricane Sandy which occurred in 2012, soon after the program was created, and affected a large area of the mid-Atlantic from Virginia to New Hampshire with most transit damage occurring in New York and New Jersey. And the second came in response to hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria in 2017 and provided \$330 million. So since those are the two appropriations we've had to this point, a lot of you may not have had the opportunity to interact with this program in other parts of the country, and realizing this is new, we want to talk a little bit about the program in general. And most recently, Congress has appropriated \$10.5 million for any major declared disaster that occurred in the U.S. and its territory in calendar year 2018 so that's the funding availability that's open now.

[Slide 5: ER Eligible Recipients and Expenses]

So eligible recipients. The recipients eligible for FTA emergency relief funding are similar to

those of other FTA programs, but you need to be a state, a territory, tribal government, or an FTA Direct Recipient. All of these eligible recipients may apply to funding directly to FTA and we will talk about how to do that later. Sub-recipients of FTA funding, for example, a rural transit agency, may also receive funding through their pass-through entity so you would need to work with the state or whatever organization that you typically apply for funding through. Eligible expenses are going to fall into three categories and I will talk about those as we go but the first is Disaster Response, meaning emergency or temporary operations that are outside the scope of normal operations that include protective measures, temporary repairs. Disaster Recovery and Rebuilding, and this includes projects to permanently repair or replace transit assets damaged or destroyed to bring them back to a State of Good Repair including current standards and environmental considerations. And thirdly, Disaster Resilience: projects that address the vulnerability to a transit system or facility due to a probable occurrence or reoccurrence or an emergency disaster. So let's look at more detail in each of those categories and see what they contain.

[Slide 6: Disaster Response]

The first category, Disaster Response, includes activities you see listed here and in the emergency relief manual. I won't read every one of them but we are talking about things like evacuation and temporary service to and from shelters. I believe we had some folks from Butte County in California planning to join us today. This is a picture of an evacuation that happened in 2017 in response to the Oroville Dam -- there was a threat from it flooding the local community, and I wanted to use that to emphasize how important transit agencies are across the country in helping to move vulnerable populations affected by these disasters. We're also talking about with disaster response emergency protective measures to prevent damage or protect health and safety such as sandbagging, debris removal and also temporary repairs to facilities to hasten their return to service until permanent repairs can be made.

[Slide 7: Disaster Recovery and Rebuilding]

Second category: Disaster Recovery and Rebuilding, this is including capital projects such as vehicle repair and replacement, facility repair or rebuilding and repair or replacement of other infrastructure such as power or track components and maintenance equipment.

[Slide 8: Disaster Resilience]

And then Disaster Resilience, the final category, includes things like flood protection measures, relocating facilities to higher ground, building covered storage to protect rolling stock, burying power lines to protect them from high winds, and features built into recovery projects where they are integral and cost-effective, such as using stronger materials. And I want to note in the past allocations under the ER program have included money specifically for resilience but the current NAERF we have does not. We anticipate that requests for funding and rebuilding will account for total funding available at this time so we don't anticipate being able to have resilience funding. It looks like I have a little disruption on my presentation here so let me see if it pulls itself back up. I just had a little connectivity issue so it's reestablishing itself.

All right. Great. Sorry, if you had an interruption there. We had a bit of a connectivity issue and the audio may have dropped as well. I will start back over here -- I will go back to the Emergency Relief Program page for the Disaster Resilience and we will cover that again. So Disaster Resilience as I was saying previously if you missed some of that includes -- includes flood protection measures, relocating facilities to higher ground, building covered storage to protect rolling stock, burying power lines to protect them from high winds and features built into recovery projects where they are integral and cost-effective such as using stronger materials. I was noting that in the past allocations under the ER program have included money specifically for resilience projects but the current NAERF does not. We anticipate that requests for response and rebuilding will account for the total funding available at this time.

[Slide 9: Ineligible Expenses]

All right, Ineligible Expenses. Of course, as with any program there are expenses that are ineligible for ER funding. You can find more about that in the Emergency Relief Manual but keep in mind the purpose of the Emergency Relief Program is to help reimburse transit operators for unusual and unexpected costs associate with disasters and to assist in rebuilding transit infrastructure. It's not meant to be a substitute for State of Good Repair investments for instance, or a supplement to existing project funding. So there are several expenses that are ineligible for the program which you can read more about in the Emergency Relief Manual on our webpage. But examples to note would include heavy maintenance, that is costs normally expected from seasonal or occasional natural occurrences such as debris removal and seasonal thunderstorms, things you normally would have budgeted for anyway. Projects that change the function or capacity of a transit asset or the transit system as a whole. This funding is not meant to help expand services but to get you back into a state of services you were in before. We cannot reimburse lost revenue. So, for example, if you decide to provide free transportation or bus passes to people who were evacuated, the ER program will not be able to reimburse that. And of course we cannot pay expenses that have already been reimbursed by another source such as FEMA or from insurance. So we will talk a little bit about that later.

[Slide 10: ER Key Policies]

So here are some key policies for the program. The base Federal share is 80 percent for this program, but it may be increased by the Secretary of Transportation and we often do this in response to FEMA deciding to offer a higher federal match. We don't want our grantees to be at a disadvantage so when we get to the current availability you will see there are several exceptions where we offer a higher federal match. When ER funds have not been appropriated, so as I mentioned previously we don't have a standing annual appropriation and so we may or we may not get an allocation or appropriation for the program. When the ER funds have not been appropriated, 5307 and 5311 funds may be used to respond to a disaster, but they cannot be replenished or replaced if ER funds are subsequently appropriated. As I mentioned, with not having a regular appropriation and we don't know whether we will receive one or not, you're certainly allowed to use those other funds but the ER funds are specifically appropriated for emergency relief and so they can be used to backfill funds for general purposes if you do choose to use them. As I mentioned on the previous slide FTA cannot pay for any expenses covered by insurance. FTA will allocate funds for emergency expenses in advance of anticipated insurance

proceeds and if a grant recipient then receives or allocates the insurance proceeds they must amend the applicable grant. We will work with you if you do get that funding to make sure we are not using the ER funds to supplant insurance. You do not need to amend your TIP/STIP if repairs don't involve functional, locational, or capacity changes. And FTA will waive remaining useful life for assets destroyed. There are a couple caveats to that. One is FTA does remain entitled for reimbursement if the recipient disposes of assets with federal interest and a fair market value of more than \$5,000. And any damaged assets that are repaired, they retain their useful life.

>>John Bodnar, FTA:

We are getting a request to speak louder.

>>Tom Wilson, Emergency Relief Program Manager:

Excellent I can certainly do that and let me know if my attempts to do that are not sufficient. Usually I'm used to people telling me to be quiet so it's nice somebody asked me to talk louder.

[Slide 11: ER Key Policies]

All right, so more key policies. Some additional key policies, grants do include pre-award authority back to the date that preparations or response activities began. So as I mentioned earlier, one of the expenses that is eligible would be, for instance, moving equipment out of harm's way and so we can reimburse you for those things all the way back to the time that you began to prepare for that. You may submit requests for waivers from administrative requirements at FTA's emergency relief docket and that is hosted at www.regulations.gov. And in the absence of a waiver, all FTA statutory procedural and contractual requirements must be met so it's important that you do not proceed with the project expecting the waiver will be granted, but you go ahead and get that request in, so that we can evaluate that and give you a waiver from those particular requirements to speed up your recovery efforts. We will begin a new emergency relief docket in 2020 so some point in January we will have that open. The current one is open for 2019 and that's for future use should you have any incidents coming up in the future. Charter-like services, those that provide services already know that typically they are not allowed, but in emergency situations, we do permit charter-like services if the action is directly related to a declaration of emergency and such services could include evacuations, returning evacuees to their homes, and transporting utility workers or emergency responders. Sole-sourced procurements are allowed if the circumstances do not permit a competitive procurement but we need to make sure you have documented that decision and why it was made. And, lastly, in the event of a disaster you need to track separately all disaster-related expenses and outcomes to facilitate reimbursement later and that's true whether it's from FTA or FEMA. This includes the number/type of vehicles used for emergency operations, labor, materials, number of people evacuated, the number of vehicle trips and hours of service, protective measures put in place, all damages and any emergency or permanent repairs. Again, sort of forward-looking, those are things to keep in mind, but also those are the sorts of things we will be looking at as we are evaluating your applications for the current NAERF for the 2018 disasters.

[Slide 12: Working with FEMA]

So, I've mentioned FEMA a couple of times. We work closely with FEMA to coordinate financial assistance and typically they are first on the ground and able to help our grantees. Because the ER program doesn't have regular yearly appropriation, when it does receive an appropriation it might be a number of months after the event and that uncertainty is why we encourage transit operators to work with FEMA immediately after a disaster to apply for funding. If the ER program does receive funding for a specific event, transit operators then must stop working with FEMA and begin working with FTA. That's the way the statute is set up and our agreement with FEMA and when Congress appropriates emergency relief funds to FTA, FTA then assumes sole responsibility for disaster relief grants for transit-related costs. Any approved in-process FEMA grants that include transit-related costs must be transferred to FTA's Emergency Relief Program and of course, our staff at the regional level will work closely with you to help that happen as well as with FEMA to make that transition go as smoothly as possible. We will work with FEMA to transfer any of that paperwork that's already in process and worksheets used for FEMA's Public Assistance program can be used for our program as a supporting document. For the current NAERF or any funding under the ER program, applicants must inform FTA if they are seeking or have received FEMA funding. That's something that will be outlined in the NAERF itself and we do work closely with FEMA to ensure expenses are not paid for twice. If you have transit-related costs that were already reimbursed by FEMA, you don't need to return that money to FEMA, but you are just not eligible for FTA funding.

[Slide 13: CY 2018 Funding Availability]

Now I'm going to get to the current funding availability. That was an overview of FTA's Emergency Relief Program, now let's talk about the current availability funding. Extreme weather and other destructive events occurring during calendar year 2018 resulted in the President declaring 62 major disasters across the U.S. including wild fires, hurricanes, earthquakes, flooding and volcanic eruptions. The Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act of 2019 which was signed into law by the president on June 6, 2019, appropriated \$10.5 billion for FTA's Emergency Relief Program for transit systems affected by major declared disasters occurring in calendar year 2018. This is the first time the Emergency Relief Program has had an appropriation available to transit agencies across the U.S. in all 10 of FTA's regions.

[Slide 14: Notice of Availability of Emergency Relief Funding]

The NAERF was published on December 3rd and the deadline is 45 days later on January 17 of 2020. The ER program works a little differently than other discretionary programs in that it is not competitive. The application process will occur in two stages. First applicants will submit proposals requesting reimbursement of eligible costs, which will allow FTA to verify that the applicant and the proposal they submit are eligible for this funding. And the second stage after the application period closes, FTA will allocate the available funding among the eligible applicants and announce those allocations on its website at [transit.DOT.gov](https://transit.dot.gov). Recipients with allocations can enter a grant application in the transit award management system known as TrAMS to receive that funding.

[Slide 15: Eligible Recipients]

So who is an eligible recipient? I want to carefully break down the exact wording from the NAERF so each element is clear. Eligible recipients are public transportation agencies, states, territories, local government authorities, Indian tribes and other FTA grant recipients....that provide or fund public transportation services in counties designated as eligible for any category of Federal Emergency Management Agency public assistance....for a major declared disaster within an incident period partially or entirely occurring within calendar year 2018. So those are the elements you need to meet to be eligible for this specific funding opportunity. I want to note there were actually 62 major declared disasters in 2018 according to FEMA but two of these did not qualify for Public Assistance, so they aren't eligible under FTA's rules. And there was an event in California that began in December 2017 and continued through January 31st. FEMA did not list that as a 2018 disaster, but under our NAERF we are including it so there are 61 disasters eligible. At the beginning of the presentation I talked about how you can search FTA's website for information on the Emergency Relief Program. We have a page entitled Emergency Relief for 2018 Disasters that has tables listing each disaster grouped by FTA region and linked to the corresponding FEMA page. Check that out if you have any questions whether a disaster you experienced was one of those eligible events.

[Slide 16: Eligible Projects and Expenses]

For those eligible recipients, eligible projects are going to follow the guidelines we spoke about earlier. Public transportation emergency operations, emergency protective measures, emergency repairs and permanent repairs. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review FTA's emergency relief manual to assist in the identification of potentially eligible projects and emergency expenses. If you happen to miss right at the beginning, that manual is available on our website. You can search for that and it's a great resource because it includes great lists of eligible expenses and ineligible expenses. As we covered earlier there are of course, ineligible expenses you'll want to know about and those are listed in the manual. Keep in mind expenses previously reimbursed by FEMA or insurance proceeds are not eligible for reimbursement under the FTA's Emergency Relief Program.

[Slide 17: Eligible Projects and Expenses]

Federal matching. I indicated earlier we'd be seeing a number of exceptions to the standard federal match. These are also listed in the NAERF so you don't have to scribble these down. Maximum federal share of all grants awarded in this NAERF is 80 percent except -- and here's the list of exceptions. If the project is for the purposes of complying with or maintaining compliance with Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 or the Clean Air Act: vehicles procured for such purposes are eligible for federal share of 85 percent: related equipment and facilities or parts thereof procured or constructed for such purposes are eligible for 90 percent. If the project is in response to or in recovery from an event in an insular area, which in this case would be American Samoa, Guam and Northern Mariana Islands, such projects are eligible for a federal share of 100 percent. For disaster response expenses limited to debris removal, emergency protective measure, emergency repairs and emergency operations, the following major declared disasters are eligible for a 90 percent federal match and those are: the Oklahoma wildfires that were 4373, California wildfires 4382 and the California wildfires that are 4407.

As I indicated earlier we tried to match what FEMA's making available in increasing those matches. Similarly, the same expenses that resulted from Florida Hurricane Michael which is 4399, they are eligible for federal match of 100 percent if completed on or before November 24, 2018 and 90 percent if completed on or after November 25th, 2018. In the event FEMA increases the public assistant federal share for any other major declared disasters occurring in calendar year 2018, FTA will increase the federal share for emergency relief grant so it's consistent with FEMA.

[Slide 18: How to Apply]

Getting down to how to apply. I'm going to ask my colleague Walt to go into more detail but please be aware that completed proposal submissions are two forms and supporting documentation, and he'll cover this a little more, but the two are the SF- 424 Application for Federal Assistance and the Supplemental Form for the Public Transportation Emergency Relief Funds for Transit Systems Affected by Major Declared Disasters Occurring in Calendar Year 2018 program. The Supplemental Form and supporting documents must be attached to the attachment section of that SF- 424. For operating expenses, the application must include the date, hours, number of buses, ferries or trains and information related to the fares charged. Only net project cost may be reimbursed. For capital projects, we're looking for detailed damage assessment so we can verify the expenses are eligible and have the necessary information to allocate funding to your projects. Before-and-after pictures are helpful and can be included with supporting documents. Given that pre- award authority is extended back to the disaster event and preparations, eligible repairs that have already been completed can also be submitted.

[Slide 19: Reporting Requirements]

And then as with other FTA grants, the ER grants require periodic reporting, oversight and audits provided by a regional staff and project management oversight contractors. Post-award reporting requirements will include quarterly submission of the Federal financial reports and milestone project reports in TrAMS consistent with FTA's Grant management circular 5010.1E. FTA will provide oversight of grants funded through the Emergency Relief Program using its standard oversight program including triennial reviews and state management reviews and procurement system review, financial management oversight review or other reviews as necessary and will monitor use of insurance proceeds to ensure they meet program requirements and including invoices for all emergency review upon FTA request.

[Slide 20: References, Regulations, & Guidance]

The slide is really just a summary of some of the regulations and guidance that we referred to during the webinar and so I want to turn this over to Walt to talk more about grants.gov which is the system through which you will be applying for state funding through the ER program for 2018.

[Slide 21: Applying for FTA Gant Opportunities in Grants.gov]

>>Walt Mokey Transportation Program Specialist, FTA:

Thank you. I think we can go to the next slide this is the opening slide to separate the distinction between content for the opportunity and the application process itself.

[Slide 22: ER Grant Opportunity]

Grants.gov is a website located apart from the FTA and it is not owned by FTA. And we are a customer of the GSA for this service. So this slide depicts here the grant opportunity for Emergency Relief and for your purposes it's for a query on grants.gov it's FTA-2020-002-TPM-ER. Provided at the top of the page provided a link to a specific synopsis page in grants.gov and the synopsis page contains basically all the information that you will need in order to download the information about the opportunity in the Federal Register as well as to apply. So this summary page shows the Supplemental Form. It contains various links and at the bottom of the page we have the Emergency Relief Program link so that you can actually review the program requirements.

[Slide 23: Download Application]

In the grants.gov when you go to the synopsis page you will notice there are 4 tabs. I circled one tab -- the third tab -- this contains information such as the Federal Register notice as well as the Supplemental Form. You can download these to your local PC or laptop or anyone can download the information. However, I caution you that in order to apply you must be an authorized registered within grants.gov, must be an authorized user and your organization must assign you a specific role in grants.gov so that you can either apply, submit, develop or do portions of the application process itself. The smaller tab at the bottom shows is basically a more detailed information about the application package tab. This is where you click on the tab and you will be lead to a link to the application package itself. This application package can be downloaded by anyone to your local PC, but in order to apply you should register with grants.gov and establish the role or user role as well as the requisite permissions from your organization to apply. Next slide.

[Slide 24: Application Package]

This is, when you click on the application package basically there are three forms. One of the forms is the SF-424, a standard OMB form used to identify the recipient, the DUNS number, the activity and the officials who will be submitting. The other at the bottom right hand of the screen is the attachment form. This is where we expect you to attach the Supplemental Form which will contain your proposal -- I'll discuss that in a little more depth -- but attached your Supplemental Form to this form and submit it with your application. The other form is the anti-lobbying form. It's a standard government form by OMB that is required as part of the application process. Next slide.

[Slide 25: Application Package]

The application package itself is all the OMB forms with the exception of our Supplemental Form. On the left side of this PowerPoint you have the applicant and proposal profile. This is a fillable PDF application where you will submit your information and your request basically

your proposal of what you plan to do with the money if FTA awards it to you. Please do not -- please type the information in into the form and do not paste it as pictures or screenshots of your Word documents or whatever. These may be accepted possibly -- accepted, I mean, they will be processed by grants.gov however we will not be able to read that form so we will reject it from our system once we receive it. So please use the grants.gov system to complete the form electronically with keystrokes et cetera and attach it to the attachment form.

One other word of caution, there are a number of supplemental forms possibly on the FTA website. Please do not use any other forms, use the form that is provided on the FTA website and also within grants.gov and the synopsis tabs.

[Slide 26: Grants.gov – Applicants]

This is just a general location and a link to the site for applicants. If your organization is not recently submitted applications for discretionary opportunities I recommend you review the requirements here. All applicants must be registered in grants.gov first of all, and must have a DUNS number, which is registered in SAM, System for Award Management, and also the specific roles and user information must be provided in the grants.gov.

[Slide 27: Workspace in Grants.gov]

In addition, grants.gov provides a service we call -- we call ... a workspace. This is basically a folder in which your organization can complete and your colleagues who will be working on this proposal can collaborate. Although you can do this remotely and fill out these forms in a local PC or elsewhere the beauty of this workspace is that these fillable -- the SF-424 forms are fillable and will be automatically populated based on the assigned roles for your individuals and individuals who are authorized to submit. So I recommend you use this and get familiar with this workspace and also assign correct roles for the users who will be completing the application. Although anyone can access these forms, only certain individuals, your designated individuals, can submit the application forms itself through grants.gov.

[Slide 28: Web Addresses]

This is a listing of various links for the program for specific to the relief program Emergency Relief Program as well as a synopsis page in grants.gov as well as for general links to the grants.gov site. If you encounter difficulties or problems with submitting any type of problems in grants.gov, recommend that you contact the grants.gov support organization, either via e-mail or telephonically. Since this is a distinct organization and it is separate function which FTA does not control, issues that you may have while submitting the application are best addressed by grants.gov. FTA may be aware how to rectify or correct or help you but in fact, the best and the quickest way to resolve your problem is by contacting support@grants.gov.

[Slide 29: Questions]

>>Tom Wilson, Emergency Relief Program Manager, FTA:

Great, thank you, Walt. Appreciate that. So we are now in the period where we'll be taking

some questions and I know a few of them have come in, so we will see what questions are in the queue. Before I do that I want to emphasize the timeliness, as I've mentioned a couple of times that the NAERF was published on December 3rd and it's a 45-day period in which we have several holidays. So I think Walt, really was able to highlight the fact that if you are not set up or not familiar with using grants.gov or some of the systems you want to start working on that early to make sure that you have everything you need and know how to do that so that you don't get stuck somewhere along the way while people are out of the office for the holidays coming up. Having said that, what questions do we have we can answer for you today?

>>John Bodnar, FTA:

We have a couple of questions in the chat box. The first one is from Jill and she asks: Is there a list of FTA regional staff that are assigned to this body of work?

>>Tom Wilson, Emergency Relief Program Manager, FTA:

There is not a list that we have made public on our website. I would suggest that you contact your Regional Office and they can connect you with that person as Regional Offices certainly are listed on our website in the About section of FTA and you can find the general number there and connect to the right person. Different staff work on different things at different times so that's why we've avoided putting a specific list up there. We want to make sure when you call you get somebody that can help you.

>>John Bodnar, FTA:

The next question is from Amanda and if the funding is not competitive, how are awards determined?

>> Tom Wilson, Emergency Relief Program Manager, FTA:

Very good. The Emergency Relief Program is a little bit of an odd duck in that it is a discretionary program but is not competitive so this is not like the bus competitive program where we take applications and try to determine which is better than the other based on certain criteria. We have a pot of money, which in this case is \$10.5 million. We will take a look at all applications and everyone who is eligible will get some type of funding. So this will require us to make decisions based upon the number of applications we have, the expenses that they submit and we have to find out the most equitable way to distribute that funding so we can help you recover from any disasters you might have been affected by during 2018 and help get any services up and going that me still be suffering from that. So the statute does give the ability for the FTA Administrator and the Secretary to make decisions on that and so we will be talking about the specific methodology when we get a sense from that first round, that first step as I was talking about which is basically send us your expenses what you had and we can see who is eligible and we can determine what we are working with in comparison to the money that we have available.

>>John Bodnar, FTA:

That's all the questions we have.

>> Tom Wilson, Emergency Relief Program Manager, FTA:

I'm sure there are other questions if you would like to put one there in the chat box in the Q&A,

we'd be glad to answer those for you. Certainly you can follow up again with your regional staff. On this last page here I've given you my contact information. The regional staff already know you guys from working one-on-one at the local level so I think they are clearly the best to help you but I'm always glad to answer questions in a general nature about the program if you have any.

>>John Bodnar, FTA:

Another question has just come in. Mackenzie she says currently in the midst of FEMA submittal. You need to know your reimbursement from FEMA before applying?

>> Tom Wilson, Emergency Relief Program Manager, FTA:

If you have submitted with FEMA and you have not yet got an obligation from them, then we would transfer that over to FTA's ER program and we would pick up all that paperwork you've already done to save you time on that. You would want to let us know when you apply that you've already applied for this funding and how much it was and you can attach the documentation that you used for FEMA to your Supplemental Form. And if you are at a point where you've already received funding and an obligation and maybe a check cut and we can talk about how that should proceed from there. The main thing is obviously we can't pay for the same thing twice. But we also don't want to disadvantage you for having already done all that work with FEMA up to this point so we will work both with you and with them to transfer that paperwork over and make it as easy as possible.

>>John Bodnar, FTA:

We are back to zero questions.

>>Walt Mokey, Transportation Program Specialist:

While we are waiting for questions, just want to alert everyone once you complete your application and you submit or the authorized representative of your organization submits and grants.gov they will receive a notification from grants.gov saying that basically your application has been accepted or it meets the technical terms to submit for acceptance. That is as far as the program. This then is downloaded to FTA and in turn FTA, we have a discretionary grant system where we actually download your application and review it and not review it to verify that the application can be read and the Supplemental Form is consistent with our requirements so that it is legible, it's readable and we can actually use it in our evaluation tool. That system will then -- if let's say there is a problem, you will be notified that it's been rejected. If it's not rejected by grants.gov it will be rejected for technical reasons such as the PDF can't be read or something is wrong with it so I would caution you to stay alert for any notices from grants.gov or FTA in the application process.

>> Tom Wilson, Emergency Relief Program Manager, FTA:

That is another point that reinforces how important it is to work on these things earlier rather than later. You certainly wouldn't want to get to the last minute, last day to find out you have some type of error.

>>Speaker:

Question queue is still clear.

>> Tom Wilson, Emergency Relief Program Manager, FTA:

Okay. In the absence of questions again if you think of some later and would like to either reach out to the regional staff or myself we would be glad to try to help you with that. Thank you again for joining us today for the webinar. If you have further questions there is my contact information. And for those that you missed right at the beginning, on your bottom left of the screen there is a file share box and one of those is the presentation so if you wanted to catch those links that I put forward and Walt had included that's one way to do that it's a PDF and you can click right on those and there is a document area of the relief NAERF for 2018 disasters you can look through that which is also available on the Federal Register. So thank you very much and we appreciate your time and look forward to assisting you with applying for the program and getting back to regular business. Thank you very much.

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