



March 27, 2020



THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON: Flurries of Activity

Social distancing doesn't mean you can't still see cherry blossoms

While it appears that D.C. will escape this winter season without any measurable snowfall, flurries of activity related to the COVID-19 pandemic are continuing their rapid pace. Earlier this week, we sent out an update on the third COVID-19 supplemental passed by the Senate, which is expected to pass the House today. However, Representative Thomas Massie (R-KY) is expected to call for a recorded vote, requiring at least 216 House members to cast their votes in person. This would slow the pace of voting and may delay the final approval.

The legislation supports state and local response through several avenues, including significant FEMA funding such as:

- \$100 million for EMPG;
- \$45 billion to the Disaster Relief Fund (\$20 billion for base DRF activities);
- \$200 million for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program;
- \$100 million for the Assistance to Firefighters Grants for PPE; and
- \$45 million for IT and communications capabilities at FEMA.

Among other things, the legislation also provides \$1.5 billion for the CDC Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) Program. The legislation also extended REAL ID deadline by one year to October 1, 2021. Acting DHS Secretary Chad Wolf has announced that a Federal Register notice regarding the extension is anticipated in the coming days.

We here at NEMA are already working with FEMA on “next steps” for EMPG and how these funds will be applied for and distributed quickly.

There is already talk in Washington of a fourth legislative package, although support for this is not universal. We will keep you apprised of any updates on that process.

Another critical update for states is the **cancellation of the remainder of the National Level Exercise** (NLE), including the FEMA-led Binary Blackout, Eagle Horizon component exercises and the unified functional exercise scheduled for May. For questions, contact the [National Level Exercise](#).

Deadlines for the following preparedness grants have been extended to April 30 at 5:00pm EST:

- [Tribal Homeland Security Grant Program](#)
- [Transit Security Grant Program](#)
- [Intercity Bus Security Grant Program](#)
- [Intercity Passenger Rail program](#)
- [Port Security Grant Program](#)

This brings them in line with the State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) and Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) grants previously extended deadline. For any questions, reach out to the [Grants Program Directorate](#).

Due to COVID-19 response, FEMA will also be **postponing the National Public Assistance Readiness Stand-Down**. For additional information, contact the [FEMA Office of Recovery](#).

Guidance for COVID response programs continues to come out on the federal level, including the [FEMA Coronavirus Pandemic: Public Assistance Simplified Application Fact Sheet](#).

We know that you all are working at top speed to combat the COVID-19 outbreak. With this pandemic's extended response phase, it is critical that you all also take care of yourselves mentally during this time to continue to serve your states and territories to the best of your abilities. We here at NEMA thank you for all you do and stand ready to support you in whatever ways we can.

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