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States Develop EMAC Advance Reimbursement Capabilities

A critical benefit of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) is the reimbursement process. During the course of the 2020 EMAC Coordinator Workshop (Virtual), states discussed opportunities for further improvement in the reimbursement process including some exciting changes to standardization.



Because some states noted that they had or were considering developing mechanisms to provide some or all expected funds to resource providers in advance of the requesting state's reimbursement, NEMA developed a survey to ascertain more information about which states currently have this capability and if so, how it is conducted.

Thirty-nine states responded to the survey, six of whom currently have an advance reimbursement capability for state and local resource providers on EMAC missions. Of these, **Utah** and **Washington** have legislation that allows for it while several others have policy and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in place.

Legislation

Utah's advance reimbursement process is codified through [legislation](#) which created a State Disaster Recovery Restricted Account. As such, agents of the state on an EMAC mission can receive advance funding of up to 80 percent of EMAC-eligible expenditures if the provider has no other funding source available at the time of the request.

Washington's payment process is funded through their [Disaster Recovery Account](#), which is legislatively appropriated and dedicated to supporting state agency or local government disaster response and recovery efforts. On an EMAC mission the resource providers pay for their expenses and then send the reimbursement to the state, which processes and reimburses as appropriate. Washington therefore incurs all the cost and then requests reimbursement from the Requesting State. However, Washington pays the appropriate reimbursement cost regardless of reimbursement from others.

Policy and Procedure

Colorado allows for the advance reimbursement of up to 100 percent via its SOP through the state's Resource Mobilization Fund and funds advanced to the resource provider are then paid back to the fund by the requesting state. **South Dakota** similarly allows for the advance reimbursement up to the full amount via its emergency fund.

New Jersey also provides full payment to the resource provider via longstanding internal process once a review of a slate of documentation has taken place. **Nevada** also allows for the advance reimbursement of up to 75 percent through the policy process to alleviate stresses on resource providers.

Looking Ahead

While these states already have legislative mechanisms or processes in place to provide an advance reimbursement capability to resource providers in whole or in part, other states are currently exploring methods by which to conduct advance reimbursement. Given the increased scale and scope of disasters in recent years, state capabilities to provide timely and appropriate reimbursement to resource providers within assisting states will be integral to ensuring resource providers remain able to surge and respond when disaster strikes.

If your state is interested in developing this capability, please note your EMAC Designated Contact is receiving a memo with additional information and resources from states that currently allow for advance payments for EMAC missions and the EMAC staff is always available to assist you.

If you have a state practice you'd like to highlight as part of this ongoing series, please contact [Lauren Goodwillie](#).

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