

# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

CHRISTOPHER R. HIXON, STAFF DIRECTOR  
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July 25, 2017

The Honorable Brock Long  
Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C St. SW  
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Administrator Long:

I write regarding the new Public Assistance Delivery Model that is being tested by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in my home state of Missouri and is set for nationwide rollout in 2018.

Public Assistance is by far the largest grant program within FEMA.<sup>1</sup> Over the past 10 years, Public Assistance has provided roughly \$50 billion in grants to state and local agencies for repairs, replacement, and restoration of publically owned facilities and infrastructure.<sup>2</sup> This assistance has been vital to overwhelmed communities in their response to and recovery from all forms of disasters. However, Public Assistance has not been free from criticism. Following past disaster declarations in Missouri, I have received multiple complaints about lost paperwork, lengthy processing times, poor communication, lack of transparency, and inconsistent handling of requests for Public Assistance depending on jurisdiction. In the past, it was not uncommon for local emergency managers to have to correspond with a number of different FEMA officials – none of whom seemed to be effectively communicating with each other. Some Missouri communities are still waiting to be reimbursed for recovery projects that were completed following extensive flooding that occurred in late December 2015.

I appreciate that the new Public Assistance Delivery Model intends to address these issues and improve customer service generally. As designed, it will provide applicants with a single point of contact and will utilize a new Public Assistance Grants Portal, through which local emergency managers will be able to upload documents and track the progression of Public Assistance in real time. The delivery model is also supported by centralized Consolidated Resource Centers (CRCs), where subject matter experts work to process grant applications across multiple disasters.<sup>3</sup> I understand this new Public Assistance Delivery Model has already

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Emergency Management Agency, New Public Assistance Delivery Model, ([www.fema.gov/new-public-assistance-delivery-model](http://www.fema.gov/new-public-assistance-delivery-model)) (accessed July 16, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Government Accountability Office, Briefing with Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Staff (June 12, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Federal Emergency Management Agency, New Public Assistance Delivery Model, ([www.fema.gov/new-public-assistance-delivery-model](http://www.fema.gov/new-public-assistance-delivery-model)) (accessed July 16, 2017).

been tested following disaster declarations in Iowa, Oregon, and Georgia and that it is now being used in response to severe flooding that struck Missouri between April 28 and May 11, 2017. Fifty-three Missouri counties have been declared eligible for Public Assistance as a result of this recent disaster.<sup>4</sup>

I commend FEMA for attempting to improve the Public Assistance process. To better understand how the new Public Assistance Delivery Model is being implemented and evaluated, I ask that you provide answers to the following questions.

1. How, specifically, is the new Public Assistance Delivery Model being used to improve consistency, simplicity, accuracy, timeliness, transparency, and efficiency in the Public Assistance process?
2. What specific data is being collected and what specific performance metrics are being used to evaluate whether the new Public Assistance Delivery Model is meeting these goals and is ready for nationwide rollout?
3. What are the preliminary results of testing in Iowa, Oregon, and Georgia? What specific challenges were experienced by these states in using the new Public Assistance Delivery Model? Are any additional performance criteria being used in Missouri?
4. What measures have been taken to ensure that proper training protocols are in place for FEMA's regional workforce and for state and local emergency management personnel who will be utilizing the new Public Assistance Delivery Model?
5. Will applicants for Public Assistance be required to use the new delivery model once it is implemented nationwide, or will participation be optional?
6. How will FEMA provide technical assistance to applicants who lack the expertise or resources to utilize the new Public Assistance Grants Portal?
7. How is FEMA assessing the performance of its Consolidated Resource Centers (CRCs)?
8. Have there been challenges between CRC and Joint Field Office (JFO) staff in collecting information or communicating project decisions, and, if so, how are these challenges being addressed?
9. How will Program Delivery Managers (PDMGs) differ from Public Assistance Coordinators (PACs) that FEMA has utilized in the past?

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<sup>4</sup> Federal Emergency Management Agency, *State of Missouri Federal Disaster Declaration Fact Sheet* (July 13, 2017).

a. Will PDMGs be FEMA Reservists or full-time FEMA employees?

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter. I ask that you respond to this letter as quickly as possible but in no event later than August 15, 2017. If you are unable to meet that deadline or should you have any questions, please contact Joel Walsh with my Committee staff at (202) 224-5618 or [Joel\\_Walsh@hsgac.senate.gov](mailto:Joel_Walsh@hsgac.senate.gov). Please send any official correspondence related to this request to [Amanda\\_Trosen@hsgac.senate.gov](mailto:Amanda_Trosen@hsgac.senate.gov).

Sincerely,



Claire McCaskill  
Ranking Member

cc: Ron Johnson  
Chairman

Frank Matranga  
Branch Chief, Public Assistance Program Delivery  
Federal Emergency Management Agency

Greg Bosko  
Joint Field Office, Infrastructure Branch Director  
Federal Emergency Management Agency