



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Tim Walz

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April 4, 2020

The Honorable Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest
Washington, DC 20500

Through:

James K. Joseph, Regional Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region V
536 South Clark Street, Floor 6
Chicago, IL 60605

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 (Stafford Act), as implemented by 44 C.F.R. § 206.36, I request that you issue an expedited major disaster declaration for Public Assistance (PA) Category B – emergency protective measures, including direct federal assistance and Individual Assistance (IA), for the State of Minnesota as result of the ongoing impacts of the global pandemic Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

United States Health and Human Services Secretary, Alex M. Azar II, declared a public health emergency for the nation on January 31, 2020, pursuant to Section 319 of the Public Health Service Act. The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. You declared a national emergency on March 13, 2020, pursuant to Section 201 and Section 301 of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. § 1621.

On March 13, 2020, you also declared that the ongoing pandemic is of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant an emergency declaration for all states, tribes, territories, and the District of Columbia pursuant to section 501(b) of the Stafford Act. In accordance with that declaration, eligible emergency protective measures taken to respond to COVID-19 at the direction or guidance of public health officials may be reimbursed under Category B of FEMA's PA program. Reimbursable activities typically include emergency protective measures, such as the activation of emergency operations center, National Guard costs, law enforcement, and other measures necessary to protect public health and safety.

I request that you authorize the following IA programs in a major disaster declaration for Minnesota: Crisis Counseling, Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Program, Individuals and Households Program, Other Needs Assistance to include Medical Assistance, Funeral Assistance, Disaster Legal Services, Small Business Administration Disaster Assistance, as well as statewide Hazard Mitigation. The following analysis supports including the IA programs in the declaration.

Individual Assistance Declaration Factors

Under 44 C.F.R. § 206.48(b), six individual assistance declaration factors are to be considered. These factors are:

1. State Fiscal Capacity and Resources Availability

Minnesota has allocated all available resources to the effort to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and is directly supporting local response efforts, while experiencing significant impact to the state's economy. Resources of local governments and supporting private entities are strained, and financial resources that were reasonably expected to be at the state's disposal are being rapidly diminished by the impact on the current operating budget. Business revenue and tax receipts are suffering, and—without supplemental federal assistance—the state's ability to respond to and recover from this event will be severely impacted.

2. Uninsured Home and Personal Property

The state is not requesting Individuals and Households program for physical damages, so home and personal property loss data is not applicable.

3. Disaster Impact Population Profile

Currently, all 87 counties and 11 tribes are impacted by the spread of the pandemic. As of April 4, 2020, Minnesota has 865 positive cases with 24 deaths. The age range is from 4 months to 104 years old. The median age of infected persons is 47 years.

4. Impact to Community Infrastructure

COVID-19 continues to have a drastic effect on community infrastructure. Hospitals, medical facilities, and emergency response organizations are facing challenges rarely, if ever, experienced before. The process of identifying, triaging, testing, and isolating potentially infected people is significantly disrupting lifesaving and life-sustaining services. Additionally,

insufficient resources and capacity at health care facilities, and the already limited number of qualified medical staff will continue to diminish rapidly as the impacts of COVID-19 spread.

Experience in previous disasters shows that emotional and psychological problems can be slow to surface, because individuals can cope with some isolation and trauma for a limited time early on. The potential delayed reactions are especially concerning during the COVID-19 pandemic because Minnesota's provider networks are already seeing drops in patient census, liquidity, and staff availability, on top of issues like school closures. Combined with a projected lengthy pandemic timeline, this will likely negatively impact the number of Minnesotans who are able to get their behavioral health and intellectual/developmental needs met through traditional means, which will create additional resource pressure on crisis lines as the pandemic unfolds.

5. Casualties

As of April 4, 2020, the Minnesota Department of Health has recorded 24 deaths as a direct result of the COVID-19 virus.

6. Disaster-Related Unemployment

During this unprecedented event, Minnesota is experiencing a high volume of calls and applications for unemployment assistance. The Minnesota Department of Economic Development (DEED) is seeing historic increases in unemployment filings. Since this event began, DEED has processed 297,397 applications for unemployment insurance.

Preliminary Damage Assessments

Preliminary damage assessments are impossible due to the dynamic nature of this public health disaster, but the damage is already substantial and continues to grow in both scope and scale. In response to the outbreak, schools and businesses have closed, workers lost their jobs, and major events were cancelled. Businesses large and small are suffering. The full economic impact on Minnesota's economy has yet to be determined, but the negative effects will be substantial. I respectfully request you waive the requirement for preliminary damage assessments in accordance with 44 CFR Section 206.33(d).

State and Local Government Actions

The State of Minnesota responded quickly to this public health disaster and continues to do so to the fullest extent possible. On January 29, 2020, Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) instituted its incident command system (ICS) to provide a standardized approach to the command, control, and coordination of our initial response. MDH convened a state agency

COVID-19 coordinating group on March 3, 2020. The Minnesota Department of Public Safety activated the state emergency operations center on March 6, 2020.

To date, I have issued 27 emergency executive orders in response to the coronavirus outbreak, beginning with the declaration of a peacetime emergency on March 13, 2020. Other major response and mitigation actions ordered include activating the Minnesota National Guard, closing schools to on-site education, and closing bars and restaurants to on-site service, as well as other places of public accommodation. On March 25, 2020, I issued a stay at home order. All these emergency executive orders remain in effect.

Nearly every government agency, non-profit, and volunteer organization around the state has supported Minnesota's response. The state government agencies and organizations assisting in the response include the Department of Health, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education, Department of Employment and Economic Development, Department of Military Affairs, Department of Agriculture, Department of Administration, Department of Commerce, Department of Corrections, Department of Labor and Industry, Department of Public Safety, Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, State Fire Marshall, Minnesota State Patrol, Department of Transportation, Minnesota Management and Budget, Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, Metro Transit, Minnesota Council on Disabilities, University of Minnesota, Department of Revenue, and Department of Natural Resources.

For this major disaster, I certify that state and local governments will assume all applicable non-federal cost shares as required by the Stafford Act. I have designated Minnesota's state emergency management director, Mr. Joe Kelly, as state coordinating officer (SCO) for this incident.

On behalf of all Minnesotans, I thank you and respectfully request your full consideration and expedited approval of my request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. J. Walz', written in a cursive style.

Tim Walz
Governor

Enclosure: FEMA Form 010-0-13

cc: John Harrington, Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Public Safety
Joe Kelly, Director, Minnesota Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management