



FEMA

February 26, 2021

Dear Tribal Leader:

In December 2020, Congress passed, and the President signed, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 into law as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021. This law provides FEMA with an unprecedented \$2 billion to reimburse individuals and households for COVID-19-related funeral expenses incurred between January 20, 2020 and December 31, 2020 at 100% federal cost-share. This is the largest amount of funeral assistance ever implemented by FEMA and for an unprecedented number of deaths caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. FEMA will provide this financial assistance under the Other Needs Assistance provision of the Individual Assistance, Individuals and Households Program to individuals and households with COVID-19-related funeral expenses.

FEMA would like to hear tribal comments on the process to support the delivery of funeral assistance, regardless of where tribal members physically live. Therefore, FEMA will host a virtual tribal consultation session on March 4, 2021, 2:00-4:00 P.M. ET to receive input from tribal nations on funeral assistance policies and procedures under development to deliver COVID-19-related funeral assistance. During the tribal consultation session, Recovery Directorate staff will provide a brief overview of:

- FEMA funeral assistance,
- the key provisions of the proposed interim policy, and
- the simplified delivery processes and procedures being advocated to reduce the administrative burden on eligible applicants.

Due to the hardship presented by the unprecedented number of deaths caused by COVID-19, FEMA will streamline the delivery of funeral assistance to make it easier for people who incurred those expenses to apply for and receive assistance. We understand that American Indians and Alaska Natives have suffered losses at an exceptionally high rate. We also understand that there are often challenges associated with the delivery of assistance directly to individuals and households, which must be addressed to ensure every American effected, regardless of their physical location, is able to access this assistance.

FEMA remains committed to its responsibility under Executive Order 13175, *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*, reaffirmed by President Biden's January 26, 2021 [Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships](#), to engage in consultation and collaboration with tribal officials. We look forward to receiving your valuable input.

Questions and any written comments may be directed to the Individual Assistance Division through fema-ia-publiccomment@fema.dhs.gov or through FEMA Regional Tribal Liaisons until March 15, 2021. Contact information for FEMA Tribal Liaisons may be found at www.fema.gov/about/contact.

On a personal note, I want to share with you my sympathies to the families and friends of the tribal leaders, tribal members, and other important members of your tribal communities who have succumbed to this disease.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Keith Turi".

Keith Turi
Assistant Administrator
Recovery Directorate
Office of Response and Recovery

cc: Tribal Emergency Managers