

## FAQ for Cities and Towns regarding FEMA Reimbursement for Quarantine/Isolation Solutions

*On March 28, 2020 the President issued a Major Disaster Declaration. Under FEMA's Public Assistance Program within the Major Disaster Declaration, affected local governments may be **reimbursed by the Federal Government for 75% of their costs** associated with response and emergency protective measures provided accurate records are kept. **These costs include housing for homeless individuals and families, and first responders and healthcare workers who need to be quarantined or isolated.***

### ***What is the difference between quarantine and isolation?***

*Quarantine* is for individuals who may have been exposed to someone who is COVID-19 positive, but are not exhibiting any symptoms and have not tested positive. Individuals who are in quarantine should stay in place for 14 days.

*Isolation* is for individuals who have either tested positive for COVID-19 or who are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 (including fever) and have been instructed to isolate by a medical professional.

### ***Can these two populations be in the same facility?***

If possible, separate facilities should be used for quarantine and isolation. If the same facility must be used, separate locations within the facility must be used to keep the quarantine and isolation populations separate. Separate entrances, hallways, elevators, and staff should be used for each group and appropriate infection control protocols should be in place.

### ***I want to stand up a hotel for isolation or quarantine in my community, what will FEMA reimburse me for?***

This is known as Non-Congregate Medical Sheltering. FEMA will reimburse 75% of reasonable, necessary, and fully documented costs associated with operating a quarantine or isolation hotel, such as lodging costs which are scalable to the need, staff overtime needed to provide administration and security, and feeding and cleaning services for the following populations:

1. **First responders and healthcare workers** who need to isolate or quarantine safely without exposing their families
2. **Homeless families**, with at least one member who tested positive for COVID-19, who live in congregate shelters and will require isolation
3. **Homeless individuals** who require quarantine or isolation

If you have questions, please [click here](#).

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***What if I want to provide an isolation location for individuals who do not fit into one of those categories (homeless, first responder, healthcare worker)?***

FEMA will not reimburse for isolating/quarantining other populations without prior approval. To request approval for additional populations please [click here](#).

***What sites are eligible for reimbursement?***

You can be reimbursed for emergency non-congregate and congregate sheltering costs that are reasonable and necessary to address the public health needs resulting from COVID-19. For example, setting up an isolation or quarantine site in a hotel, motel, school gym, fieldhouse, tent, or warehouse may all be reimbursable.

Expenses to repair damage that may occur to sites during use may be reimbursable. However, reimbursement is limited to costs associated with the provision and operation of emergency non-congregate shelters and **does not include** the approval of costs for the conversion of the proposed or any other facility for emergency medical care. Minor repairs or upgrades to existing facilities may be covered. If you have any questions please [click here](#).

Local governments must comply with, and enable FEMA to comply with, applicable environmental and historic preservation laws, regulations, and executive orders, or funding may be jeopardized.

***Does reimbursement cover staffing costs?***

Yes. You can apply for FEMA reimbursement to help with costs associated with increased staffing needs. For new hires brought in, full wages are reimbursable. For staff already employed, regular wages will continue to be paid by their employer, while overtime associated with running a quarantine/isolation site are reimbursable by FEMA.

***When does FEMA reimbursement end for these costs?***

Currently, the Federal Government has indicated that you can be reimbursed for costs associated with sheltering individuals through **April 30, 2020**. The Commonwealth will seek an extension from FEMA and will update our local partners about any granted extensions.

***I'm trying to purchase hotel rooms for isolation/quarantine, but the hotel is saying that they cannot help because of the COVID-19 Essential Services [order](#), is that true?***

No. The [guidance](#) implementing this order identifies **hotels providing accommodations to “vulnerable populations” as essential businesses** that are permitted to continue to operate. Individuals and families experiencing homelessness are vulnerable populations. Hotels are able to participate in this effort, under this exemption from the emergency order.

The guidance also clarifies that hotels, motels, and other short-term lodging can be used to:

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- House health care workers, first responders, and other workers constituting the COVID-19 Essential Workforce; and
- Housing and accommodation for Massachusetts residents (i) who are isolating or self-quarantining; and (ii) families or roommates of individuals who are isolating or self-quarantining; but (iii) in each case, for no longer than the period required to complete the necessary period of self-isolation or self-quarantining.

***What are the documentation requirements for FEMA reimbursement?***

Cities and towns must maintain tracking mechanisms to provide sufficient data and documentation to establish the eligibility of costs (including the need for non-congregate sheltering of each individual, length of stay, and costs). Lack of sufficient support documentation may result in FEMA determining that some or all of the costs are ineligible. For additional information, [click here](#).

***If my city/town is using a congregate setting for quarantine or isolation, like a school gym, how can I get help with costs related to that?***

Seventy-five percent (75%) of costs associated with standing up and operating a congregate setting for quarantine or isolation are reimbursable from FEMA and do not require preapproval.

In addition, the state is able to provide technical assistance and will work in partnership with local municipalities to obtain supplies like cleaning materials and furnishing such as cots, beds, blankets, and portable showers, to support the establishment of congregate quarantine or isolation sites. For assistance, please contact your MEMA Regional Office.

You can also apply for FEMA reimbursement to help with costs associated with increased staffing needs for these sites.

***How do I sign up for Federal funding?***

To request funding assistance, click this [link](#).

If you have questions, please [click here](#).

***What is the State doing to support vulnerable populations?***

The Commonwealth is establishing regional Isolation and Recovery Sites for individuals who are homeless across the Commonwealth. Sites are currently open in Lexington and Pittsfield, with additional sites opening the week of April 13<sup>th</sup>. These sites will accept individuals who have COVID-19 and are homeless. If you have a homeless individual who has COVID-19 and needs a safe place to isolate, please contact the appropriate number below:

**Boston:** 617-534-5050

**Outside of Boston:** 781-438-9254 between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

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The Commonwealth can provide logistical [support](#) and technical assistance to depopulate a shelter or to stand up a quarantine or isolation location. The Commonwealth is not able to provide ongoing staff support or management support for these locally operated sites. If you would like to request logistical support, please coordinate through your MEMA Regional Office.