

CERF+ NCAPER FEMA Individual Assistance Reforms Informational Webinar 3/4/24 TRANSCRIPT

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:02:02

Welcome everybody. We're gonna get started in about a minute. We're just waiting for the rest of the waiting room to arrive.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:02:11

Technology is fast, but not as fast as we would like it to be. So if you would bear with us for about one more minute.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:03:14

Alright, thank you everyone for joining us today to learn more about the rule changes. For Fema's individual assistance program.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:03:26

I'm just gonna open with a couple of tech information for y'all. We do have the chat disabled.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:03:34

You will need to use the QA box to submit any questions that you may have for today.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:03:46

You'll do that by clicking on the 2 little, conversation bubble icon in your menu bar at the bottom of your screen.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:03:50

If you click on that, it'll open another window. It'll say question and answer and you'll just type your question in there and once it's submitted will be I will be moderating.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:03:59

So we'll keep an eye on that for you. When we do have the Q&A section at the end of our presentation at the end of our presentation today, we will give everyone the opportunity at the end of our presentation today we will give everyone the opportunity to raise your hand and unmute yourself if you'd like to pose a question.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:04:30

At the end of our presentation today, we will give everyone the opportunity to raise your hand and unmute yourself if you'd like to I just wanna say thank you to everybody that's joining us today.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:04:35

I know we sent the invitation pretty far and wide, so thank you for everyone taking time out of your day on short notice.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:04:37

Do make sure that you mark your calendars for the upcoming. Webinars that we'll share at the end of our time together.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:04:43

And with that, we have a lot of information so I am going to pass it to Jan Newcomb with the National Coalition for Arts Preparedness and Emergency Response.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:04:52

Thanks. Ruby. You can make directions sound interesting. Okay, thank you.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:04:58

And thanks everybody. For being here and as we said, we pulled this together. Rather quickly and my job is to kind of little context of how we got here and so I see in all the people are here many of the people I wanna thank are on this call which is really lovely.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:05:22

For those of you craft emergency relief fund began in 19, it formed in 1985 and Cornelio Carey was the ED for the for over 25 years I believe and now Ruby has stepped into that role which is wonderful but this was an idea that that, you know, offering artists relief when emergencies.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:05:53

Happen and you know it was a concept at that time that maybe only a few people had. And so we're just really thrilled after all these years that FEMA has enacted all these years that FEMA has enacted some of the things that we're just really thrilled after all these years that FEMA has enacted some of the things that we're really being advocated for for a long time.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:06:21

And so not only Cornelia Carey, but Craig Nutt, who is an artist in his own right, in Tennessee, and he really worked very hard.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:06:26

He's a former director of program. Surf and and he worked for many years I also want to point out handy mathis who used to work at the National Endowment for the Arts.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:06:39

She was just such a proponent of helping artists and and arts organizations. Especially after disaster. So I'm so glad she's here that we.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:06:51

Here are a round of applause. And also not. He is here from the Heritage Emergency National Park Force.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:07:01

They are another organization that's worked hard. They were formed in 1995 and they have also been working towards.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:07:09

Getting more help from the national assistance. Agencies. Or artists and arts organizations. And caper was formed in 2,006.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:07:20

And we have, we're a coalition, so we have a lot of national arts service organizations and funders.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:07:28

Who work together to help artists and arts organizations before during and after. Yeah. Just disasters and other thing.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:07:40

And I'm so glad we have Amy Schwarzman here because Amy's been on the coalition since.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:07:47

It started, I think, I believe. And she is. She's the one that's worked tirelessly to try to figure out what all this language means for those of us who are not lawyers.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:08:01

And, so she's gonna be talking with you today as well as Christina Mcallister from FEMA.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:08:09

So they're the people you really want to listen to. But I just wanted to thank everybody for showing up and thank you for those of you and Molly Quinlan Hayes as well.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:08:20

You've all worked higherlessly to bring us to this point and I'm, glad that we're all here together that we can recognize that.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:08:29

So thank you and I'm turning it back to. I don't know. Is it Amy?

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:08:35

No, we will start with, our folks from FEMA. So I still want to give them a shout-out.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:08:37

No.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:08:43

Okay.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:08:43

We've got, Danisha and Christina and, Monica on with us as well.

So. It's over to y'all.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:08:49

Hey, okay. It would have helped if I had read the run of shell, but. Thing. You know, thank you.

[Dinusha Weerakkody] 14:09:02

Actually, I'm going to turn it over to Deputy Section Chief, Kristina MacAlister from our individuals and households. Thank you Krsitina

[Kristina McAlister] 14:09:20

My pleasure, Danisha. We are very excited at FEMA to be rolling out. These efforts.

These are things that we have been working on for more than the past 3 years. We've had, you know, public we asked for feedback on our program.

A little more than 2 years ago from the public and we also considered the kind of feedback that we've gotten from many of our partners over the years and really looked for ways to cut red tape.

Simplify our program and expand the number of people. That can be eligible for it. So. There are about 11 major reforms that we are making, but the one that I've been asked to focus on the most here today is the ability to provide some assistance to self-employed applicants in the past for anything sort of business related, all applicants were sent to the US Small Business Administration, all applicants were sent to the US small business administration for loans. They are still a partner.

They are still going to offer that more significant relief for people who have, you know, businesses that employ several people or larger businesses.

But we have expanded FEMA assistance to provide. Some amount for people who are self-employed.

And generally we mean. You know, artists, gig workers, people who We're likely to have some tools or things that they use, you know, with their Etsy business or whatever.

They're small business or you know sort of personal. Art maybe. So, you know, those kind of smaller items that you might have in your home and might be damaged by a disaster.

You're in your home or vehicle. So I just wanted to take you a little bit. Through the process that an individual would go through to ultimately request this assistance.

So it would be part of your standard FEMA application. We do ask at that point if you are self-employed, but you even if you didn't include that at that point, it's not vital.

But essentially you need to register for FEMA assistance and answer all of the questions that FEMA asked to include that you have damage to some of your personal property.

At that point, a FEMA inspector. Will reach out to you and this is one area that in some of our messaging materials we've been trying to emphasize a little more Most of our FEMA inspectors do not necessarily have a phone number that's gonna be identified as from FEMA and we find more and more a lot of people you know don't like to answer their phone.

To people numbers they don't know. So if you're applying for federal assistance, it's important to respond to they will leave them they will leave a voicemail if you don't answer but it's important to check those and get back to FEMA because we're probably trying to schedule something or ask you for additional information.

You know, we will always confirm who are and be very careful with any personal information. But it is important to answer the phone even if you don't see an official FEMA on your caller ID.

So from there, during the inspection, you know, you would point out any damages you had, vehicle needs, etc, but they would also look through your personal property.

And ask if you had essentially any occupational tools. Whether you are self-employed or not, they're going to ask that question.

And what they're really going to be looking for is any type of tools which that could be anything from like a wrench to a paintbrush but something that helps you do your job.

Computers, books, uniforms, because they're available. Occupational tools are available both for educational purposes and employment purposes.

So those will be noted at the time of inspection. And from there you would receive a letter from FEMA.

Noting that you indicated you had these losses, but we also need some additional documentation before you can. So there are also just some basic criteria you have to meet like you or someone in your household has to be a US citizen, non-citizen national.

Or qualified non-citizen. We have to be able to confirm your identity. Confirm your occupancy in your home, that it's the place that you live the majority of the year.

Have the FEMA inspection that documents the damage. And you have to not already. Have insurance that covers these items.

So we can still assist people who are somewhat underinsured, you know, and there are certain things that maybe aren't covered by flood insurance or mobile home insurance.

But are considered by. Home owner's insurance, so we work through all of that. With you.

But essentially, We will send you a letter that now says. You know, we noted that you had these issues.

If someone needs them for educational purposes they need to include like the receipts for the books that they bought.

Receipts or estimates. As well as that it's required by the school. If you have an employer, you provide us a letter showing that your employer requires those items but does not provide them.

So that can be computers, tools, books or uniforms. And then if you're self-employed It will also ask you to provide documentation of the items like specific items and costs that you lost or need based on a receipt or estimate as well as ask you to provide proof of your self-employment.

In the form of a federal income tax return documentation. Usually that's going to be like a form, 1040 or 1040 SR showing that you have reported income from self-employment in the past.

And then, from there, once you submit those to Femo, we will review them and then provide you funds based on the receipts that you provided to us.

And if for some reason you know you purchase some things and then you discover there are a few more things you needed like you can appeal for more money.

It's not necessarily a one and done. But it's also not going to, you know, extend out for a long period of time.

You have 60 days to appeal. From once we give you a decision.

And. From there, like we have line item amounts generally for like computers, tools and books.

So your receipts are going to be compared to those line items which are based on kind of the average cost of that item.

But for the actual tools themselves. It's, a very general catch all. So. We're not gonna say, you know, when we do the inspection, you lost exactly 5 tooth, like 5 paintbrushes and the state didn't say that a paintbrush is an eligible item.

It's very much like a catch all. Where you tell us what you use for your employment.

And then we compare that to some amounts that are eligible. And we have, you know, some flexibility there, but generally, you know, we're talking about those kind of smaller items that are in your house.

If you have, you know, 5 computers for your employees that you have in an alternate building, that's not going to be covered, you know, by this type of assistance.

It's generally like possibly around 800 to a thousand dollars for those kind of smaller tools that you might need.

Or use in your own business that could be damaged by a disaster.

So that's really kind of the overview of what we can provide and I'd be happy to answer more questions.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:17:49

Christina really quick we did have a question come in that I think is relevant to the information you just shared.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:17:59

Would your car be considered if it was damaged?

[Kristina McAlister] 14:18:00

That is going to be like we already provide vehicle. Assistance so yes if your car is damaged during the disaster we can look at that during the inspection and again typically if it's added an inspection like the inspector can look at everything we need you know we need to know like you have to be in good standing with say your state tribe or territory so your car, you know, needed to be like in working order before the

disaster and registered with the state, etc. So we can kind of confirm all of that during your inspection or if for some reason the things that you report like if you report just a vehicle loss we can send you a letter and you can send us some documentation about that vehicle loss and we can still assist with that.

But that would be covered more under kind of your personal losses. And it would have no relation to whether yourself employed or not.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:18:56

Thank you. Is there coverage for lost artwork under any inventory or goods for sale provision or just coverage for tools.

[Kristina McAlister] 14:19:07

It's really gonna be those things that you need to like get back into working. So it is gonna be tools, computers, books.

We're very focused on you know, meeting people's basic needs. Under Fema's programs, you know, SBA has like much larger business loans, other things available, but we're really about do you have the things you need to start your recovery on a solid footing?

So, you know, sort of that initial rental assistance. How to bring your home up to like a safe and habitable condition, not necessarily, you know, if you had fancy.

Countertops, we're gonna give you a countertop, but maybe not enough money to replace.

The exact type of countertop that you had. We're more about putting you in a livable position to start resuming more of your, you know, regular daily life.

Activities from before the disaster. And it's gonna be, you know, your insurance and other things like that are gonna be what.

Are working to, you know, make you whole from where you were before the disaster.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:20:15

Thank you. Another question, does an artist have to be completely self-employed? Or could someone that has a side gate type of self-employment still be eligible for support?

[Kristina McAlister] 14:20:26

A side gig is also eligible as long as you can show that you reported some income from self-employment.

You can be considered for this assistance. It doesn't have to be like the sole way you're supporting your household.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:20:39

Great. So Christina and I apologize if I missed it. I think some of this gets really big and I don't mean to but glass over.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:20:53

It's a still processing. So you mentioned, the activation of federally declared disaster.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:21:00

Is there anything else that folks should be aware of that need to happen in lead up to this assistance being of made available that's kind of not their control but just need to know that These are all the things that happen and then you can access.

[Kristina McAlister] 14:21:14

That's, that's a great question. So, you know, the state tribe or territory does need to request Fema's assistance and say that it exceeds you know what they can address after a disaster.

In that request, they determine if they need help with public assistance, which is like, which is schools, government buildings, etc.

And then if they also need help with individual assistance they can get you know one of the 2 public assistance IA or both an individual assistance is going to be that people's homes, people's vehicles, it's gonna be all of the assistance that's for individuals in the community.

So, in ultimately the disaster has to be federally declared, include individual assistance, and your home has to be included in one of one of the counties.

That is declare. There are a few rare. Sorry, a few rare exceptions. Like if you're injured in another county because you're there on a other county because you're there on a trip and if you're injured in another county because you're there on a trip and if your vehicle or like you're there on a trip.

And if your vehicle or like your personal self or harmed, we can still assist you because you were in the area where it occurred, and if your vehicle or like your personal self or harmed, we can still assist you because you were in the area where it occurred, but generally things focused on that you live and your primary home is in the area where the disaster occurred and that's what we focus on for

I think you're on mute Ruby.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:22:52

I am. Here we are, March, 2024 and still haven't figured out how not to.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:22:58

Get caught on mute. I do have another question that I think you know also kind of covers like what happens in between now and when the rule activates in later this month and when the rule, activates in between now and when the rule, activates in later this month.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:23:25

If we previously qualified for assistance in the winter storm of 2021 and had insurance who didn't pay out. Can we still receive assistance?

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:23:26

And if so, who should they contact?

[Kristina McAlister] 14:23:27

So I'd have to look at at least timing. I mean FEMA assistance lasts for 18 months from the date the disaster is declared.

So I think you would already be past that so I believe that disaster is likely closed. But generally, you know, you can provide your insurance information for like up to a year.

After the disaster. And just to sort of further clarify timing for future disasters, you know, these kind of further clarify timing for future disasters.

You know, these kind of rules are not retroactive timing for future disasters. You know, these kind of rules are not retroactive.

So ultimately, this kind of rules are not retroactive. So ultimately, this kind of rules are not retroactive.

So ultimately, this will be true in any disaster that is declared on March, 20 s or after. So if your disaster is already declared or even declared in the next few weeks.

We're required to use our current regulations. But if it is March, 20 s or after we will be in this new new realm.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:24:21

And then I'm not sure that you mentioned it. Christina, can you get folks an idea of what the range of assistance, whether I think more monetary range of the assistance is.

[Kristina McAlister] 14:24:34

So again, I like for all assistants or are we talking about just self-employed? Just self-employed.

Okay, so it's really kind of a on item basis. So if. But generally what we're looking at is computers, books, uniforms, and tools.

Computers, books, and uniform forms are going to be kind of a set amount and typically they may change just a little bit based on the county that you're in.

We partner with a company that gives us, you know, the average price. We actually update every quarter.

The average price of sort of these basic items around the country. And then. Tools is the one that's kind of, it's generally around \$800, but that's not an exact cap like we will look at other receipts that are sent in.

And we're kind of a evaluating. Where exactly that dollar amount needs to be in the future.

Since we've never provided a assistance for self-employed individuals before so we're still kind of working through the best way to do that and where really the need is that we can support versus what.

You know, really needs to be an SBA issue. But when you add all of those up, you know, computer, books, tools, uniforms, if they had losses in every area that could be documented.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:25:51

Right.

[Kristina McAlister] 14:26:02

You know I think you could possibly be in the like 2,500 to \$3,000 range but I don't have exact numbers in front of me and again you know we update things by CPI each year there's a lot of moving pieces, which is why we don't give an exact amount.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:26:18

Yeah, yeah. So I had 2 more questions come in and I do wanna just mention to everybody we will still do a brief QA at the end of our time together.

We were running a little bit ahead so I figured let's get some of these. Really direct questions answered.

So, don't feel that you've lost your chance if you're waiting. To verbalize later in our call.

So Christina would costumes that some performers may own be considered uniforms.

[Kristina McAlister] 14:26:49

We don't have direct, I mean. You know, we don't have super explicit descriptions.

I think it's really about if you are self-employed and you need it. Before you use it in support of your personal employment and the gigs that you do.

[Kristina McAlister] 14:27:06

Like I would say include it and then we'll work with you and let you know what is and isn't.

So I would say request anything that you think could fall under any of these categories.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:27:19

And the last question I was trying to get some specificity, but could you talk a little bit about, so, you know, the craft emergency relief fund was established in the 8 mid eightys and certainly there's been a lot of you know shifts and changes and updates and supports certainly through the pandemic, especially for relief efforts.

Because you talk a little bit about or, Dinisha, if you have more insight, how this rule change came to happen.

[Kristina McAlister] 14:27:54

So I can start and if there's anything Danish would like to add. So this is really the largest change to our regulations in over 20 years from when we change to I think the individual and family grant program to the individuals and households program.

Around the late nineties, early 2,000. And really. You know, the pre-Catrina female was a very different animal.

The expectations of the Americans public, the funding that we have and the size of our organization along with the increased amount of disaster activity that we're seeing around the country has really resulted in FEMA growing substantially and you know after certain disasters like we used to have a cap of \$10,000 of repairs that we could provide.

Now we can provide up to this fiscal year, 42,500 just for your repairing your home.

And then we also have some other sort of tranches of money. That are available under other other needs assistance and rental assistance.

So just really the expectation of what the federal government can support following a disaster has increased exponentially and we've kind of been tacking on little improvements to the program, what we could change within our own policy.

You know, we have had some changes come from Congress that we've ultimately had to kind of work in but we had never actually captured those in our regulations.

They just kind of superseded our regulations in certain areas. So We really wanted to. Take, you know, some of the things that we were hearing from the

Years and as we went from you know what was a much smaller program to a program with much larger expectations.

And create. Assistance. That worked better for applicants. You know, made more sense to the public had fewer red tape and documentation anywhere where we could cut it.

And so we, like I said, we, put out, you know, some public requests for feedback over all of Fema's programs.

We also, you know, heard from our federal partners. Certainly this specific one I believe we had already once or twice written reports that were requested by Congress because we'd certainly had this self-employed question a lot and previously because of our regulations we did not have the ability to do this.

So there's kind of, you know, policies. You have to publish, you can talk about, but you can really change those about every 2 to 3 years with just the people.

Inside the agency. When you get to the code of federal regulations, that's really a cross agency effort.

You have to start it within your own agency, but then you need a lot of other buy-in to ultimately bring those regulations to fruition and it can often be like a 4 to 6 year process.

In this instance we actually went to an interim final rule so we're posting on this on in the federal register for 60 days which will be over March 20 s and then we'll be able to immediately implement many other types of rules you post you get feedback and then you don't post again and it actually go into effect for like another 2 years.

So we really wanted to make sure we could make these impactful changes for our applicants. Sooner rather than later.

And like I said, we had had multiple requests for self-employment. We had written reports to Congress.

They hadn't really changed the rules because it wasn't. The law governing feed at FEMA that kept us from providing this assistance but it was in our regulations.

So we have now gone through that long process. To update the regulations and took this into account. Given the many requests we had received in the past.

[Kristina McAlister] 14:32:31

Yes, that is we actually have a very extended period for comments. I would just recommend and I can maybe get we can get you the I don't know if it's a special website within FEMA, but on Phoenix website we have sort of a high-level summary of the document.

The documents on the federal register, it's about a 400 page packet. Which can be a lot to take in so I would say you know we certainly are interested in everyone's feedback but maybe go to that FEMA.

Gov look at our summary of what the changes are and then feel free to make your comment. Don't feel like you need to read all 400 pages.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:33:12

Yes.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:33:47

So Christina, Danisha, Amy Schwarzman, who is, our next.

Presenter is gonna be giving what a wonderful segue to talk about the comment section should some great information.

Christina Sh also has a question for you before she gets started. So I'm going to pass the mic to Amy and then, let her take us through the next part.

[Amy Schwarzman] 14:34:13

Thank you so much, Ruby. I'm so glad to be here today. Thank you so much for doing this for us.

It's really great. I did want to add actually a little bit more context because it does involve what Jan alluded to earlier about surf plus and end caper being involved in this process for a really long time.

So to give even further context about how all this arose for us. And how it relates. To the comments is that.

When, endkeeper was created into 2,006 in 2,007. I was actually hired to create a blueprint.

For what would a national safety net look like? If we created one that was an art sector one for artists and arts organizations before during and after disasters.

[Kristina McAlister] 14:34:58

Yeah.

[Amy Schwartzman] 14:34:59

And as part of doing that work, one of the things I did was I just looked at everything that was relative.

In the, Robert Stafford Act, for those who don't know, that is the Disaster Act.

And I discovered that there was this provision which said that those who were employed by others could actually get this aid of help with their tools or uniforms or equipment if they were employed by others and it was necessary to their work.

[Kristina McAlister] 14:35:12

Hello.

[Amy Schwartzman] 14:35:27

And I pointed it out as an issue. Well, we should have this for the self-employed too.

That would really help artists. And other cultural workers. And then Surf Plus picked that ball up and ran with it and we've really this issue was spotted in 2,007.

I think the advocacy was going on for about 10 years. As part of that, Surf Plus did provide feedback and commentary to FEMA on the self-employment issue and from what we can see about how I items were quoted in the federal register.

In fact, it seems to refer back to the commentary that Craig Nutt drafted on behalf of Surf Plus.

So it kind of brings us full circle. In relation to give folks a better understanding and say things that you probably don't even know about how we were involved in this.

So my little question, which maybe is not so little is that you mentioned that this would only be for smaller tools.

But having read through the federal register because we are going to be submitting commentary now to the interim final rule.

I noticed that in fact even in the commentary they referred to that a musician could apply for his or her guitar.

Which might not be so small. So I just wanted to ask, you know, I'm assuming that people could ask for whatever it is they regard as a tool.

And that let let FEMA do its work. Would that be correct?

[Kristina McAlister] 14:36:53

Yes, yes, I think I think when I say like I would still consider guitar like what I'm saying is what I'm trying to refer to as small is that you don't have some sort of large printing press or you know something that is like an industrial kind of item that is supporting your work.

I would say apply for anything that is present and you know then we FEMA will help determine what is an isn't eligible but you should definitely put the request in and yeah I would say guitar I mean And again, you know, we're still kind of working through that like.

There are really expensive guitars and there are guitars that will help you if you know, you need the basics.

So FEMA is more focused on providing you the basics that I certainly wouldn't call a guitar a large you know, but we mean things that aren't present in another business and things that aren't.

You know, thousands upon thousands of dollars to start with.

[Amy Schwartzman] 14:37:57

Okay, and they and I mean I will say they very well could be and so you know I guess people will just see what happens how this gets you know implemented and carried out so to that I am actually here to address with all of you today how you can now help us.

And help FEMA as these rules are put into place and affectuated. So Thank you all for being here.

So in the near term, one of the things we need from all of you since this session is basically directed to organizations, including state and local arts councils, and not necessarily the individual artists and other cultural workers who will come later.

We need you to help us get the word out. That this aid actually exists. Because it's a really big deal that it does exist.

And so we need your support in doing that. To all of your artists that you have as constituents and other cultural workers because it's not just for the artists, but it would be for the cultural workers as well, so long as they're self-employed.

We will also be sending you notice in the future of the April session. Which is directed towards artists and other cultural workers.

And which FEMA is sponsoring with us. And obviously we would like your help in getting that word out.

Everybody's mailing list, you know, in your locale will make a big difference to more and more people throughout the country being aware of this.

Once the changes go into effect. We hope that obviously you will be there for your artists and other cultural workers.

They may need your support. And help in understanding how to apply for this aid, what to do. And we hope that you'll be able to be there for them in whatever way that you can.

Same way we will be there on the national level. And, We certainly hope that none of you experiences a presidentially declared disaster in the near or distant future.

Right? But, if you do. The rules do go into effect in your locale, we really need you to as well as being in touch with your artists and other cultural workers then and giving them the guidance.

That they need and letting them know of this. Aid. We are gonna also gonna need you to be our eyes and ears on the ground.

Certainly prior to July, 20 s when all final comments need to go. In because it may be that as the rule goes into effect, there are issues that arise that nobody anticipated.

And it would be very important for FEMA to understand that. Whether these are things that happen procedural or substantively and it's not that we would be asking you directly to reach out to FEMA but to reach out to us so we can kind of be a go-between and help manage whatever flood of information there might be.

And if I'm saying anything here, FEMA that you think is not a good idea. Do jump in and let us know.

But this is what we would, you know, would like to do and way that we think we can pay a role to sort of help you and all of us because one of the other big things about all these rules that just went into effect, another context for them is that the Biden administration had issued executive orders earlier on and those executive orders were geared to all their agencies about achieving greater equity in the way the agency does its work.

And so a bunch of these rules are also geared towards achieving greater equity. And that was a thing of having self-employed people as including, you know, and people employed by others so that this would bring greater equity.

Some of the other rules are much more specifically about dealing with people in low-income communities. So, you know, they but they are all related in part to that desired to achieve greater equity.

So again, we're going to need your help to understand what's in working, what issues are people encountering, where don't they understand what they need to do.

So yes, BRIs and ears on the ground and let us know once this happens.

Another thing to be aware of is that it is very important for you, especially if you're a local or a state arts council to build relationships with your local FEMA offices within your region because those Those relationships can really make a difference.

We regard ourselves as one of the voluntary organizations active in disasters or both surplus and and caper are that.

And we relate to people who are called voluntary agency liaisons that exist at FEMA within every region.

And when a recovery office get stepped up, there will be people there. So the more you are in communication.

That's a good thing because you know you can interact with them and get clarification for your constituents.

As well as that. It's my understanding that some of this aid might not come into effect in a region if a governor in this area governors and states have to contribute 25% of the aid that is provided.

FEMA provides 75%. And that may not be true for other areas, but certainly for the tools that will be true.

And I sort of, you know, have a question there. I mean, is it possible that if governors don't request this aid that in fact it might not be made available.

So that's actually for you guys and I, you know, I don't really, I didn't know the answer to that.

If this could actually be an optional rather than a compulsory program.

This is a compulsory part of the assistance. If you accept individual assistance, this will be included.

Okay.

But what if they don't accept individual assistance? Because we know of some, in your prior figures, you cited for the when it was only for those who were employed by others.

They were told, oh, there were people, 11,000 people. These are figures you supplied to Congress that applied for that aid under that provision but 0 of them were granted that aid and we couldn't figure out why.

[Kristina McAlister] 14:44:01

It could be that they didn't provide the appropriate documentation and I would have to look at the actual report because I know that we mentioned you know, like self-employed individuals were not eligible at that.

Time, so would have been 0, but I don't have that report in front of me to speak to, but you you cannot opt out of this portion.

[Amy Schwartzman] 14:44:16

Okay.

[Kristina McAlister] 14:44:23

Like if you, I mean, you can choose between public assistance and individual assistance, but generally like if the damage is there.

You know, the state will request individual assistance. This is a portion. You, you do get housing assistance and other needs assistance.

[Amy Schwartzman] 14:44:32

Okay.

[Kristina McAlister] 14:44:37

Those are pretty much automatically turned on when you request and are approved. For individual assistance.

[Amy Schwartzman] 14:44:43

Okay, alright. So the other thing that we need from you guys, as well as this portion is that we are going to be doing advocacy.

We do have some comments to the interim final rule that we would like FEMA to know about more formally.

And, we will be drafting both letters from Ncaper and Surplus and we will be providing guidelines to you.

We would like you to also send in your commentary. It's our understanding that, you know, the numbers do count.

That if we provide information about certain issues that may be there for our field or things that need to be clarified.

That we want the government to know about. We will send you the guidelines and model letters and ask that as many of you as can do this, submit that.

Our goal is to get you this information by March, the twelfth. And as if as many of you as possible can get it done by March, the 20 s or before then when the rule goes into effect that would be great.

But if not sometime after then. And, Again, we thank you. We thank you.

Guys at Fema so much for doing this and for all of you for attending and we look forward to this going into effect and seeing how it helps our field.

Thank you.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:46:04

Thank you. Thank you so much. Oh my gosh. It is so clear that you've spent so much time with this information and just have an incredible grasp.

Of the scope of this work. So thank you so much for sharing a little bit about the comment period and asking such very clear and precise questions.

We have a few minutes left in our Q&A, official QA. So yeah, at this point, if you do have a question and want to raise your hand to verbalize it, you are welcome to do so.

I am going to start with 2 questions that came in through the chat box. One from Philip with damaged fine art.

How current should the appraisal be on the collection?

For Christina.

[Kristina McAlister] 14:46:55

Yes, so again, we replace basic items in your home. So. The drywall, your appliances.

We are not going to provide. Assistance for art jewelry those things that aren't. Necessary for basic everyday living or work.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:47:18

So Christina, would you recommend that, folks make sure that those items are insured?

[Kristina McAlister] 14:47:25

Yes. That's a great point.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:47:25

Yes. Awesome. Thank you. Elizabeth with mid America arts alliance is curious how long is the approval process.

Once an artist submits a request for support.

[Kristina McAlister] 14:47:40

That's a great question. You know, we work to assist people as quickly as possible. This does require a manual review.

So someone actually looking at your documents and making the payment. So many of our types of assistance like you know, can be paid within 24 to 48 h after an inspection in this instance you're gonna get that letter during that period and then need to send us your documents the quicker you send us documents the quicker we can assist you but really how quickly you will get those dollars is a function of how many disasters are occurring

at the time. And a variety of other factors. So we don't speak to like.

We, we don't speculate about how often it can take. To go from submitting those documents to payments.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:48:35

Yeah, understandable. We appreciate you giving some. General insight. So that, that's all the questions we had available.

I'm gonna go through just a couple of next steps. In case You need a moment to continue processing because it is our lucky lucky day to share with you that today is not the first bite at the Apple.

But today is not the first bite at the Apple. Folks are gonna have an opportunity to get familiar with you, that today is not the first bite at the Apple.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:49:07

Folks are gonna have an opportunity to, get familiar with this information. Folks are gonna have an opportunity to, get familiar with this information. Join us for 2 more information sessions.

Get familiar with this information. Join us for 2 more information sessions. April fifteenth at 2 o'clock.

That's. So, get familiar with this information. Join us for 2 more information sessions.

April fifteenth at 2 o' but also for arts organizations that may be in a position to provide support for those artists that would be then submitting for support.

That's going to be again on April, the fifteenth from 2 to 3 30 PM.

Eastern standard time and we will be following up in the next week or so with some additional information. So don't worry if you didn't write that down.

And then we will also do a final session on June tenth at 2 o'clock. Similar to this session, we'll share any new information that we might have.

Given that, you know, there'll be some distance from the go live date of March 20 s.

And it'll be just one more opportunity to talk about how to submit comments, frame your comments, any other questions that may have come up how to submit comments, frame your comments, any other questions that it may have come up for you in the meantime, but it'll be that last opportunity, frame your comments, any other questions that, frame your comments, any other questions that it may have come up for you in the meantime, but it'll be that

last opportunity for you in the meantime, but it'll be that last opportunity for you in the meantime, but it'll be that last opportunity before the comment period closes on July, but it'll be that last opportunity before the comment period closes on July, 20 s.

Recordings will be available just aren't in a place where you can copy and paste. Because here we are in tech right and before we close, Christina, we had another question come in.

If an individual bit was displaced. For more than 18 months. Can FEMA extend the 18 month window for assistance?

[Kristina McAlister] 14:50:52

We can extend the 18 month window. But that's not done on a case by case basis.

It is done, like through a request from the governor or tribal leader to FEMA and it's based on sort of the number of individuals who might still need help.

You know, what specific challenges have there been in that disaster? I will say how I can't remember off the top of my head but like Katrina, I mean, it's very large disasters.

Often if we have a direct housing mission where we put people in directly leased departments or we bring in manufactured housing because there's just no resources in the area.

Those tend to be extended just because you know there's like a major disruption to the entire housing market in the area.

In some of your disasters that are near urban centers where there's you know more housing to start with.

We don't always see that. So. It can occur, but on like the financial rental assistance side.

It's less than a handful of times in my 17 year career. So not something that occurs very often and not decided on an individual basis.

I will say we are also making some changes to our continued temporary housing assistance to start working with people more closely those individuals who are still in FEMA rental assistance at say 12 months, 14 months, 16 months to make sure that we're getting a better understanding of who's struggling to reach.

You know, that recovery within the 18 month period and working with our VAL partners to put them more in touch with other things.

That could help them so that you know, they don't just kind of unexpectedly get that letter at 18 months that says your rental assistance is ending you know you need to finish achieving your long-term solutions.

So one of the improvements is this process is simplifying some of the documentation you need to send on the front end to ultimately receive continued temporary housing assistance and then working more closely with those applicants that are still in toward the end of the disaster to help them transition more effectively.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:53:13

Right. Christina, thank you. And, thank you everyone for joining us again today to learn a little bit about the rule changes that are coming.

We're so excited to be able to provide this opportunity to learn. So thank you, Christina, for sharing.

Danisha for joining us. Jan and Amy, thank you so much. Jan's waving at me.

So I think she wants to see something.

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:53:38

I just wanna say that also the summary and transcripts and things like this from will be on you a linked on our website and I'm sure SERFs and things like that from will be on you a linked on our website and I'm sure SERFs website as well case.

In case you miss it. Yeah.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:53:52

Casey or you wanna share it because we know there's a lot of folks that didn't, join us today.

So, we know there's a lot of folks that didn't, join us today.

[Ruby Lopez Harper, Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)] 14:54:03

So, please do make sure that you're circulating this information, especially if you are working with artists in your community.

This is going to be important information for them to have. Of course, it's an ongoing support system.

So one time won't be enough. But luckily there's folks like and caper and, the craft emergency relief fund here to make sure that that information is easy to find.

When you need it. So again, thank you everyone for joining us today. We hope we see you on April tenth and, no, April fifteenth and June tenth.

And with that, thank you so much and have a wonderful rest of your day

[Jan Newcomb, NCAPER] 14:54:37

Thanks, everybody