**FEMA Funeral Assistance**

FEMA has announced that they will begin accepting applications for funeral assistance on Monday, April 12. The following number will be used for those applying: **844-684-6333.**

FEMA released its guidance for the COVID-19 funeral assistance program today.

Please find highlights of FEMA guidance below:

* FEMA is working to finalize the funeral assistance guidance and hoping to publish it early next week. Once published, they will conduct outreach to stakeholders on the policy, including states, the medical community, and funeral directors association, over a couple of weeks before officially launching the program in early April.
* FEMA is taking a call center only approach, and will have the call lines open from 9am-9pm to allow people to call after hours if needed. FEMA is using both contract staff and FEMA staff at the call center. The goal is to have 5,000 staff answering phones at or soon after the program launch. The call line will be accessible for those with limited English proficiency and access and functional needs.
* Although FEMA expects wait times may be an issue at the launch, they expect this to work itself out in the first few days and believe 5,000 is the appropriate number of staff, but may increase that if needed.
* The maximum award amount will likely be $9,000 per funeral, and $35,500 per applicant (one applicant can apply to be reimbursed for more than one funeral) at 100% Federal cost share. The policy guidance will include a list of expenses that may be eligible, such as transporting the remains, burial plots, or caskets, but it is not an exhaustive list and FEMA plans to be as flexible as possible. Only deaths that occurred in the U.S. are eligible and the normal Individual Assistance citizenship or residency requirements will also apply here to the applicant, but not to the deceased.
* An applicant must submit a copy of the death certificate, which must indicate COVID-19 as the cause of death or a likely contributing cause, and the funeral expenses. Eligible deaths occurred from January 2020 onward.