



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**  
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**CHARLES D. BAKER**  
GOVERNOR

**KARYN E. POLITO**  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

March 26, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D. C.

Through: W. Russell Webster, Regional Administrator  
FEMA Region 1  
99 High Street  
Boston, MA 02110

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), and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.36, I request that you declare a major disaster for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a direct result of the overwhelming and adverse impacts from the Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19) beginning January 20, 2020 and continuing. Specifically, I am requesting Public Assistance, Category B and Individual Assistance, for all fourteen (14) counties in the Commonwealth.

The COVID-19 pandemic is rapidly evolving here in Massachusetts. To date, 19,794 tests have been completed. This includes tests done at the State public health lab and commercial laboratories. Of those tested, 1,838 have tested positive while 15 residents have died from COVID-19. Using federal guidance and direction, I along with my Commissioner of Public Health have implemented aggressive social distancing measures in an effort to mitigate the outbreak. Elementary and secondary schools have been closed through at least May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Colleges and universities have closed and sent students home for the remainder of the Spring semester. Gatherings of more than 10 people have been banned, all businesses and organizations not providing "COVID-19 essential services" have been ordered to close their physical workplaces to workers, customers and the public. All residents have been advised to stay home and avoid unnecessary travel

and other unnecessary activities. On-premises consumption of food and beverages is prohibited, though take-out and delivery are allowed so long as social distancing guidelines are followed. Public transportation systems are operating on reduced schedules.

In response to the severity and overwhelming impacts of this pandemic I ordered the creation of a COVID-19 Command Center (“CCC”). Today, I announced the COVID-19 Advisory Board, a group of medical experts that will support the CCC as the Commonwealth continues to respond to COVID-19. The CCC, under the leadership of Secretary of Health and Human Services and reporting to me and Lt. Governor Polito, is the Commonwealth’s single point of strategic decision making and coordination for the Administration’s comprehensive COVID-19 response. The COVID-19 Advisory Board, which first met on Wednesday, March 19, will advise the CCC on key decision points in the state’s response, including expanding access to testing and planning for medical surge, and will formally meet weekly for updates.

Preliminary damage assessments are impossible to perform at this time due to the dynamic nature of this pandemic, but cases continue to increase each day and ongoing life-saving response activities are overwhelming both State and local resources. Further, conducting assessments at this time would jeopardize the health and safety of our collective staffs. At this time, the Executive Office for Administration and Finance informs me that the Commonwealth has already expended over \$28 million in expenditures for PPE and medical equipment alone. I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of State and local governments and that supplementary Federal assistance is necessary.

In response to the gravity and overwhelming impacts of this pandemic I directed the execution of the State Emergency Operations Plan, including activation of the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act. Additionally, I declared a statewide emergency on March 10, 2020. The state of emergency remains in effect.

In order to immediately alleviate suffering and provide support to those who continue to be severely impacted by this disaster, I am also requesting that you authorize the following Individual Assistance Programs detailed below:

- **Disaster Unemployment Assistance.** COVID-19 and the associated community mitigation measures, including social distancing and business closures, is impacting the ability for individuals to work and is resulting in unprecedented temporary and permanent unemployment for Massachusetts workers.

Prior to the impact of COVID-19, the state experienced an unemployment rate of 2.8%, which was below the 3.5% national rate. New unemployment insurance claimant figures published by the U.S. Department of Labor today reflect the most recent impact of COVID-19 on unemployment insurance claims filed last week. As a result of COVID-19 in Massachusetts, the number of initial unemployment insurance claimants the week ending March 21 increased more than 132,000 new

individuals than the previous week. For perspective, new claims for the entire month of February 2020 were slightly over 17,000.

Companies are contacting our state Rapid Response program to get help with the impact of COVID-19 as they grapple with temporary or permanent shutdowns. As a result of the most recent closure orders over the week, more than 110 businesses have requested Rapid Response impacting an additional 6,500+ individuals.

There are tens of thousands more workers who are ineligible for the regular unemployment insurance program, including self-employed and contract workers or individuals who work for covered UI employers who do not earn enough wages, many of whom are working in food and other service occupations that have been hit hard. Disaster Unemployment Assistance provides benefits for workers that do not qualify for support through the regular UI program and would mitigate the impact of the disaster on this group of workers. The Administration estimates that there are more than 410,000 or 11% of the workforce who are self-employed.

- **Crisis Counseling Assistance/Regular Services Program.** The long-term impacts to this disaster include significant mental and behavioral health concerns. As senior centers, faith-based organizations, and other voluntary organizations close and cancel services, the local mental health need is expected to grow across the state. Many services provided by state and local governmental agencies have been forced to close due to concerns over public health and safety. Locations offering congregate nutrition meal site programs, behavioral health, and other services to individuals and families in communities across the state, including to very low-income and homeless individuals and families, have either been closed completely or reduced their services. The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected our most at-risk populations and resulted in reduced operations or closures of libraries, adult day care centers, skilled nursing programs, client transition services, community choice guiding services, counseling and support groups, senior foot care centers, and many other governmental and non-governmental programs that are vital to supporting the well-being of individuals and families in our communities. The enormity of this disaster will require substantial supportive crisis counseling, education, development of coping skills, and a robust support system that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is unable to adequately provide without federal assistance. In order to implement this program, the state will explore vendor relationships with in-state private not-for-profit organizations capable utilizing telephonic and/or video-chat technologies to conduct one on one or group sessions designed to prevent the onset of diagnosable disorders. The goal of the program will be to help those in need to understand that they are experiencing common reactions to extraordinary occurrences as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. The Commonwealth's Department of Mental Health (DMH) will be the lead agency for this program and has previous experience working with similar vendors.

## **Activation Summary**

Representatives from the following agencies and organizations are present in the State Emergency Operation Center (SEOC)/Regional Emergency Operation Centers:

- Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health
- Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development
- Massachusetts Office on Disability
- Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
- Massachusetts Department of Fire Services
- Massachusetts Environmental Police
- Massachusetts National Guard
- Massachusetts State Police
- Massachusetts Department of Transportation
- Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
- Massachusetts Port Authority
- Northwest Incident Management Team
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- American Red Cross
- Salvation Army
- Franklin County Sheriff's Office
- Hampden County Sheriff's Office
- InfraGard (Private Sector Coordination)

Three multi-disciplinary planning subgroups have been convened at the SEOC.

- Emergency Services Subgroup
- Logistics subgroup
- Mass Care Subgroup

These subgroups coordinate daily and have been assigned the task of developing strategies and coordinating efforts related to COVID-19.

I have designated the Director of the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, Samantha C. Phillips, as the State Coordinating Officer for this request and the major disaster declaration, if issued. Ms. Phillips will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and may provide further information or justification on my behalf.

I thank you for the support we have received from the Federal Emergency Management Agency throughout this challenging period, and for your consideration of this request for a Major Disaster Declaration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles D. Baker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Charles D. Baker  
Governor

Enclosures:  
FEMA Form 010-0-13  
Enclosure C



**10. Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment\***

Individual Assistance    Dates Performed \_\_\_\_\_ Requested N/A    Start \_\_\_\_\_ End \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Assistance Accessibility Problems (Areas that could not be accessed, and why)  
 Due to the nature of COVID-19, including the risks of furthering spreading the virus, traditional PDAs have not been conducted.

Public Assistance    Dates Performed \_\_\_\_\_ Requested N/A    Start \_\_\_\_\_ End \_\_\_\_\_

Public Assistance Accessibility Problems (Areas that could not be accessed, and why)  
 Due to the nature of COVID-19, including the risks of furthering spreading the virus, traditional PDAs have not been conducted.

**11. Programs and Areas Requested**

Individual Assistance  N/A     Individuals and Households Program     Crisis Counseling Program     Disaster Unemployment Assistance  
 All     Disaster Case Management     Disaster Legal Services     Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Assistance

For the following jurisdictions, specify programs and areas (counties, parishes, independent cities; for Indian tribal government, list tribe(s) and/or tribal area(s)) If additional space is needed, please enclose additional documentation).

Due to the global nature and statewide impacts of COVID-19, Individual Assistance is requested statewide, which includes the following fourteen counties: Barnstable, Berkshire, Bristol, Dukes, Essex, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex, Nantucket, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk and Worcester.

For States, identify Federally-recognized Tribes in the requested counties (if applicable).  
 Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe has requested to be their own Recipient.  
 Wampanoag Aquinnah Tribe has requested to be their own Recipient.

Please see **Enclosure A: Supplemental Information for Individual Assistance** for additional information in support of this request\*.

\*Not Required for Emergency Declaration Request

11. Programs and Areas Requested (Continued)

Public Assistance  N/A  Debris Removal (Category A)  Emergency Protective Measures (Category B)  Permanent Work (Categories C-G)\* (not available for Emergency Declaration Requests)

For the following jurisdictions, specify programs and areas (counties, parishes, independent cities; for Indian tribal government, list tribe(s) and/or tribal area(s)). If additional space is needed or your request includes different categories of work for different jurisdictions; please enclose additional documentation.

Due to the global nature and statewide impacts of COVID-19, Public Assistance is requested statewide which includes the following fourteen counties: Barnstable, Berkshire, Bristol, Dukes, Essex, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex, Nantucket, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk and Worcester.

For States, identify Federally-recognized Tribes included in the requested counties (if applicable).  
 Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe has requested to be their own Recipient.  
 Wampanoag Aquinnah Tribe has requested to be their own Recipient.

Please see **Enclosure B: Supplemental Information for Public Assistance** for additional information in support of this request\*.

**Indemnification for Debris Removal Activity**

I do not anticipate the need for debris removal.

I anticipate the need for debris removal, which poses an immediate threat to lives, public health and safety. Pursuant to Sections 403 and 407 of the Stafford Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5170b & 5173, the State or Indian tribal government agrees to indemnify and hold  harmless the United States of America for any claims arising from the removal of debris or wreckage for this disaster. The State or Indian tribal government agrees that debris removal from public and private property will not occur until the landowner signs an unconditional authorization for the removal of debris.

**Request for Direct Federal Assistance**

I do not request direct Federal assistance at this time.

I request direct Federal assistance for work and services to save lives and protect property, and:

a. I request the following type(s) of assistance:  
 This request includes but is not limited to to equipment and supplies necessary to augment the Commonwealth's healthcare system through the establishment of temporary hospital and intensive care facilities, establishment of testing sites, supply and and distribution of testing equipment, personnel and logistical resources to support the preceding requests. Any and all other Federal assets as may be necessary to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19.

b. List of reasons why State and local or Indian tribal government cannot perform, or contract for, required work and services. The evolving nature of of this event exceeds the capacity of the Commonwealth to protect public health and safety or to lessen as well as to avert the threat of greater disaster and minimize the spread of the virus.

c. In accordance with 44 C.F.R. § 206.208, the State or Indian tribal government agrees that it will, with respect to direct Federal assistance: (1) Provide without cost to the United States all lands, easements, and rights-of-ways necessary to accomplish the approved work; (2) Hold and save the United States free from damages due to the requested work, and shall indemnify the Federal Government against any claims arising from such work; (3) Provide reimbursement to FEMA for the non-Federal share of the cost of such work in accordance with the provisions of the FEMA-State or FEMA-Tribe Agreement ; and (4) Assist the performing Federal agency in all support and local jurisdictional matters.

**Request for Snow Assistance**

N/A  I request snow assistance.

Snow assistance for the following jurisdictions (Specify counties, independent cities or tribes and/or tribal areas).

Please see **Enclosure D: Historic and Current Snowfall Data** for additional information in support of this request\*.

\*Not Required for Emergency Declaration Request



11. Programs and Areas Requested (Continued)

Hazard Mitigation\*  Statewide OR

For the following specific counties, parishes, independent cities or tribes and/or tribal areas.

12. Mitigation Plan Information\*

a. Mitigation Plan Expiration Date September 18, 2023 b. Type of Plan  Enhanced  Standard

13. Other Federal Agency Programs

I do not anticipate requirements from Other Federal Agencies  I do anticipate requirements from Other Federal Agencies

Please see **Enclosure C: Requirements for Other Federal Agency Programs** for additional information in support of this request\*.

14. Findings and Certifications

I certify the following:

- a. I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and the affected local government or Indian tribal government and that supplementary federal assistance is necessary.
- b. In response to this incident, I have taken appropriate action under State or tribal law and have directed the execution of the State or Tribal Emergency Plan on March 10, 2020 in accordance with the Stafford Act.
- c. The State and local governments, or Indian tribal government will assume all applicable non-Federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act.

15. List of Enclosures and Supporting Documentation

- Cover Letter  Enclosure A (Individual Assistance)\*  Enclosure B (Public Assistance)\*
- Enclosure C (Requirements for Other Federal Agency Programs)  Enclosure D (Historic and Current Snowfall Data)
- Additional Supporting Documentation \_\_\_\_\_

Charles D. Bales

Governor's or Tribal Chief Executive's Signature

3/26/20  
Date

If anyone except the Governor or Tribal Chief Executive signs this document, please provide the documentation that establishes that this individual has the legal authority to act on behalf of the Governor or Tribal Chief Executive.

\*Not Required for Emergency Declaration Request

**ENCLOSURE C TO MAJOR DISASTER REQUEST**

**Estimated Assistance from Other Federal Agency Programs**

County/ Tribal Area	SBA Home Loans	SBA Business Loans (Economic Injury Disaster Loans)	FSA Loans	NRCS	FHWA	USACE	BIA	OTHER
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>TBD</b>
<b>Totals</b>								

*Note: Provide numbers and amounts, as appropriate.*