



Continue Support for Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG)

Background

Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG) allows State, tribal, and local governments to make key investments to build capacity and enhance the capability of states and localities to respond to disasters.

EMPG is the **only** source of federal funding directed to state and local governments for planning, training, exercises, and key professional expertise for all-hazards emergency preparedness. The money is often used to conduct risk and hazard assessments and support emergency operations centers which are the coordination hubs for all disaster response. The program also provides public education and outreach, enhanced interoperable communications capabilities, and the ability to manage statewide alerts and warnings.

Few federal programs boast EMPG's 50-50 matching commitment from the state and local level. EMPG stands as the beacon of Congressional commitment to ensuring communities and states are more ready to prepare, mitigate, respond, and recover from any number of emergencies and disasters. EMPG does far more, however, than provide funds for planning, training, exercises, and communications. EMPG must continue to be strengthened and maintained through shared investments.

Talking Points

- Only federal source of funding to assist state and local government with planning and preparedness activities associated with natural disasters.
- Primarily for maintaining emergency management programs and building capacity at the state and local levels.
- NEMA intends to continue focusing heavily on building metrics to measure outcomes of the program and continues to support the matching requirement in exchange for flexibility.
- The program is funded at \$350 million in fiscal year 2016. NEMA supports the President's proposed funding level of \$350 million for fiscal year 2017.
- NEMA produces the report *EMPG: Providing Returns on a Nation's Investment* which highlights the effectiveness of EMPG. This report is produced annually.

Requested Action

- Congress should continue to make strong investments in EMPG and ensure adequate support for preparedness at the state and local levels. Congress should approve sustained funding of EMPG at \$350 million.
- EMPG must be maintained as a flexible and all-hazards program and not stray from the Congressional intent of authorizing legislation including the Stafford Act. Program funds should not be tied to specific percentages, or "carve outs," for specific tasks, and improvements to emergency operations centers should continue as an allowable cost.



Implement Comprehensive Preparedness Grant Reform to Better Address Risk

Background

Since the inception of the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP), NEMA has maintained support of these grants as critical resources to help state and local governments build and sustain capabilities to address the various threats and hazards they face. Congress has repeatedly expressed the need for answers to lingering questions about the effectiveness and performance of the suite of FEMA grant programs. Therefore, in 2012, NEMA decided the time had come to develop an innovative approach to grants that goes beyond simply requesting additional funding.

The eight month long process conducted by NEMA produced a four page document addressing the full suite of preparedness grants. Key principles and values include supporting PPD-8; building a culture of collaboration; the ability to be agile and adaptive to confront changing hazards; building and sustaining capabilities; encouraging innovation; providing full visibility to all stakeholders; and recognizing the interdependencies of our national systems. The importance of these principles and values highlight a critical point in any retrospective on homeland security grants. Regardless of our country's fiscal situation, physical security and economic security are not mutually exclusive and can be achieved with a more streamlined grant structure. Even without a proposal that achieves comprehensive grant reform in the FY17 budget, NEMA will continue to support efforts to prioritize key components of a grant structure that is measurable, flexible, and sustainable.

Talking Points

There are four key components of the NEMA grants proposal:

1. **The THIRA.** The THIRA process is necessary to assess the risks of threats and hazards, but will have limited effectiveness if implemented in the current grant system due to shortcomings in the planning process.
2. **Comprehensive Planning.** Current planning efforts are fiscally-centric and focus on capabilities based on expected funding which limits our ability to measure progress. A comprehensive preparedness plan should be developed to examine the full range of needs, capabilities, and requirements to help buy-down risk. As funding is allocated against long-range priorities, the delta between “need” and “capability” will become measurable over time.
3. **Skilled Cadre.** NEMA proposes utilizing and mirroring the existing EMPG structure by adding a homeland security cadre grant. These grants will support efforts to maintain all-hazard planning efforts, remain current with appropriate levels of training and exercises, support national priorities as outlined in PPD-8, and conduct public education, and grants management.
4. **Investment Grants.** A majority of the funding through this new system would go toward investment grants still made through a single allocation to states. These applications are reviewed by a multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional advisory committee, and the SAA makes awards.

Requested Actions

- Congress should address the need for a comprehensive preparedness grants structure. This reform should harness lessons of the past ten years and allow participation from the full range of stakeholders.
- The new system must be flexible, adaptable, and transparent. By offering flexibility to grantees, Congress and the Administration can expect added accountability.



Urge Development and Implementation of a National Strategy for Reducing Future Disaster Costs

Background

In response to the needs of state and local governments, Congress passed the *Sandy Recovery Improvement Act* (SRIA) which made sweeping changes to the existing Stafford Act. This legislation not only helped facilitate a smooth recovery in the Sandy-impacted area, but also forever changes FEMA programs and policies. Some of the provisions of SRIA, such as the debris removal pilot program, have been supported by NEMA for many years.

Fortunately, NEMA held our Mid-Year Forum in Washington, D.C. just three weeks after passage of SRIA which afforded the opportunity to adequately review the legislation and begin a dialogue with FEMA about implementation of the Act. NEMA found this legislation so important, more than seven hours were dedicated to the review thereby facilitating ample opportunities for FEMA officials to engage with state emergency management directors while considering the necessary changes to policies and rules. NEMA quickly realized the effort to develop a framework for a National Strategy for Reducing Future Disaster Costs could be paramount in ensuring the solvency of our disaster response network for generations to come.

NEMA members understood the importance of clearly articulating initial steps in developing an informed and effective national strategy for reducing future disaster costs including planning assumptions. NEMA also recognizes varying levels and types of activities to consider for reducing future disaster costs including those in the near-term, long-term, administrative/programmatic/operational, and strategic. While the initial direction from Congress was for FEMA to simply describe a framework, NEMA encourages the full development of this strategy.

Talking Points

- FEMA was required to develop a National Strategy for Reducing Future Disaster Costs through the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act.
- The Administration submitted their proposed framework in September 2013.
- No further imperative exists to codify the framework in to a true strategy.
- FEMA should be instructed to take this effort to the next step and fully develop the National Strategy for Reducing Future Disaster Costs in consultation with states.

Requested Action

The National Strategy for Reducing Future Disaster Costs should be finalized and:

- Build, enhance, and sustain capabilities, self-reliance, and resilience of our communities and nation while encouraging innovation.
- Reflect the fiscal realities and limitations of the present and the future. This nation deserves safety and security, but it also deserves solvency.
- Recognize the complex interdependencies and vulnerabilities of our national systems, particularly the movement of goods, services, and people.
- Mitigation and long-term recovery are societal investments – not a cost. These endeavors must build on non-traditional partnerships to communicate that efforts are worth the investments.



Support Continued Funding for the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)

Background

EMAC was the first national disaster-relief compact ratified by Congress since the Civil Defense and Disaster Compact of 1950. Since ratification in 1996, every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have enacted legislation to become EMAC members. Annual line-item funding is critical for response to disasters (natural and man-made) in support of our nation's mutual aid system. For example, 178 personnel were deployed through EMAC in response to flooding events in New Mexico, Colorado, and Alaska to assist with public assistance, hazard mitigation, infrastructure repairs, and search and rescue operations. Last year, in response to winter storms, 165 personnel were deployed through EMAC to Connecticut and Massachusetts with snow clearing equipment and operators to help those states reopen businesses and allow citizens to return to work. During Hurricane Sandy, 35 states sent over 2,600 personnel to assist with the response and recovery efforts through EMAC. Prior to Hurricane Sandy, states responded under EMAC to the Colorado Wildfires, Hurricane Isaac which impacted Mississippi, Florida, and Louisiana. In 2011, states deployed over 1,100 personnel in response to Hurricanes Irene and Lee which impacted Vermont, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, Virginia, and New Jersey.

EMAC has grown considerably over the past decade. States sent 26 emergency management personnel responded to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Conversely, over 66,000 personnel from a variety of disciplines deployed through the EMAC to the Gulf Coast in response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and 12,279 personnel to Texas and Louisiana during Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. The 2009 Spring Flooding in North Dakota and Minnesota resulted in States deploying equipment, sandbags, and 1,029 personnel to North Dakota. In all, 727 National Guard personnel and 302 civilians were sent to assist. In 2011, over 600 personnel were deployed in response to the floods and tornados in Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, South Dakota, Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee.

Talking Points

- All 50 states, DC, and 3 territories have enacted legislation becoming EMAC members.
- The Post Katrina FEMA Reform Act authorized \$4 million annually for EMAC.
- Line item funding for EMAC is *not* an earmark. The funds are for a nationwide mutual aid system and not for a specific state, jurisdiction, or project. All resources in a state can deploy through EMAC (fire-hazmat, law enforcement, public health, medical, mass care, animal response, emergency medical services, National Guard, public works, search & rescue, transportation, human services, engineering, agriculture & forestry, emergency/incident management).
- Investment into EMAC leverages federal grant dollars— such as those from the Hazard Grant Mitigation Program and the Emergency Management Performance Grant – that have already been invested in state and local emergency management capabilities.

Requested Action

- Provide budget line item for EMAC to the full authorized amount of \$2 million.
- Include an annual budget line item in FEMA to assist with planning, training, education and exercises; operations support; information and resource management; after action reviews and implementation of lessons learned and model practices.



Coordinate Stafford Act Changes with the Emergency Management Community

Background

The *Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act* (Stafford Act) authorizes the President to issue a major disaster declaration to speed a wide range of federal aid to states determined to be overwhelmed by hurricanes or other catastrophes. Financing for the aid is appropriated to the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) and administered by DHS and FEMA. Funds appropriated to the DRF remain available until expended which makes it a “no year account.” The Stafford Act authorizes temporary housing, grants for immediate needs of families and individuals, repair of public infrastructure, emergency communications systems, and other forms of assistance.

In regard to legislative changes to the Stafford Act following Hurricane Sandy, NEMA has extended offers to work closely with FEMA as policies and regulations are put in place under the *Sandy Recovery Improvement Act of 2013* (SRIA). The broad sweeping changes to the Stafford Act under this legislation will forever change the way recovery is managed at all levels of government and state emergency managers must be consulted as changes are implemented.

Since the Stafford Act provides the President with permanent authority to direct federal aid to stricken states, Congress need not enact new legislation to meet immediate needs, but will occasionally address program reauthorization within the Stafford Act.

Talking Points

- NEMA continues to engage Congressional committees as they explore potential changes to the Stafford Act.
 - Supported provisions in recent bills from the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management to reauthorize FEMA (HR 3300) and make changes to certain disaster assistance programs within the agency (HR 1471).
- The Stafford Act Coalition, of which NEMA is a member, remains available to Congressional staff to discuss issues impacting the Stafford Act.

Requested Action

- Should more broad changes to the Stafford Act be considered, NEMA should be utilized as a resource for consultation as the bills are being considered.
- NEMA stands ready to work with Congress on any efforts to explore changes to the Stafford Act.