



January 21, 2022



THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON: At-Home Tests for Everybody

A short 4-day week for Congress before a district work week meant a flurry of activity with little resolution. Filibuster discussions carried over into this week– leading up to a failed move by Democrat leadership to get a majority vote on Senate rulings that have stalled the progress of the President's voting right reform.

The USPS rolled out their at-home COVID-19 test request portal this week, allowing all citizens to request four free tests that will be shipped out at the end of the month. This step comes as a direct result of the ever-looming Omicron variant continues to surge health care facilities and impact schools, businesses, and just about every other aspect of daily life.

FEMA confirmed long-standing friend of NEMA, Pamela Williams, as Assistant Administrator for Grant Programs Directorate. We look forward to continued partnership with her in her new role!

A reminder that the Flood Management Assistance and BRIC Program application deadlines are next week, by January 28 at 3pm ET!

Hearings the Week of January 24, 2022

Next week is a district work week for members. No hearings scheduled.

More News from the Nation's Capital...

House Homeland Security Committee Holds Hearing on FEMA Staffing Shortages

On Thursday, the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery and Subcommittee on Oversight, Management, and Accountability held a joint hearing on FEMA workforce challenges. Witness testimony revolved around the workload that FEMA faces and what changes can be implemented in order to prevent overloads and burnout among personnel, often caused by redeployment and the constant need to respond to ongoing disasters without breaks. A change that was offered to potentially alleviate these burdens would be to work on streamlining post-disaster processes, allowing responses to be closed out quicker. This would increase the available workforce to respond to new disasters rather than working on closing disasters from years ago. One of the witnesses, former FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate, made a request to amend the Stafford Act to allow DRF funding to be used to train reservists without tying it to a specific disaster. In addition to Former FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate, Director of Homeland Security and Justice Team at the Government Accountability Office (GAO), Chris Currie, and Carra Sims, Senior Behavioral and Social Scientist at The RAND Corporation, were also witnesses.

A recording of the hearing, written witness testimony, and opening statements from the Committee are available on the [Committee website](#).

NASCIO Outlines State CIO Priorities for the New Year

On Wednesday, the National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO), a partner of NEMA, held a strategic partner meeting to discuss the outlook and insights of CIOs in the coming year. Coming in as the number one priority on the [top 10 priority list](#) for the 9th consecutive year was cybersecurity and risk management according to the voices of state CIOs across the country. The conversation touched on a remote work future, increasing the equity and availability of broadband, and upgrading current IT systems among other priorities.

Additionally, as with other aspects of emergency management, cybersecurity needs to adopt a whole of government approach as it looks to develop and innovate government digital services.

For more information on the work NASCIO is doing and on state cyber practices, please visit the [NASCIO website](#).

FEMA Seeks Input on Development of National Continuous Improvement Guidance

On Tuesday, FEMA released a request for additional information on their Continuous Improvement Guidance. They are seeking whole community stakeholder feedback to aid in the development of National Continuous Improvement Guidance. The engagement period will begin on January 18 and last until February 10. The Continuous Improvement Program allows organizations to incorporate lessons learned from exercises and real-world incidents so they can build capabilities and become more resilient.

FEMA will host a series of webinar sessions between January 25 and February 8 to gather input from whole community stakeholders that wish to participate and indicate what they would find most useful in establishing new or developing existing continuous improvement processes.

For information on webinar sessions and to register, click [here](#). For additional questions or feedback contact FEMA-CITAP@fema.dhs.gov.

GAO Recommends More Data to Assess Equity of HUD CDBG-DR for Vulnerable Populations

On Wednesday, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report outlining the need for more data on the distribution of Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Relief funds by the Office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in order to better assess and ensure to equity of funding for vulnerable populations. In a report last year, the GAO recommended that HUD take additional steps to collect, analyze, and publish demographic data from CDBG-DR grantees on vulnerable populations who apply for and receive assistance. HUD did not agree or disagree with the recommendation but identified potential ways to collect data to assess how vulnerable populations are being served and the associated challenges.

Highlights from the report can be found [here](#), and the full report [here](#).

Other News from DC and Around the Country:

HSToday: [Army Corps of Engineers Announces Port Infrastructure, Disaster Mitigation Investments](#)

CNN: [Covid Pandemic 'nowhere near over,' WHO says](#)

Governing (Opinion): [Your Agency Is Special? Not When It Comes to IT and Security](#)

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