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## THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON: Off to the Races!

NEMA staff has gotten some insight into the FY2024 budget cycle, with word coming across our desks that President Biden's executive budget proposal should be released around March 9. This should be taken with a grain of salt with how far out this date is, however, it does provide a nice timeline for when we should expect to see where the President's funding priorities lay. The budget is typically due out the first week of February, but due to the tardiness of the FY23 Appropriation, they needed a bit more time to reconcile.

As NEMA-alum Jared Moskowitz gets his bearings as a newly-elected Member of Congress, NEMA and IAEM had a chance to meet with him this week to discuss priorities during the 118<sup>th</sup>. His primary committees will be Foreign Affairs and Oversight which should keep him quite busy, but he's not forgetting his roots and anxious to help-out the emergency management community where he can. With business cards exchanged the two associations and Moskowitz's staff will establish a close relationship to align priorities for the next couple years.

A reminder that the Safeguarding Tomorrow Revolving Loan Fund program has begun accepting applications. This FEMA program was born out of the STORM Act which passed back in 2021, a piece of legislation that NEMA has worked with FEMA on implementing. Information on the program and applications can be found [here](#).

### Hearings the Week of February 6, 2023

No relevant hearings this week.

*More News from the Nation's Capital...*

### Representative Perry (R—PA) to Chair Emergency Management Subcommittee

This week, we got a full picture of what the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee make-up would look like. Subcommittee leadership and membership were announced on Wednesday in the committee's organizational meeting. With that, we saw Rep. Scott Perry (R—PA) appointed as the chair of the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management. We are excited to work with Rep. Perry and the rest of the subcommittee in the near future as we continue to progress the work of emergency management.

### FEMA Expands Eligibility for Revolving Loan Fund to Insular Areas, Tribes

FEMA is announcing expansion to eligibility for a new grant program that provides revolving loans for resilience-related activities. The Safeguarding Tomorrow Revolving Loan Fund grant program has been expanded to give insular areas the same eligibility to apply as states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. As defined by the Safeguarding Tomorrow through Ongoing Risk Mitigation (STORM) Act, insular areas are American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands and U.S. Virgin Islands.

Additionally, any of the 20 federally recognized tribal nations that have received major disaster declarations are now eligible to apply. This removes the five-year window that limited the opportunity to 15 tribal nations.

### GAO Release Report on Emergency Relief Funding Fraud

On Wednesday, the GAO released a report highlighting fraud and improper payments from various COVID-19 emergency relief programs. In the report, This includes the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and COVID-19 Economic Injury Disaster Loan (COVID-19 EIDL) program, the Department of Labor's (DOL) Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs, and economic impact payments issued by the Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service.

The extent of fraud associated with PPP, COVID-19 EIDL, UI, and other COVID19 relief programs has not yet been fully determined. Nevertheless, in December 2022, GAO found that measures and estimates indicate substantial levels of fraud and potential fraud in UI during the pandemic. Specifically, GAO reported that if the lower bound of DOL's 2021 estimated national fraud rate for the regular UI program was extrapolated to total spending across all UI programs during the pandemic, it would suggest over \$60 billion in fraudulent UI payments. However, such an extrapolation has inherent limitations and should be interpreted with caution.

The full GAO report along with all the recommendations on the analysis can be found [here](#). A highlight page can be found [here](#).

### FEMA Releases New Tools for State Mitigation Planning

FEMA developed two new resources to help state mitigation programs work with FEMA regional offices. The first can be used to help plan annual program consultation meetings. The second can help enhanced state programs prepare for annual validations. [Planning the Mitigation Consultation: Resources for States, DC and Territories consultation toolkit](#) will help states, Washington, D.C. and territorial hazard mitigation planners work with FEMA to plan the annual consultation.

A second resource, the [Enhanced State Validation Toolkit](#), gives resources for FEMA and planners with enhanced state mitigation plans to use to jointly develop performance measures and commitments for the annual validations.

### MS-ISAC to Hold Two Webinars on ".Gov" Best Practices and Cyber Apprenticeships

This week, MS-ISAC announced two webinars coming up this month. One, titled *ISAC Best Practices: .Gov--the "Top" Top-Level Domain* will be held on Tuesday, February 7, 2023, 2-3pm ET. Join co-hosts MS-ISAC, NASCIO, NACo and NLC for this important webinar that is sure to answer your questions and connect the dots about the .gov domain. With all of this information, you'll be well prepared for your transition planning to increase the security and integrity of your online presence. Follow this [link](#) to register.

The second webinar, titled *Building a Cyber Secure Future through SOC Apprenticeship* will be held on Thursday, February 16, 2023, 2pm ET. Join co-hosts MS-ISAC, Texas A&M University, and Cyber Florida at University of South Florida to learn about an exciting new program that will allow your organization to stand up a Security Operations Center and, in doing so, also training the next generation of cyber professionals; all with the expert assistance of the Center for Internet Security (CIS) SOC. Follow this [link](#) to register.

### FEMA Hosts Benefit Cost Analysis Webinar

On February 7, FEMA will host a non-credited webinar on completing a Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) for generator projects. This webinar will provide an overview of how to conduct an analysis using FEMA's BCA Toolkit as part of the requirements for the agency's Hazard Mitigation Assistance application.

The webinar is at 1 p.m. ET on Tuesday, February 7. To register for the event, click [here](#).

### DHS Center for Countering Human Trafficking Releases FY 2022 Annual Report

This week, DHS released their most recent report from the Center for Countering Human Trafficking which highlights the Department's achievements in combatting human trafficking during the previous fiscal year.

In FY 2022, DHS agencies developed implementation plans tailored to incorporate a victim-centered approach into all relevant policies and programs; assisted 765 human trafficking victims; granted immigration protections to more than 22,500 victims and their families; and made 3,655 trafficking-related arrests. DHS personnel supported over 1,000 trafficking-related indictments and 600 prosecutions, and trained more than 200,000 DHS employees and private-sector personnel in recognizing and reporting suspected cases of human trafficking.

The full report can be found on the [Center's website](#).

*Other News from DC and Around the Country:*

Science Alert: [Wildfire Destruction in The Western US Has Doubled in Just 10 Years](#)

Route Fifty: [2022's Billion-Dollar Disasters: Climate Change Helped Make It US's 3rd Most Expensive Year on Record](#)

Governing: [Elections Stayed Secure in 2022, but Trouble Could Return in 2024](#)

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