



April 9, 2021



## THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON:

### Odds and Ends

After so much activity in recent months, the Senate is returning to session and first on the agenda is moving through some of the items that weren't completed before recess. Included on that list is Deanne Criswell's nomination to be FEMA Administrator. Her nomination is being sent to the floor by the Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC) next week. While this is another step forward in the process, a vote is not yet scheduled for her confirmation.

This past week NEMA and IAEM released our annual joint report on the return on investment related to the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) program. Survey responses from this year indicated the criticality of sustained EMPG funding for COVID-19 pandemic response and for continuing to prepare for other hazards even amidst resource and time constraints. NEMA and IAEM have been providing this report for over a decade and it has been seen in Congressional testimony, House and Senate member statements, and Appropriations report language. It is a cornerstone of our strategy to defend the program and secure increases. Thank you to those of you who were involved in responding to the survey in your jurisdictions. [You can find the report here.](#)

#### Hearings the Week of April 12, 2021

[Preparedness for COVID-19: The Initial Pandemic Response and Lessons Learned](#)

Senate Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee

Wednesday, April 14, 10:00am ET

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

#### FEMA Interim Policy Released on Safe Opening and Operation Cost Eligibility Under Public Assistance

FEMA released the *Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic: Safe Opening and Operation Work Eligible for Public Assistance Interim Policy*. State, local, tribal, and territorial governments and some nonprofits may be eligible for this additional assistance for eligible facilities. Eligible facilities could include schools, medical facilities, and government facilities open to the public.

Items potentially eligible for reimbursement include:

- Face coverings and other PPE;
- Cleaning and disinfection;
- COVID-19 diagnostic testing;
- Screening and temperature scanning;
- Portable temporary physical barriers for social distancing (long-term building costs such as wing expansions are not eligible); and
- Purchase and storage of PPE and other supplies listed based on projected needs.

Reimbursement is related to actions performed from January 21, 2021 - September 30, 2021. The [interim policy is available here.](#)

#### CRS Report: State and Federal Authority to Mandate COVID-19 Vaccination

Given the recent Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs) related to COVID-19 vaccines and their implications for addressing the pandemic, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) released a report providing considerations to Congress as to potential state and federal authorities to mandate vaccination should they be interested in doing so. The report provides background on previous vaccination authorities under states' police powers, the Supreme Court's recognition of state and local authorities to mandate vaccination as part of their police powers, and information on modern courts' analyses of more recent challenges to state vaccination mandates.

It does not provide a recommendation on if or how to mandate vaccinations. [Read the report here.](#)

#### Notice of President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee Meeting

CISA announced that the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee (NSTAC) is meeting May 6, 2021 from 12-2:00pm ET. Discussions will be based around current NSTAC activities and the government's ongoing cybersecurity and NS/EP communications initiatives, as well as a keynote address on the Administration's homeland security priorities.

The meeting is open to the public, but if you would like to attend or register to speak you must do so by **5:00pm ET April 29.** [Additional information is available here.](#)

*Other News from DC and Around the Country:*

ERO Insider: [NASEO and NEMA to Granholm: Use FEMA Funds for Grid Resilience](#)  
Scientific American: [Pressure Builds on Congress to Help People Afford Pricy Flood Insurance](#)  
AP: [Senators Press for More on SolarWinds Hack After AP Report](#)

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