



National Emergency Management Association

National Policy Priorities 2025

[The National Emergency Management Association \(NEMA\)](#) represents the voice and consensus policy positions of the directors of the emergency management agencies of the 50 states, U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia who are responsible to their governors for all hazards emergency and disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery.

Address the Role of Emergency Management for Nation-State Threats

Our nation faces an evolving array of threats from foreign adversaries. Nation-state actors increasingly target critical infrastructure and disaster response operations, posing risks that could hinder immediate response efforts and long-term trust in government. In today's landscape, these threats require enhanced collaboration across federal, state, and local agencies, along with a renewed focus on authorities, resource allocation, policy development, and robust information-sharing.

NEMA would like to work collaboratively with the Trump Administration to address the following issues:

- Awareness of nation-state threats and their impacts across various sectors needs to be fully understood both within emergency management and its wider community of partners. The threat must also be effectively communicated to elected officials at all levels of government so that appropriate actions can be taken to prepare and protect the public.
- The dangers of misinformation and disinformation perpetuated by nation-state actors during recent disasters such as the Maui wildfire, Hurricane Helene, and Hurricane Milton disrupted the response and prevented some disaster survivors from seeking much needed assistance. The federal government must be the lead in combating these threats by uniting the nation with a common message that builds trust in government at all levels.
- The roles, responsibilities, and relationships between defense, homeland security, emergency management, and public safety are not clear. Planning at the federal level cannot be done in a silo. Reducing barriers to information sharing across all levels of government and the private sector is a top priority.
- Given the heightened nation-state threat environment, increased information sharing by the federal government during large special events like the World Cup 2026 is essential to ensure real-time situational awareness and coordinated responses. By providing state and local authorities with timely intelligence and threat analyses, federal agencies can help preempt potential security risks and enhance public safety.

NEMA calls on the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Northern Command, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to engage with emergency management to ensure its role is clearly understood in consequence management planning for a nation-state event.

Build State and Local Emergency Management Capacity

The Administration and Congress should support increased Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) funding through FEMA for state and local emergency management agencies. These grants are vital in building and sustaining comprehensive emergency management capabilities across the nation. EMPG funding enables

state and local agencies to enhance preparedness, response, recovery, and resilience efforts, ensuring that communities are better equipped to handle disasters of all types, including human caused.

By investing in EMPG, the federal government helps maintain a standardized and coordinated approach to emergency management, reducing the impact of disasters and improving the overall resilience of the nation. Moreover, these grants support the training and development of emergency management personnel, fostering a skilled workforce that can effectively manage emergencies and protect public safety.

Robust funding for EMPG as well as homeland security grants not only bolsters state and local capacity to protect communities but also strengthens national security by fostering a unified and coordinated approach to disaster and threat management.

Ensure Disaster Survivor Resources are Available When Needed

The Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) at FEMA is the federal funding which supports state and local governments with their immediate disaster response and long-term rebuilding and restoration efforts. For the third time in two years, FEMA may have to limit the support it provides to disaster impacted communities to only Immediate Needs Funding (INF) and once again halt ongoing recovery projects across the country. This particularly impacts small and rural communities and non-profit organizations that must take out loans to meet initial response needs. Protracting the recovery process means projects are halted, FEMA is limited in the support they can provide to recent disaster survivors, and communities are unable to recover and prosper. INF impacts every single state and community with an open disaster declaration.

The President should direct the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and FEMA to collaborate regularly and communicate with the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations to ensure this account is always funded. Restricting funding through INF, slowing the review of existing project applications, or cannibalizing programs such as the Building Resilient Infrastructure in Communities (BRIC) to maintain the account is an unsustainable strategy.

Reduce the Complexity of Federal Disaster Assistance Programs

To enhance the effectiveness of federal disaster assistance programs, it is essential to streamline processes and reduce bureaucratic barriers. Requiring federal agencies to coordinate disparate disaster programs, increase transparency, provide faster assistance to survivors, and build resilience would vastly improve the nation's emergency management system. A survivor-focused approach that prioritizes timely and personalized assistance can significantly improve overall disaster response and recovery efforts.

NEMA calls on the Administration to support the establishment of a single, common disaster survivor application to be utilized across all federal disaster assistance programs. This seamless interagency data sharing would enable better communication and coordination, faster disbursement of funds, as well as improved oversight and accountability.

Incorporate FEMA into the Presidential Cabinet

The FEMA Administrator should have direct access to the President and a seat on the National Security Council's Principals Committee. This can be accomplished through Executive Order (EO) similar to the EOs of 2017 and 2021 regarding the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). This will ensure leadership intent for programmatic areas of Preparedness, Response, Recovery, and Resilience.

NEMA urges the incoming Administration to empower FEMA to coordinate actions across the federal government for effective long term disaster recovery. FEMA must also have the appropriate resources to meet its ever-expanding mission and increased demands for more comprehensive response and recovery efforts.