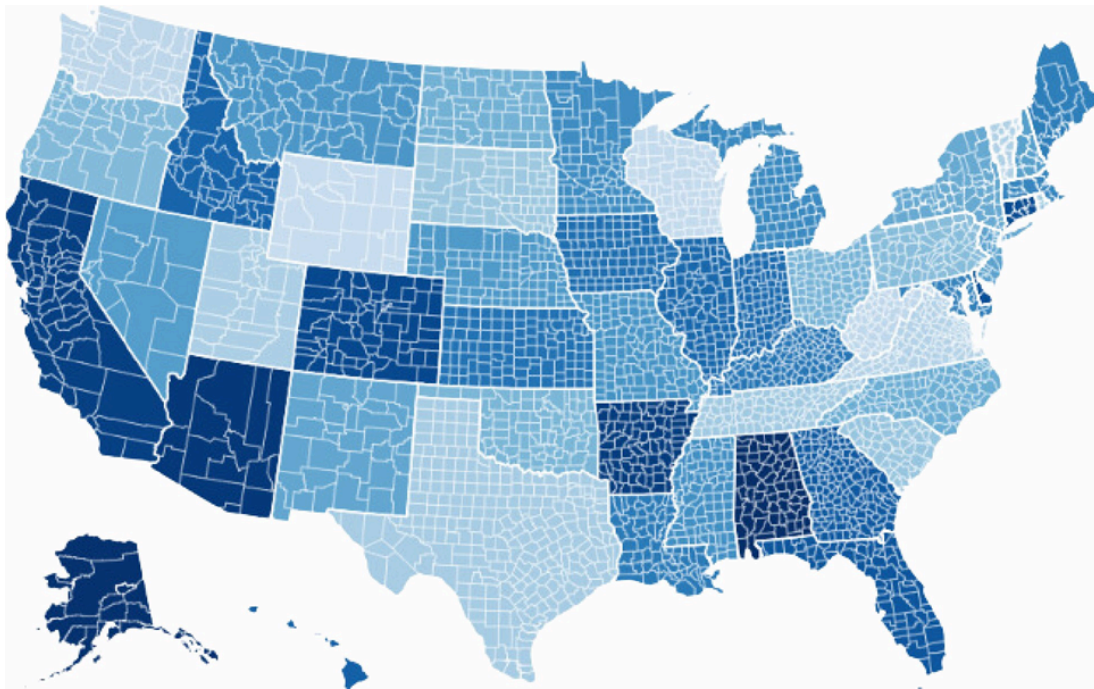


EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE GRANTS

Evaluating the Nation's Return On Investment



2026 Edition

Joint Report Presented By





The U.S. Council of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM-USA) and the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) offer this joint report annually to detail the return on investment of the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) program. The EMPG program enables local and state governments to strengthen emergency management capabilities and effectively prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. As the federal government continues to expand the responsibilities of state and local emergency management agencies and reduce the federal role in disasters, an appropriately funded EMPG program is more important than ever.

This year's report was generated from the survey responses from 51 states and territories and over 400 local emergency management agencies regarding spending of EMPG funds in Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) and the outcomes of their investments. State and local governments continue to demonstrate a strong commitment to this partnership with the federal government to build an all-hazards emergency management capacity and enhance resilience nationwide.

Congress has historically met the needs of these state and local agencies. As recently as FY20, EMPG received a \$5 million increase to a total of \$355 million annually, which stayed unchanged until FY24, when Congress cut EMPG funding by nearly 10 percent. NEMA and IAEM call upon Congress to increase EMPG consistent baseline levels to \$500 million in FY26. As associations dedicated to emergency management, we commit to providing transparency in how these funds are allocated and remain good stewards of taxpayers' dollars.

Sincerely,

A.J. Gary

President, NEMA

Director, Arkansas Department of Emergency Management

Josh Morton

President, IAEM-USA

Director, Saluda County (SC) Emergency Management Division

REDUCING DISASTER COSTS TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Disasters of varying scale and impact happen every day across the United States. Large-scale disasters, however, represent only a fraction of the work being done by state and local emergency managers. FY25 saw many emergency events that caused devastation at the local and state levels but did not require federal assistance. For these events, EMPG funding supported the capabilities necessary to mitigate threats to residents and avoid escalation of such events, allowing these events to be managed without federal expenditures. In FY25:

- **55** events required a federal major or emergency declaration.
- **24,957** events required state assets (including EMPG-funded assets) but did not reach the level of a federal declaration.
- **3,512** additional events used EMPG-funded assets in combination with local assets without any additional state or federal support.
- States and localities collectively managed at least **28,469** events without additional federal expenditure.

At a cost of just over \$1 per resident, EMPG generates more than \$700 million annually in return on investment (ROI). This ROI approaches \$1 billion when additional state and local contributions beyond the required 50/50 match are included. As the only federal preparedness grant program with this required funding match, **EMPG is one of FEMA's best values for taxpayers.**

Moreover, by strengthening state and local capabilities to manage incidents and enhancing emergency management capacity, **EMPG can reduce the need for federal support during declared disasters, driving down federal disaster costs.**



Image courtesy of the Washington Emergency Management Division

ADDRESSING STATE AND LOCAL NEEDS

One of the great strengths of the EMPG program is its flexibility, as it enables state, local, and territorial governments to invest their assistance in the specific areas where they have identified their greatest needs, vulnerabilities, and growth opportunities. In FY25, states highlighted diverse priorities, ranging from enhancing state emergency communication capabilities and investing in training and exercise programs to developing emergency/hazard mitigation plans and updating technological systems, among many more.

ADDRESSING STATE AND LOCAL NEEDS

These wide-ranging priorities reflect that each state understands best what they need for their communities to be resilient, prepared, and ready to respond when disaster strikes. For example, in FY25, EMPG helped local and state emergency managers:

"Invest in a robust, mission-ready Strategic Technology Reserve and enhanced state and local Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) capability and proficiency."

"Enhance local and state capacity to restore essential services and infrastructure after disasters."

"Support the necessary site modifications and the purchase of supplies and materials for our Alternate Emergency Operations Center (EOC) facility."

"Manage 28 real-world incidents without interruption while simultaneously conducting 11 exercises, updating 26 plans, and maintaining full EOC readiness—all with only three full-time staff."

"Support special projects for our local emergency management agencies, bolstering their response capabilities and providing resources that may be utilized throughout the state, including Incident Management Team support trailers and equipment, drones, and drone support vehicles."

"Increase the quantity and quality of public outreach toolkits developed and provided to local emergency managers throughout the year, amplifying our reach for preparedness messaging."

"Implement new technology to ingest and analyze information and create better shared situational awareness amongst partners and stakeholders."

"Update the state's Hurricane Annex, Playbook, and Continuity of Operations Plan, along with 15 local Emergency Operations Plans."

"Implement a recurring monthly tabletop exercise program that brought together city departments and partner agencies to discuss locally relevant scenarios."

"Create a local Teen Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training program working with the local Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) and extension office."

EMPG-SUPPORTED SUCCESS

EMPG funding enabled the **Alabama Emergency Management Agency** to improve efficiency, safety, and support employee well-being at the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). The project was completed in 2025, and it has **enhanced the workflow and operational efficiency** of the SEOC, resulting in faster decision-making and reduced downtime. The significant enhancements made to the facility ensure that the SEOC is **equipped to handle future challenges and technological advancements**, maintaining its relevance and effectiveness. The modernized facility also improves employee safety and reduces the risk of accidents, fostering a more productive work environment and leading to higher employee satisfaction and retention.

PLANNING, TRAINING, AND EXERCISING

Planning:

Coordinates Stakeholder Efforts, Accelerates Response and Recovery

Planning provides a clear framework for responding to emergencies and disasters and supports the efficient allocation and use of personnel, equipment, and other resources. At least **2,953** state plans were developed, maintained, or updated using EMPG funds in FY25—an **8.2** percent increase compared to FY23. Additionally, at least **1,953** local plans were developed, maintained, or updated using EMPG funds. Plans address all phases of emergency management from relief to recovery to mitigation and resilience-building. EMPG funds also supported specific plans for critical infrastructure continuity of operations, Strategic National Stockpile usage, distribution management, evacuation protocols, hazard-specific planning annexes, and many more.

Training:

Translates Planning into Action

Effective training builds the knowledge and skills needed to respond effectively under pressure, improving decision-making speed and accuracy during high-stress situations. It also ensures that responders understand their roles, responsibilities, and authority, which promotes coordination and interoperability among agencies and organizations. In FY25, EMPG supported more than **1,473** local and **7,297** state-level training courses in emergency management and homeland security. At least **161,034** personnel across the country received and completed these courses, including public officials, first responders, infrastructure operators, educators, and various stakeholder groups. This represents a **14.5** percent increase from FY23.

Exercising:

Assesses Planning and Training, Provides Real-Life Scenarios

Well-developed exercises allow emergency management stakeholders to evaluate their emergency plans, procedures, and training in realistic scenarios, enabling them to identify strengths and gaps before real incidents occur. In FY25, EMPG supported more than **858** local and **2,022** state-level exercises. At least **99,646** personnel participated in these exercises nationwide. Many stakeholder groups also participate in these exercises, strengthening partnerships within jurisdictions well before disaster strikes.

EMPG-SUPPORTED SUCCESS

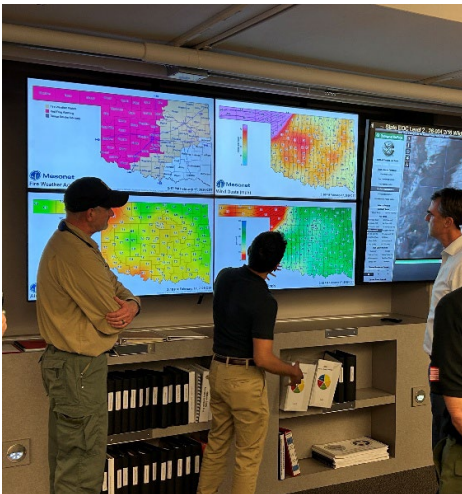


Image courtesy of the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management

In FY25, the **Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (OEM)** invested EMPG funding in supporting planning efforts that incorporate whole community partners. Oklahoma hosted and facilitated planning meetings with state agencies and stakeholders assigned primary and supporting responsibilities in the **State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP)**. As part of this EMPG-funded planning process, OEM was able to expand their firefighting planning to address situations outside of the Oklahoma Forestry Services' usual scope, as well as including private sector utility operations in planning discussions with the Oklahoma Corporation Commission that focused on **mutual aid**. The state also engaged the Oklahoma Inter-Tribal Emergency Management Coalition **to collaborate and update the Tribal Relations Annex** in the SEOP.

Supporting public preparedness is critical to a successful emergency response and community recovery. With the proliferation of available sources of public information, the support of EMPG for public outreach campaigns by local and state-level emergency managers is all the more **critical to share timely, accurate information**.

In FY25, EMPG funding supported at least **2,203** statewide preparedness outreach campaigns and **2,264** local campaigns. These campaigns reached at least **81,121,114** people at least once throughout the country.

Most states made outreach efforts that expanded engagement with **communities and populations not previously or consistently reached**. Examples of this engagement includes efforts to expand outreach to rural and frontier communities, tribal governments, individuals with access and functional needs, community- and faith-based organizations, students, communities experiencing high-poverty rates, populations who do not speak English as a first language, and many more.

EMPG-SUPPORTED SUCCESS

Delaware has invested EMPG funds to support a wide variety of public outreach efforts in FY25. For example, EMPG funding supported **Delaware's Family Emergency Preparedness Day**, an in-person community event that had over 40 preparedness agencies in attendance providing information to **over 1,000 community members**.

EMPG also supported outreach efforts at the Delaware State Fair, their single largest event in which they interact directly with citizens to educate them on disaster preparedness in their homes and communities. **Around 3,000 Delawareans were provided information on signing up for emergency notifications, their evacuation zone, radiological planning zones, and general preparedness.**



Image courtesy of the Delaware Emergency Management Agency

COMMUNICATIONS & WARNING SYSTEMS

The rapid evolution of **communications, early warning, and hazard monitoring technologies** allows **responders to act swiftly and efficiently during response to all hazard types**, as well as keep the public informed as events evolve. These investments are often substantial and can exceed the budgets of many local and even state-level agencies. EMPG supports investments in new systems and technologies where required, but more often in maintenance and upgrades of existing systems, to manage tax dollars carefully without sacrificing high-quality capabilities. In FY25, EMPG supported approximately:

- **524** local and state emergency response systems or services, including WebEOC platforms, shelter management capabilities, and donation management software
- **619** state and local community warning systems
- **300** redundant communications systems
- **91** state and **210** local emergency operations centers

FINDING SOLUTIONS THROUGH MUTUAL AID

Mutual aid strengthens emergency management by enabling jurisdictions to handle more routine incidents independently, while relying on established partnerships when response and recovery demands exceed local capacity. **This approach improves resource efficiency and resilience without requiring state or federal assistance.** In FY25, EMPG supported **1,290** local and **2,905** state-level mutual aid agreements, memoranda of understanding, and memoranda of agreement with neighboring jurisdictions, nonprofit organizations, Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs), and private sector organizations. Nationwide, approximately **1,761** real-world incidents required the activation of MAAs, MOUs, or MOAs established, maintained, or updated using EMPG-funded staff or EMPG funds in FY25.

EMPG-SUPPORTED SUCCESS



During FY25, EMPG funding played a critical role in sustaining the **Connecticut Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security's** ability to coordinate and manage both intrastate and interstate mutual aid operations after disasters. Resources and capabilities built with EMPG enabled Connecticut's Urban Search and Rescue Team and other assets to deploy within the state to local flooding events and the Hawthorne Fire, and to deploy through the **Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)** following requests from Vermont (severe flooding) and North Carolina (Hurricane Helene). Additionally, Connecticut deployed Voluntary Agency Liaison resources to Texas in response to the deadly flooding. These deployments demonstrated **Connecticut's ability to provide trained personnel and effectively execute intrastate and interstate mutual aid missions, while ensuring financial accountability.**

*Image courtesy of the CT
Division of Emergency
Management and Homeland
Security*

CONCLUSION

The EMPG program supports state and local capacity to augment federal capabilities. EMPG requires a dollar-for-dollar match and directs funds straight to state and local emergency management agencies, helping them address changing response and recovery needs in a cost-effective way. In FY25, EMPG remains a vital resource for state and local emergency managers, enabling them to manage threats and hazards in their own communities, while reducing costs to the federal government. By ensuring emergency management agencies can tailor preparedness efforts to the unique conditions and needs of the communities they know better than anyone, EMPG supports nationwide resilience one community at a time.

At just over **\$1 per resident nationwide, including the match requirement and additional state and local investment, the return on investment by EMPG exceeds \$700 million**. When accounting for investments exceeding a 1:1 match, this return approximates **\$1 billion** every year. With the existing 50/50 match requirement, EMPG is the most significant value to the taxpayer in the suite of FEMA programs.

In FY25, at least **28,469 events** were managed by local, state, and territorial governments without additional federal assistance. This figure far surpasses total federal disaster declarations year after year. State and local governments are willing and eager partners but do require sustained assistance from the federal government to maintain and build capabilities and assume more responsibility of federal programs.

Moreover, the EMPG funding structure reflects that while all disasters begin locally, response and recovery is most effective when the capabilities of local and state leaders are reinforced—not replaced—by intergovernmental partnerships. **EMPG investments measurably decrease the risk of escalation of thousands of events each year to those requiring national-level responses and additional federal expenditures and mitigate impacts on the most vulnerable populations as well.** Beyond the benefits described in this report, the year-over-year investment by EMPG sustains stakeholder relationship-building and public engagement and trust-building whose benefits in preventing and mitigating the impacts of emergency events may be incalculable.

To sustain the investments made through FY25, NEMA and IAEM call on Congress to **increase EMPG baseline levels to \$500 million in FY26**. Congress's support for this program to date reflects a strong commitment by its Members to the communities they represent, and we remain grateful for this sustained legacy of support. With continued backing, NEMA and IAEM-USA remain committed to ensuring that every dollar is used effectively and efficiently to support the tireless efforts of the nation's emergency managers in serving and protecting their communities.

ABOUT NEMA:

Established in 1974, NEMA represents the emergency management directors of the 50 states, territories, and the District of Columbia. These professionals are responsible to their governors for all-hazards emergency preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery from all emergencies, disasters, and threats to the homeland. NEMA is a non-profit, non-partisan organization headquartered in Lexington, Kentucky, and an affiliate of the Council of State Governments.

Headquarters:

National Emergency Management Association
1776 Avenue of the States
Lexington, KY 40511
P: 859-244-8162

Washington, D.C. Office:

444 North Capitol St NW
Suite 401, Hall of the States
Washington, D.C. 20001
P: 202-624-5459

Contact: Matt Cowles, Deputy Director

ABOUT IAEM:

IAEM-USA is the nation's largest association of emergency management professionals, with over 5,500 members, including emergency managers at the state and local government levels, tribal nations, the military, colleges and universities, private businesses, and the nonprofit sector. Most members are city and county emergency managers who coordinate and integrate local efforts to prepare for, mitigate the effects of, respond to, and recover from all types of disasters, including terrorist attacks. The membership includes emergency managers from both large urban and rural areas. IAEM is a non-profit, non-partisan organization headquartered in Falls Church, Virginia.

Headquarters:

IAEM-USA
201 Park Washington Court
Falls Church, VA 22046
P: 703-538-1795

Washington, D.C. Office:

444 North Capitol St NW
Suite 401, Hall of the States
Washington, D.C. 20001

Contact: Thad Huguley, Government Affairs Director