

NEMA 2026 Annual Forum

Statehouse Convention Center Little Rock, AR



Legal Counsel Committee

MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2026 | 10:00 – 11:30 AM

FULTON

Agenda

- Roundtable Discussion with FEMA Chief Counsel's Office
- Lessons Learned: Implementing a Revolving Loan Fund
- Review of Open Legal Cases Related to Federal Grants
- Lightning Round with Legal Counsels

Presenters & Guests

Jim Evans, FEMA | Jotham Allen, FEMA

Committee Members

Chair: Will Polk, NC

Vice Chair: Morgan Middleton, MS

All interested state legal counsels may participate.

Private Sector Liaisons: Deborah Sulzer (Sulzer Group), Sam Van Kopp (Cordatis)

NEMA Board of Directors Liaison: Marc Pappas (RI)



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EMAC Committee

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2026 | 1:30 – 2:45 PM
WALLY ALLEN BALLROOM

Agenda

- **EMAC Executive Task Force Update**
- **EMAC Technology Ecosystem**
- **From Preparedness to Response: Building Resource Readiness Through EMAC for New Madrid**
- **State Director's Guide to EMAC**
- **Modernizing Emergency Management: Mutual Aid**

Presenters & Guests

Jaci Hamel, EMAC Executive Task Force Chair | Brian Blake, Central United States Earthquake Consortium | Randy Padfield, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency

Committee Members

Chair: Kevin Sweeney, MI

Vice Chair: Jeff Smitherman, AL

Bryan Fisher, AK
Gabe Levine, AZ
Trevor Denny, CO
Jared Perdue, FL
Jonathan York, KS

Eric Gibson, KY
Jason Maufouz, LA
Delila Bruno, MT
Jeanne Hengemuhle, NJ
Peter Cichetti, NY

Sima Merick, OH
Randy Padfield, PA
Angel Jimenez Colon, PR
Patrick Sheehan, TN
Daryl Jaschen, VI

Private Sector Liaisons: Tony Robinson (NEMR), Brian Blake (CUSEC)

Legal Committee Liaison: Kristine Hoffman (NY)

Past President Liaison: Dave Maxwell



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Homeland Security Committee

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2026 | 3:00 – 4:15 PM

WALLY ALLEN BALLROOM

Agenda

- **New and Emerging Grant Requirements**
- **The Slow Drip: Recent Water Sector Attacks**
- **A State's Perspective on AI**
- **Gaining Further Understanding of School Violence**

Presenters & Guests

Jonathon Myers, FEMA | Pam Williams, FEMA | Gayle Combs, CISA |
Caroline Thomas Jacobs, CA | Mike Woodward, Center for Internet Security

Committee Members

Chair: AJ Schall, DE

Vice Chair: Robert Buxton, NH

Bryan Fisher, AK
Clint Osborn, DC
Peter Rogers, ME
Delila Bruno, MT
Ali Rye, NM
Marc Pappas, RI
Matthew Blackwood, WV

Gabe Levine, AZ
Ted Berger, IL
Kevin Sweeney, MI
Brett Compston, NV
Will Ray, NC
Lauren Opett, VA
Lynn Budd, WY

Caroline Thomas Jacobs, CA
Jonathan Whitham, IN
Allison Farole, MN
Jeanne Hengemuhle, NJ
Erin McMahon, OR
Robert Ezelle, WA

Private Sector Liaisons: Bear Afkhami (MPACT), John Rabin (ICF)

Legal Committee Liaison: David Neill (CA)

Past President Liaison: Glen Woodbury



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Preparedness Committee

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2026 | 8:30 – 9:45 AM

WALLY ALLEN BALLROOM

Agenda

- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Brief**
- **New York State Office of Emergency Management IPAWS Workshops**
- **Presentation on National Weather Service Meteorologists Embedded in State Emergency Operations Centers**

Presenters & Guests

Jonathon Myers, FEMA | Cynthia Spishak, FEMA | Pam Williams, FEMA | Pete Cichetti, New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services | Madison McGuire, New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services | Greg Engle, Wisconsin Division of Emergency Management | Jonathan York, Kansas Division of Emergency Management

Committee Members

Chair: Sima Merick, OH

Vice Chair: Greg Engle, WI

Gabe Levine, AZ	David Lopez, HI	Brett Compston, NV	Peter Cichetti, NY
Clint Osborn, D.C.	Jonathan York, KS	Jeanne Hengemuhle, NJ	Kris Hamlet, UT
Josh Lamb, GA	Russ Strickland, MD	Ali Rye, NM	

Private Sector Liaisons: James Joseph (Tidal Basin), Brian Baker (Hagerty)

Legal Committee Liaison: Caitlyn Rynn (AZ)

Past President Liaison: Dave Maxwell



**National Emergency Management Association
Preparedness Committee
Position Paper**

DATE:

SUBJECT: Recommendations for Enhancing State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Readiness to Lead Disaster Response and Increase National Preparedness

DISCUSSION:

The National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) applauds efforts to improve the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). We support efforts and recommendations to simplify FEMA's disaster programs, increase nationwide preparedness and resilience, and improve the outcomes and quality of services for disaster survivors.

FEMA's mission remains critical to our nation, and NEMA firmly supports this important work. Simultaneously, it recognizes opportunities for change that could improve outcomes for disaster survivors and increase nationwide preparedness. NEMA urges the administration, the U.S. Congress, and FEMA leadership to continue to engage regularly with state and local emergency managers and other stakeholders in developing and implementing policy changes. State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial (SLTT) emergency managers are the tip of the spear in delivering federal disaster programs and are best positioned to assess successes and opportunities for improvement. Regular stakeholder engagement can help align expectations, develop relationships, prevent unanticipated consequences, and therefore, strengthen the nation's preparedness.

NEMA recommends the following to enhance SLTTs' ability to lead disaster response, with the federal government in a supporting role, thereby increasing national preparedness.

Recommendations:

1. NEMA recognizes that national-level standards strengthen emergency management. A federally maintained standard is vital to ensure that every jurisdiction, regardless of size or hazard and disaster frequency, is prepared to respond to any event. NEMA supports the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and provides support with implementation conditions for the National Qualification System (NQS). NEMA strongly recommends that NQS be reviewed and improved upon with partnership from state emergency management stakeholders. We support a national qualification system that aims to provide consistent skill sets for deployments during critical response and recovery periods, but find the current FEMA NQS program insufficient to deliver such a system due to burdensome instructor requirements, outdated training materials, insufficient funding, and a lack of position-specific training courses. Further, we recommend that these frameworks be maintained at the federal level to ensure consistency across jurisdictions, but should they be shifted to states, the appropriate funding should be made available to support management and resources needed to do so.
2. The Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) is vital to building robust, state and local emergency management capabilities. EMPG is a cost-effective federal investment because of the matching requirement from state and local governments, which doubles the investment as compared to expenditure. NEMA recommends that EMPG levels be returned to, at a minimum, Fiscal Year 2024 levels (\$355 Million), with an increase of \$100 Million to support capability development as soon as possible.
3. Credentialing remains critical to ensuring that emergency managers have baseline education and training to fulfill their responsibilities successfully. NEMA recommends that credentialing be scalable. The threat landscape and jurisdictions' responsibilities differ, but maintaining well-defined professional standards ensures readiness, empowering individuals at any level to perform their duties and leading to a more prepared nation.
4. NEMA supports the Emergency Management Accreditation Program's (EMAP) work to provide accreditation to emergency management programs nationwide. This work remains critical to building the foundation of the nation's emergency preparedness system. NEMA recommends providing financial incentives to obtain and maintain accreditation, so jurisdictions can fully realize the benefits of the upfront personnel and time invested in obtaining accreditation. Moreover, tying financial incentives to accreditation ensures that jurisdictions work towards wide adoption, thereby increasing preparedness across jurisdictions. To further support this goal, NEMA recommends

continued financial support for the Emergency Management Baseline Assessment Grant Program (EMBAG), which helps fund the work of maintaining national-level standards.

5. Enhancing SLTT capabilities requires reliable, nimble federal support. NEMA recommends that FEMA provide clear, consistent guidance on which capabilities federal partners will continue to maintain. Reliable federal support enables states to plan, prepare, and anticipate which resources and capabilities require development at the state level. As states continue to manage disasters and build capacity, clear, defined expectations must be communicated.
6. There is a shared responsibility of local, state, and federal governments to ensure that when a disaster occurs, communities receive the assistance they require. Yet it is neither practical nor fiscally responsible for every state to have capabilities for every possible hazard or threat, because each jurisdiction's risk profile differs. For states that experience fewer large-scale disasters and have smaller agency personnel as a result, federal support will likely be needed in the event of major disasters. NEMA strongly recommends addressing these cases by providing scalable federal support to be deployed when incidents overwhelm state capacities.
7. Development of additional state capabilities and capacity requires time. NEMA strongly recommends adopting a well-defined, phased timeline of no less than 3 years when implementing reforms that could significantly impact states' disaster management responsibilities. When additional responsibilities are placed on states, it is paramount that adequate time be given to address the funding and staffing implications of these actions. State appropriation timelines do not always align with the federal cycle, so phased timeline considerations should be developed with this difference in mind. Allowing adequate time ensures there is no service gap and that all jurisdictions remain prepared to respond to all hazards and events.
8. NEMA strongly supports the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) because it continues to strengthen national preparedness and response capabilities. We reinforce that interstate mutual aid is imperative to a "locally executed, state-managed, and federally supported" approach to emergency management. Continued federal preparedness investments, including EMPG and capability-based grants, remain essential to sustaining deployable resources and nationwide mutual aid readiness. While EMAC Members remain committed to meeting their reimbursement obligations under the Compact, it is important that future funding and reimbursement structures remain aligned to ensure all states and territories can continue to request and provide mutual aid when needed. NEMA recommends continued federal funding for EMAC to enable modernization, integration, and expansion of interstate mutual aid.
9. NEMA supports interoperability and acknowledges its connection to national preparedness. Interoperability is crucial to maintaining national continuity, especially in communications. NEMA recommends that interoperability remain a priority in emergency management and emergency communications.
10. Continued, regular communication with SLTT stakeholders is crucial to the successful implementation of disaster management reform. Without proper communication and prior notification, states' capacity to plan and prepare adequately is weakened. NEMA strongly recommends that U.S. Congressional members, FEMA leadership, and the administration seek input from state stakeholders when examining how to implement disaster management changes.

Moved:

Disposition:

Second:

Authenticated:

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Response and Recovery Committee

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2026 | 10 AM – 11:15 AM

WALLY ALLEN BALLROOM

Agenda

- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Office of Response and Recovery Brief**
- **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of Community Planning and Development Brief**
- **Tracking Federal Emergency Management Change**

Presenters & Guests

David Arnold, FEMA | Frank Matranga, FEMA | Bryan Horn, HUD |

Dawn Brantley, Massachusetts

Committee Members

Chair: Ery Portis, NE

Bryan Fisher, AK
Caroline Thomas Jacobs, CA
Trevor Denney, CO
Josh Lamb, GA
Jonathan York, KS
Eric Forand, VT

Vice Chair:

Eric Gibson, KY
Dawn Brantley, MA
Stephen McCraney, MS
Ali Rye, NM
Peter Cichetti, NY

Erin McMahon, OR
Randy Padfield, PA
Marc Pappas, RI
Tina Titze, SD
Nim Kidd, TX

Private Sector Liaisons: Brittany Kelly (WSP), Elizabeth Zimmerman (IEM)

Legal Committee Liaison: Will Polk (NC)

Past President Liaison: Nancy Dragani



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Resilience Committee

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2026 | 2:45 – 4:00 PM
WALLY ALLEN BALLROOM

Agenda

- **FEMA Update on Hazard Mitigation Programs**
- **Statewide Resilience Planning: Resilient Maryland Strategy**
- **Run It Yourself: Section 404 Authority and the Case for State-Administered HMGP**

Presenters & Guests

Kristin Fontenot, FEMA | Jonathon Myers, FEMA | Cynthia Spishak, FEMA |
Chas Eby, MD | Derrick Hiebert, AECOM | Laura Dhuwe, FL | Annie Vest, OK

Committee Members

Chair: Bill Turner, CT

Vice Chair: Tina Titze, SD

Caroline Thomas Jacobs, CA
Clement Bermudes, CNMI
Jim Remillard, MO
Marc Pappas, RI
Stephen McCraney, MS

David Lopez, HI
Russ Strickland, MD
Delila Bruno, MT
Kim Stenson, SC
Kris Hamlet, UT

Ben Roeber, ID
Allison Farole, MN
Annie Vest, OK
Patrick Sheehan, TN

Private Sector Liaisons: Lucrecia Vargas (CDM Smith), Jonathan Jenkins (AECOM)

Legal Committee Liaison: Kim Zigich (CT)

Past President Liaison: Jim Mullen



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Past Presidents Committee

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2026 | 6:30 – 8 PM

THE CAPITAL HOTEL (closed meeting)

Agenda

- **Gubernatorial Elections and State Director Appointments; NEMA New Director Training**
- **NEMA Foundation Update**

Committee Members

Chair: Lynn Budd, WY

All Past Presidents are members of the committee.



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Private Sector Committee

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2026 | 9:15 – 10:30 AM
WALLY ALLEN BALLROOM

Agenda

- **NEMA's Business Solutions Directory**
- **Non-profit and NGO Spotlight – Supporting State Disaster Programs**
 - State of Recovery: Disaster Case Management Services
 - Making a Regional Capability Deployable: Highly Infectious Disease Specialty Ambulance Mission Ready Package
 - Rural Radio Resiliency: Supporting Rural, Remote, and Tribal Communities

Presenters & Guests

Anna Brugmann, American Coalition for Public Radio | David Long, Tidewater EMS Council | Leiloni Stainsby, Endeavors

Committee Members

All Corporate and Organizational members of NEMA are members of the Private Sector Committee.

Chair: Erica Bornemann,
AC Disaster Consulting

Vice Chair: Lee Siler
Walmart

NEMA Board of Directors Liaison: Marc Pappas (RI)

Legal Counsel Liaison: Morgan Middleton (MS)



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Legislative Committee

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2026 | 10:45 AM – 12:00 PM
WALLY ALLEN BALLROOM

Agenda

- **Congressional Report on State Capacity**
- **Partnership Update with FEMA External Affairs**
- **Aligning Priorities with Stakeholders**
- **Establishing Committee Process for FEMA Reform Comments**

Presenters & Guests

Lauren Stienstra, CRS | Chase Wollenhaupt, FEMA | Josh Morton, IAEM |
Aaron Davis, BuildStrong America

Committee Members

Chair: John Benson, IA

Vice Chair: Darin Hanson, ND

Jeff Smitherman, AL
Bill Turner, CT
Ted Berger, IL
Kevin Sweeney, MI
Sima Merick, OH
Lynn Budd, WY

AJ Gary, AR
Clint Osborn, DC
Russ Strickland, MD
Ali Rye, NM
Erin McMahon, OR

Trevor Denney, CO
AJ Schall, DE
Dawn Brantley, MA
Allison Farole, MN
Patrick Sheehan, TN

Private Sector Liaisons: Danielle Aymond (Baker Donelson), Kristin Cormier Robinson (IEM)

Legal Committee Liaison: Anne Vitale (OH)

Past President Liaison: Wendy Smith-Reeve

