



# We Are FEMA

Helping People Before, During, and  
After Disasters



**FEMA**



## Purpose

Publication 1 (Pub 1) is our capstone doctrine. It helps us as Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) employees understand our role in the emergency management community and provides direction for how we conduct ourselves and make decisions each day. It explains:

- **Who We Are:** An understanding of our identity and foundational beliefs
- **Why We Are Here:** A story of pivotal moments in history that have built and shaped our Agency
- **What We Face:** How we manage unpredictable and ever-evolving threats and hazards
- **What We Do:** An explanation of how we help people before, during, and after disasters
- **How We Do It:** An understanding of the principles that guide the work we do

The intent of our Pub 1 is to promote innovation, flexibility, and performance in achieving our mission. It promotes unity of purpose, guides professional judgment, and enables each of us to fulfill our responsibilities.

## Audience

This document is for every FEMA employee. Whether you have just joined us or have been with the Agency for many years, this document serves to remind us why we all choose to be a part of the FEMA family. Our organization includes many different offices, programs, and roles that are all committed to helping people. Everyone plays a role in achieving our mission.

We also invite and welcome the whole community to read Pub 1 to help individuals and organizations across the Nation better understand FEMA's mission and role as we work together to carry out an effective system of emergency management.

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*"Once you are a part of the FEMA family, you are always a part of the family."*

**Larry Hall**  
**Former FEMA Employee**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS



**Who We  
Are**

**Page 5**

**Why We Are  
Here**

**Page 14**



**What We  
Face**

**Page 29**

**What We  
Do**

**Page 33**



**How We  
Do It**

**Page 47**

# 1

## Who We Are: We Are FEMA

We are the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). We are a team of Federal leaders who support the people and communities of our Nation by providing experience, perspective, and resources in emergency management. Each of us finds strength and value from our role at FEMA, whether we are helping others in the office or in the field. We live our core values of Compassion, Fairness, Integrity, and Respect every day to help people and support the Nation's disaster and emergency management needs.

*"Each time I go out to the field, I'm reminded of how much living out our mission and core values can and is making a difference in the lives of survivors. We exist to help people before, during, and after disasters. This is our mission."*

David Maurstad  
FEMA Executive

## We Are FEMA: Helping People Before, During, and After Disasters

### FEMA's Fundamental Role

Leadership is a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others towards the achievement of a goal.

We have a distinct role as Federal leaders. Our Administrator is the principal advisor to the President, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Homeland Security for all matters relating to emergency management in the United States (U.S.). This unique role is what fuels us as leaders to create an environment where partners work together to make a difference in communities before, during, and after disasters.

Our Agency is one player on a large team collaborating to build a more resilient Nation. We provide a platform for people to build relationships, gather and share information, and think holistically about disasters. We lead by supporting, coordinating, and managing personnel, assets, and information. We also offer tools, guidance, and resources to help individuals and communities review, build, and continuously improve their own capabilities.

In our emergency management role, we:

- Raise risk awareness; educate in risk reduction options; and help to take action **before disasters**
- Alert, warn, and message; coordinate the Federal response; and apply and manage resources **during disasters**
- Coordinate Federal recovery efforts; provide resources; and apply insight to future risk **after disasters**

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*"Every FEMA employee is an owner of our mission  
and a defender of our Core Values."*

**Joel Doolin**  
**FEMA Executive**

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## Your Role as a FEMA Employee

We are a team. Every FEMA employee contributes to our mission and has an impact on the Agency. Whether you are supporting human resources, information technology, policy and program work, deploying to a disaster, engaging directly with survivors, or performing any other function within our Agency, we all play a critical role in building a prepared and resilient Nation.

As a family we take care of each other so we are best positioned to help others. Responding to increasingly frequent and complex disasters requires us to become more skilled, agile, informed, and innovative as emergency management professionals. We foster a culture of innovation in our Agency by encouraging new ideas and accepting creative thought. We are curious and disciplined, constantly seeking ways to learn, develop, and grow. We also offer training, education, and professional development opportunities so every employee feels knowledgeable, empowered, and ready to take action in any work setting.

Fulfilling FEMA's mission is also dependent on our personal credibility and preparedness. We offer training to our employees on individual and financial preparedness, emergency procedures, and continuity of operations planning. We lead by example by preparing ourselves, just as we want others to do for themselves and their communities.

As we face an ever-changing disaster landscape, one thing will always remain constant – we are a diverse and inclusive team making a difference in the lives of others. We are a dynamic workforce with different backgrounds and identities that strengthen our ability to help, relate, and support others during adversity. We work together to lead and support in service of the Nation. We believe we have the best mission in the Federal Government: helping people before, during, and after disasters. As a FEMA employee you are a part of this mission and we expect you to make a mark on the Agency and a difference in the lives of others!

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*“Every employee at FEMA is a critical part of the team that comes together to help people before, during, and after disasters. Whether you are pulling network cable, ordering supplies, standing in the rain at a staging area, processing a grant award for a survivor or their community, working the night shift in an operations center, or filling in for your deployed teammates YOU are what makes FEMA able to deliver to the American people when they need us most.”*

**MaryAnn Tierney**  
**FEMA Executive**

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## We Are One FEMA

There are many different types of FEMA employees that work together to create One FEMA. In addition to permanent full-time employees, FEMA's workforce includes: a Cadre of On-Call Response/Recovery Employees (CORE) who contribute directly to open disasters; Reservists who support disaster operations in affected communities; and FEMA Corps members who spend ten months completing FEMA-related service projects throughout the country. Additionally, FEMA can hire locally to augment the disaster workforce, providing a way for individuals to help their community in the recovery process and support their local economy.

Our diverse perspectives and experiences position us to respect that every community is unique and to help others in their time of need. We work together to deliver solutions. The dedication and commitment of our workforce extends beyond our normal duties, especially when our mission requires us to deploy around the country when disaster strikes.





## What We Believe

We believe in honoring and practicing our ethos and core values every day. They are the essence of our identity and the force that drives us. They give us purpose to keep going and guide each decision we make. They define who we are and set expectations for our employees. We embody our ethos when we demonstrate our core values in all our interactions – both in our professional and personal lives – and treat others with Compassion, Fairness, Integrity, and Respect.

## Ethos

An ethos describes the character, tone, or collective reputation of an institution and conveys the underlying sentiment that informs a particular organization's belief.

Stemming from our belief that we help people, our commitment to public service distinguishes us as an organization and defines our ethos. An ethos is the feeling created within a group that drives the work it does. Our ethos is the pride we have in our work as public servants. It motivates and inspires us as an organization to work diligently for ourselves and others.

We are also a team of colleagues who respect and care about one another. The sum of our people, programs, and dedication to helping others defines our strength as an Agency.

## Core Values

Core values are the accepted standards of an organization that are the foundation for which work is performed and conducted.

Our core values are Compassion, Fairness, Integrity, and Respect. They are the heart of what our Agency and our employees stand for and represent. These values form the foundation of who we are, what we believe, and who we want to be. We are committed to these core values, which apply to our interactions with everyone – survivors, colleagues, partners – every single day.

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*"Helping people before, during, and after disasters means helping all impacted people – including those who speak different languages, have mental or physical disabilities, are low income, are older, etc. Our best is needed by everyone, in every corner of every community; there are no second class citizens in our work."*

**Jo Linda Johnson**  
FEMA Executive

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# Compassion



**Compassion** is the expression of our care for others. We are understanding, empathetic, and inclusive as we support fellow employees, partner organizations, individuals, and communities.

## Compassion in Action



- Showing empathy to a disaster survivor, and providing relevant information and direction
- Supporting a colleague by listening or assisting with a project, or when they are coping with a personal or family emergency
- Exercising patience when explaining our processes to one of our partners

# Fairness



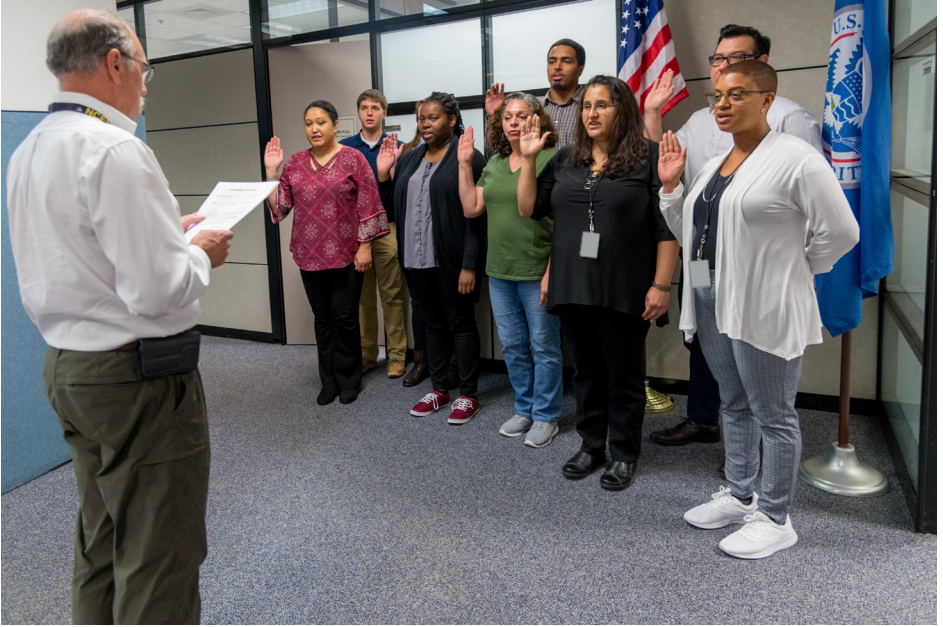
**Fairness** is treating everyone impartially, offering unbiased and consistent assistance, and ensuring equal access to resources and tools. We are consistent in our commitment to help others.

## Fairness in Action



- Providing programs and services that ensure equal access for survivors with disabilities
- Treating all colleagues equitably, professionally, and consistently
- Creating a standardized review process for stakeholder requests that ensure all applicants are considered equally

# Integrity



**Integrity** encompasses our responsibility as stewards of Federal resources, services, and programs, and our conduct as trusted professionals. We earn trust by being accountable, present, honest, and dependable. Because we are the face of FEMA, our conduct – both on and off duty – matters.

## Integrity in Action



- Applying the highest levels of honesty and transparency in everything we deliver to those we serve
- Acting and standing up for our colleagues when we see something wrong by doing what is necessary and appropriate to make it right
- Holding ourselves accountable so that our partners can rely on us to be truthful and to follow through

## Respect



**Respect** is the practice of acknowledging the value of the people we work with and serve. We are committed to active listening and welcome diversity of thought, opinion, and background. Together, we are stronger.

### Respect in Action



- Treating each survivor with dignity and allowing them to maintain their personal autonomy and self determination
- Fostering a healthy, safe, and positive environment where managers and staff enjoy working together
- Building trusted relationships with partners in which we value different points of view and listen to one another

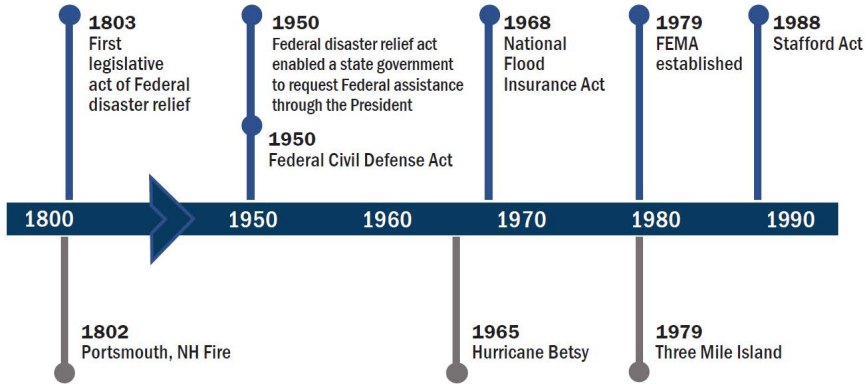
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## Why We Are Here: Becoming FEMA – The History of Our Agency

Our history provides the foundation for our identity as leaders today. It is rooted in the story of a Nation committed to finding strength in the face of unpredictable and devastating disasters. FEMA's creation in 1979 was the first step in unifying Federal emergency management activity and building a comprehensive approach to national emergency management. We continue to learn, grow, and improve as we work to build a more resilient Nation. We are proud of our Agency's evolution and the people who have made that progress possible.

*"I'm not 'Old FEMA' or  
'New FEMA,' I'm  
'Successful FEMA.'"*

Delois "Ruby" Champ  
FEMA Employee



Our Nation is built on the willingness and ability of its people to help one another in times of need. In early years, emergency managers reacted to each disaster, providing inconsistent assistance to those impacted. Over time, we realized the need for a more clearly defined approach to managing these disasters and providing consistent Federal support. This realization ultimately led to the creation of FEMA.

## Initial Federal Role (1802 – 1949)

The first legislative act of Federal disaster relief in U.S. history followed a devastating fire in Portsmouth, New Hampshire in December 1802. The destruction of large areas of the city’s seaport threatened commerce in the newly founded Nation. In 1803, acting from the new national seat of government in Washington, D.C., the U.S. Congress provided relief to affected Portsmouth merchants by suspending bond payments for several months.

Destructive disasters such as the Chicago, Illinois Fire of 1871 and the Johnstown, Pennsylvania Flood of 1889 further revealed a need for greater Federal involvement and response to major disasters. As the Nation moved into the early twentieth century, advancements in science also enabled a better understanding of hazard risk and mitigation methods to reduce vulnerability and

The American Red Cross relief efforts for the 1927 Mississippi Valley Flood victims in New York, NY.



impacts of disasters. For example, the Federal Government played a role following the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 in expanding the development of flood control systems. While the Federal Government generally did not have a significant role in disaster response operations during this time, it supported the American Red Cross in its capacity to organize relief efforts for affected communities.

### Broadening Emergency Management (1950 – 1977)

World War II and the Cold War brought a new national focus on civil defense and continuity operations. Emergency management began to evolve from a term that primarily referred to the Federal role in mobilizing the Nation for war to a more holistic definition to include both natural hazards and man-made incidents.

From 1803 to 1950, Congress passed 128 separate laws relating to disaster relief. A lack of comprehensive legislation led to a cumbersome system that required Congress to pass a law following each disaster to provide support. Thus, Congress enacted an untitled Federal disaster relief act in 1950 that enabled a state government to request Federal assistance through the President and empowered the President to declare a major disaster. This legislation was foundational in establishing the philosophy that Federal disaster assistance would supplement the efforts and available resources of state and local governments. Congress also passed the *Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950* that created a parallel nationwide system of civil defense authorities. These two statutes began to lead the U.S. towards comprehensive national emergency management.

In 1965, Hurricane Betsy caused major damage across southern Florida and Louisiana. In the aftermath, Congress passed the *National Flood Insurance Act of 1968* that made flood insurance coverage available to homeowners and



established a national program for flood risk reduction. Congress also enacted reforms that authorized Federal loans and tax assistance to individuals and Federal funds to repair and replace public facilities, created the first program to provide direct assistance to individuals and households, and strengthened Federal support in risk reduction from fires and earthquakes. Though FEMA had not yet been established, the legislative changes made in the 1960s and 1970s are the backbone of our programs today.

### Creation of FEMA and Expanding Authorities (1978 – 1989)

By 1978, more than 100 separate Federal agencies had jurisdiction over aspects of emergency management. The National Governors Association championed a request from state governments seeking a national-level disaster management organization capable of handling both natural and man-made disasters. In response, on June 19, 1978, President Carter submitted a proposal to Congress that would consolidate emergency preparedness, mitigation, and response activities into one Federal emergency management agency.

In late March of 1979, a partial meltdown at the Three Mile Island Nuclear Generating Station in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania required more than 100 entities to coordinate response efforts. Unfortunately, the disaster response effort was inefficient and fragmented, once again reinforcing the need for a coordinated emergency management agency. President Carter signed Executive Order 12127, effective April 1, 1979, establishing FEMA and activating his reorganization plan. Shortly after, in signing Executive Order 12148 on July 20, 1979, President Carter gave our Agency the dual mission of emergency management and civil defense. This brought together additional agencies such



*This image shows a FEMA employee representing the U.S. at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Our engagement with the international community expanded in 1988, when President H.W. Bush issued an executive order giving our Agency a role at the U.S. Mission to NATO. The executive order assigned FEMA lead responsibility to assist the Secretary of State in coordinating the formulation and implementation of U.S. policy for NATO civil emergency planning.*

## Publication 1

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*"President Carter has honored me in requesting that I assume the responsibility as the first director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)...*

*I believe that the five agencies that are brought together under the leadership of that single executive have a high degree of program compatibility and that through their merger greater effectiveness and efficiency can be achieved in the performance of the Federal Government's role."*

**John Macy**  
**First FEMA Director**  
**August 1979 - January 1981**

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as the Defense Civil Preparedness Agency (from the Department of Defense), the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration (from the Department of Housing and Urban Development), and the Federal Preparedness Agency (from the General Services Administration).

Our Agency's authorities were further defined and expanded by the *Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Amendments of 1988*, which amended the *Disaster Relief Act of 1974* and renamed it the *Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act)*.

### Requesting Federal Assistance

The *Stafford Act* provides clear direction for our role in emergency management and establishes the current statutory framework for disaster response and recovery through Presidential disaster declarations. When resources exceed the capabilities of the state, local, tribal, or territorial government, a declaration request may be submitted by the Governor or Tribal Chief Executive to receive supplemental Federal assistance.

For necessary expenses in carrying out the *Stafford Act*, Congress makes appropriations to the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF), which enables us to direct, coordinate, manage, and fund eligible response and recovery efforts associated with domestic major disasters and emergencies that overwhelm state, local, tribal, or territorial resources. The *Stafford Act* remains the formal and legal foundation for our role as leaders in emergency management.

## FEMA's Ten Regional Offices

In 1974, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) required all Federal departments and agencies to establish a consistent and compatible Federal field structure to provide more opportunities for intergovernmental coordination. Five years later in 1979 when FEMA was established, we mirrored our regional structure to meet this requirement.



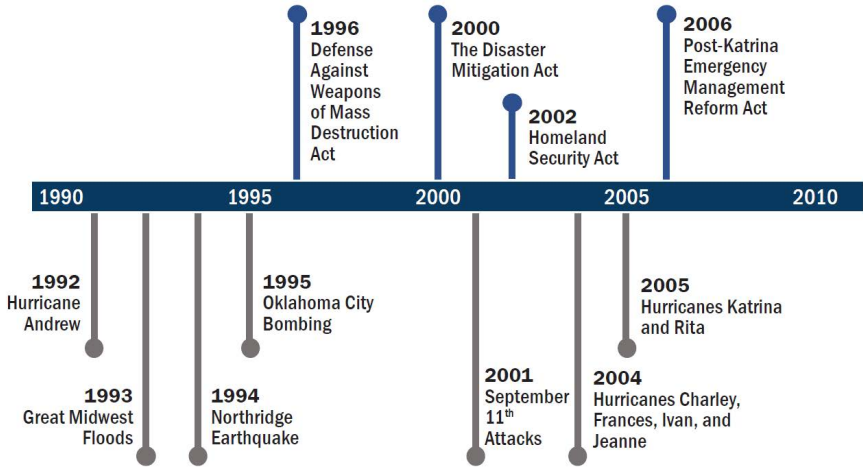
*Construction of Federal Regional Center for Region VI in Denton, TX on August 31, 1962.*

Our FEMA regions are:

- Region I (Boston, MA): Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont
- Region II (New York City, NY): New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands
- Region III (Philadelphia, PA): Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia
- Region IV (Atlanta, GA): Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee
- Region V (Chicago, IL): Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin
- Region VI (Denton, TX): Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas
- Region VII (Kansas City, MO): Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska
- Region VIII (Denver, CO): Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming
- Region IX (Oakland, CA): Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Pacific territories\*
- Region X (Bothell, WA): Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington

Facilities from legacy agencies, such as the Defense Civil Preparedness Agency and the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration, contributed to our initial regional offices. For example, in the 1960s the Federal Government built five Federal Regional Centers in Maynard, MA; Denton, TX; Thomasville, GA; Denver, CO; and Bothell, WA. These centers were originally constructed for continuity of operations in the event of an attack during the Cold War. Over time, we were given funding to expand and relocate. Today, some of our regional offices still use the original Federal Regional Centers as coordination centers, office space, or warehouses. FEMA also shares the U.S. government's unique nation-to-nation relationship with Federally recognized tribes. Tribal governments and their members are an essential part of our Nation's emergency management team. Our regional offices serve as invaluable conduits to reach, connect, and better communicate with people in all communities in their day-to-day lives.

*\*The Pacific territories are Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa. Region IX also has the unique responsibility to coordinate with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to support the Federal Government's long-standing relationship and treaty obligations with the Compact Nations of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.*



Once organized as one FEMA, the decades following our creation were pivotal in defining what we do and how we can do it better. The triumph of our Nation following major disasters in the 1990s and early 2000s provided opportunities for us to learn from our mistakes, grow together, and continue to define our mission.

## Expanding Mitigation and Preparedness (1990 - 2000)

As the Cold War ended and the threat of nuclear war faded, our Agency began to shift away from civil defense activities. In 1992, we brought together 27 Federal agencies and departments, as well as the American Red Cross, to publish the first Federal Response Plan. This plan was the first step in formalizing how we coordinate Federal resources to assist state and local governments in responding to disasters.

In August 1992, the Nation witnessed Hurricane Andrew destroy swaths of infrastructure across Florida and Louisiana, leaving tens of thousands of people without homes. Congress enacted reforms through the *Stafford Act* to streamline Federal relief and recovery operations and prioritize service delivery, emergency preparedness, and mitigation measures.

## Publication 1

The Great Midwest Floods of 1993 and the Northridge Earthquake of 1994 tested these new reforms. We successfully leveraged innovations in technology to create service centers that enabled survivors to apply for Federal assistance over the phone rather than in person. Furthermore, as the value of risk-based hazard mitigation became apparent, we encouraged communities to adopt better building practices and increased outreach programs focused on building disaster-resistant communities.



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*A firefighter surveys the Murrah Building following the Oklahoma City bombing in Oklahoma City, OK on April 19, 1995.*

The 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, OK shook the Nation with the emerging threat of domestic terrorism. In 1996, Congress passed the *Defense Against Weapons of Mass Destruction Act* that reshaped the role of our Agency and other entities to further protect the public from terrorists. Earlier that year, President Clinton also raised our FEMA Director to cabinet-level status, signaling the importance of our disaster authority and responsibilities in response and recovery.

With the threat and hazard landscape continuing to evolve, Congress also passed legislative reform to further advance disaster risk reduction. The *Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000* marked the first time in history that disaster management legislation placed a requirement on state and local governments to assess risk and plan for mitigation efforts as a condition of receiving Federal mitigation grant assistance.

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*“Disasters have a way of making us stronger in the broken places.”*

**James Lee Witt**  
**Former FEMA Director**  
**April 1993 - January 2001**

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## Securing the Nation (2001 – 2003)

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 changed America forever, resulting in the loss of nearly 3,000 lives, billions of dollars in property, an untold number of jobs, and the displacement of many individuals and businesses. In a time of unanswered questions, confusion, and uncertainty, we immediately went into action supporting New York, Virginia, and Pennsylvania officials in managing the consequences of the attacks. We deployed Urban Search and Rescue teams, mobile communication equipment, and thousands of staff. The Agency helped fund extensive debris removal operations and the rebuilding of major infrastructure in lower Manhattan to include the modernization of the mass transportation system. We pushed our authorities to bring the financial resources that communities needed to recover.

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*FEMA Region VIII Urban Search and Rescue team leader and the Colorado Lieutenant Governor inspect the recovery operations underway at Ground Zero, the site of the World Trade Center collapse.*



The attacks changed the face of homeland security and emergency management, and drove major statute and policy changes to reorganize the Federal Government. In 2002, President W. Bush signed the *Homeland Security Act*, leading to the creation of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The new organization stood up on March 1, 2003 and united our Agency and 21 other organizations into one Department. The FEMA Director title was renamed to the FEMA Administrator. Shortly after the formation of DHS, most of our terrorism-related preparedness programs were consolidated with other counterterrorism activities to refocus our Agency's efforts primarily on natural disasters.

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*"I watched our rescue teams join New York City's finest and Virginia's finest, working shoulder to shoulder around the clock to find their brothers and sisters and fellow citizens. These sites are truly hallowed ground. Now our rescue teams have gone home and we are fully engaged in the recovery process."*

**Joe Allbaugh**  
**Former FEMA Director**  
**February 2001 - March 2003**

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## Large Scale Disasters, Major Reforms (2004 – 2010)

The response to the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks involved thousands of emergency responders from across the Nation and highlighted the need for a common planning process and incident management structure. In 2004, the National Response Plan was published, replacing the Federal Response Plan and breaking new ground in integrating all levels of government in a common incident management framework.



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*FEMA and the Alabama Emergency Response Team at the state's Emergency Operation Center monitor Hurricane Katrina as it makes landfall on the Gulf Coast.*

Large-scale natural disasters in 2004 and 2005 once again led to the reform and evolution of our Agency's role in serving the Nation. The rapid succession of Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne in 2004 left significant damage to Florida, marking our Agency's first large-scale, sustained response effort. The following year brought Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.



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*If an incident exceeds the capacity of our disaster workforce, the Secretary of Homeland Security is authorized to activate the DHS Surge Capacity Force (SCF) to augment the Federal response efforts. Pictured, SCF members canvass neighborhoods to reach those who might not have registered for assistance.*

## Publication 1

The historic Hurricane Katrina made landfall in Mississippi, causing large-scale devastation along the Gulf Coast, leaving more than 1,800 people dead, displacing families to all 50 states, and resulting in billions in losses to infrastructure and the economy. The Federal Government's response to the extensive and disruptive impacts of Hurricane Katrina faced criticism, which caused a significant reevaluation of the execution of Federal disaster response efforts and resource allocation. As a result, Congress passed the *Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006*.

### **Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA)**

The *Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006* established us as a distinct Agency within DHS, defined our primary mission, and designated our FEMA Administrator as the principal advisor to the President, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Homeland Security for all matters relating to emergency management in the U.S. This Act also codified into law the key principle that FEMA may provide accelerated Federal assistance and support where necessary in the absence of a specific request by a state to save lives and prevent suffering.

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*"The primary mission of the Agency is to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the Nation from all hazards, including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters, by leading and supporting the Nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation."*

***The Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006***

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Recognizing our shortfalls has helped empower our Agency to improve. In the years following, we continued to build capability and capacity, nearly doubling our full-time workforce and cadre of disaster reservists, to include staff dedicated to ensuring our programs and services are available to people with disabilities. DHS transferred preparedness programs back to us, and we began enhancing our regional offices, professionalizing our disaster workforce, increasing our logistics capabilities, and building stronger relationships across the whole community.





To be successful in executing our mission, every member of the community must understand their important and indispensable role in emergency management. The ability of our Nation to be truly ready depends on everyone understanding their part in our collective resilience. We need to continue to build our capabilities together as a community to address an evolving landscape of threats and hazards.

## Coordinating the Federal Family (Early 2010s)

In 2011, President Obama signed *Presidential Policy Directive 8: National Preparedness* which called for the development of a national preparedness goal and a national preparedness system. This direction was exciting for our Agency because it allowed us to lead an integrated whole community approach to preparedness.

Our Federal capabilities were tested once again in 2012 when Hurricane Sandy affected the entire East Coast from Florida to Maine, as well as states as far inland as West Virginia, Ohio, and Indiana. The storm's effects were extensive, leaving millions without power, destroying hundreds of thousands of homes, and causing tens of billions in damages. Hard-working team members of a coordinated Federal, state, and local response worked around the clock to restore power, public transportation, critical infrastructure, and services. We also leveraged the DHS Surge Capacity Force as a force multiplier to ensure a comprehensive

## Publication 1

response in aiding those impacted. Subsequently, Congress passed the *Sandy Recovery Improvement Act of 2013* to streamline the recovery of public infrastructure and to allow Federally recognized tribes to directly request a Presidential declaration.

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*A FEMA worker surveys damage from a fire caused by a gas leak during Hurricane Sandy at Breezy Point, NY in November 2012.*



As an example of our growth in Federal leadership, our Agency has also been directed by the White House and DHS to support response operations outside of traditional coordination authorities. In 2014, for example, we provided incident management advice and support to other DHS components and Federal agencies for matters such as the influx of unaccompanied children across the Southwest border, Ebola responses, and water contamination in Flint, Michigan.

### Unique Response Coordination Efforts in Our History

*Cuban Refugee Crisis – 1980:* FEMA was tasked to help process more than 100,000 refugees arriving on Florida's shores.

*Space Shuttle Columbia Disaster – 2003:* FEMA coordinated the collection of debris from the shuttle accident across Texas and Louisiana.

*Bam, Iran Earthquake – 2003:* At the request of the Iranian Government, FEMA sent two International Medical Surgical Response Teams to set up a temporary field hospital.

*Haiti Earthquake – 2010:* Supporting USAID, FEMA established a Joint Information Center on the island. FEMA also sent search and rescue teams, communications equipment, and staff from the Mobile Emergency Response Support system.

*Increase in Arrivals of Unaccompanied Children – 2014:* FEMA coordinated a government-wide response to address the needs of an influx of unaccompanied children crossing into the U.S. along the southwest border. Over 57,000 children crossed the border, many in need of food, water, shelter, and social and medical services.

*Ebola Virus – 2014:* FEMA collaborated with over a dozen Federal agencies, states, the private sector, and other nations in combatting the spread of Ebola domestically and overseas.

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*"We know that there are many challenges ahead and that recovery will not happen overnight. Many survivors remain without power, and many are finding themselves without shelter. FEMA will remain in support of our state, tribal, and local partners, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Even as television cameras turn to other stories, we will be on the ground to support the survivors."*

**Craig Fugate**  
**Former FEMA Administrator**  
**May 2009 - January 2017**

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### Sharing Responsibility Across the Nation (Late 2010s)

In 2017, the Nation faced a historic Atlantic hurricane season and extreme wildfire disasters. The effects from consecutive Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria were widespread, causing long-lasting damage across the southern continental U.S. and surrounding islands, as well as Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Our Agency brought together the community in a way it had never done before. We leveraged our skilled workforce to manage the coordination of resources across multiple locations during consecutive storms and deployed large numbers of Federal personnel before and after the storms' landfall to provide assistance to survivors and communities. Hurricane Maria will be one of the largest post-disaster humanitarian and reconstruction efforts in our history.

In addition to the devastating 2017 hurricane season, in October of the same year, communities in Northern California were ravaged by fast-moving wildfires. The unprecedented and rapid succession of disasters transformed the way we look at emergency management and focused our efforts to build a culture of preparedness, ready the Nation for catastrophic disasters, and reduce our Agency's complexity – because together, we share this responsibility.

Congress provided us with expanded authorities to further these goals by enacting the *Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 (DRRA)*. The *DRRA* is a landmark law that highlights the Federal Government's commitment to increasing investments in mitigation and building the capabilities of our state, local, tribal, and territorial partners. With this expanded assistance, communities will be able to plan and execute programs to assist with community recovery and help reduce disaster risk in the future. The *DRRA* also provides better opportunities for the Agency to retain and promote an experienced and talented workforce, as well as work even better with our interagency partners.

## Publication 1

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*Passengers board chartered buses leaving each morning to take FEMA employees to Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) in Butte County, CA to assist Camp Fire survivors in their recovery.*



## An Evolving Agency

Our Agency emerged from the Nation's need for a comprehensive emergency management entity. We are an organization that is ever-changing and continuously learning. Our history has shown us that we can meet and overcome adversity. We are strong and we are resilient. We are one team united by our shared privilege and responsibility to lead and support the Nation through its worst disasters. We all contribute to FEMA's history.

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*"FEMA's best assets are its people...The 2017 hurricane season provided many opportunities for FEMA's programmatic staff to support response and recovery efforts. This experience is invaluable and will help FEMA deliver better services and support in future disasters."*

**Brock Long**  
**Former FEMA Administrator**  
**June 2017 - March 2019**

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# 3

## What We Face: The Nature of Emergency Management

History has shown us that our Nation faces an evolving disaster landscape. Known and unknown threats and hazards require that we all take part in implementing policies, developing plans, and executing processes that reduce risk and mitigate the loss of life and property. In doing so, it is important to recognize that disasters impact individuals and communities differently. It is critical that everyone understand their role in the system of emergency management. By everyone doing their part, we can better achieve our vision of a more prepared and resilient Nation.

*“Change has been constant, but one thing remains the same: It’s the dedication of FEMA’s workforce that makes the difference...I truly love my job to this day!”*

Josie Arcurio  
FEMA employee

## What We Face as A Nation

Our Nation experiences a diverse range of disasters. A disaster is defined as an adverse condition or occurrence that requires coordinated action across multiple entities to resolve. Disasters include all types of emergencies and hazards, and can come in all forms and magnitudes to include both natural and man-made incidents.

We consider many factors when preparing and planning for disasters. From the climate to new threats, alongside things like demographics and technology, many factors must be taken into consideration on our path to becoming more resilient. We prepare for natural hazards such as heatwaves, heavy precipitation, storm surges, droughts, floods, wildfires, hurricanes, tornadoes, or earthquakes. We also prepare for man-made incidents such as acts of terrorism and war. As a Nation we need to be more prepared than ever to face a spectrum of disasters.



Severe Storm



Power Outage



Tornado



Earthquake



Wildfire



Winter Storm

Our operating environment is also shaped by the individuals and communities we serve. Through experience, we have seen disasters have disproportionate impacts on people with disabilities, people with specific medical requirements, older adults, individuals with limited English proficiency, and people with low income, among others. We recognize and account for diversity to help reduce barriers to resources and opportunities for those individuals and communities.

As we work towards a prepared and resilient Nation, we face the challenge in balancing disaster preparedness and mitigation with competing priorities. For example, economic goals and consumer choices can influence decisions and resource allocation, even when the risks these choices present are well known.

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*"To implement effective emergency management,  
you have to acknowledge both mother nature and  
human nature."*

**Billy Wagner**  
Former FEMA Employee

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## Nature of Emergency Management

Our Agency is only one member of a larger team that shares responsibility for emergency management and national preparedness. Most disasters begin and end locally. Local officials best understand the unique needs, opportunities, and risks their communities face. As such, it is our philosophy that local officials are best positioned to prepare their communities and execute disaster response and recovery efforts. The larger or more complex the disaster, the greater the number and variety of partners that must be involved to support local officials.

Emergency management is collaborative and tiered. It is a system reflective of a continuous cycle, with no definitive beginning or end. Our efforts often overlap and carry over from one phase to the next. It is designed to continuously increase our Nation's resilience to all hazards. Preparedness efforts with partners at all levels are fundamental to increase the effectiveness of this type of cooperation.

Local level disasters require a unified approach from local agencies, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations. Some may require additional support from neighboring jurisdictions or state, tribal, or territorial governments. As a disaster increases in scale or scope, so does the level of support. States, tribes, and territories play a critical role in coordinating planning, mitigation, and response activities, while also serving as a critical conduit between Federal resources and local needs. The Federal Government's support before, during, and after disasters builds on, and is affected by, the capacity of state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, as well as the business community and nongovernmental organizations. When those capacities are overwhelmed and assistance is requested, the Federal Government can then begin coordinating and collaborating with the governments of the impacted area.

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*"The mission success of FEMA happens through the work of many coming together. Our employees are selfless, empathetic, and passionate – working long, tiring hours in unison to support survivors and communities."*

**Elizabeth Zimmerman**  
**Former FEMA Executive**

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### Managing an Emergency – A Tiered Approach

Disaster: A residential flood

A local emergency manager is leading the response. Firefighters and police are on scene providing traffic control and aid in evacuations. Emergency medical services personnel are triaging, transporting, and redistributing injured to local hospitals. A local nonprofit or voluntary organization (e.g., American Red Cross, Salvation Army) may be on hand to assist displaced residents. The scope of the impacted area quickly changes when a dam is breached as a result of the flooding, and surrounding communities are compromised, lives are at risk, and property is damaged. The complexity of the situation has increased as others – such as states or tribes and, ultimately, the Federal Government – become involved. Businesses, voluntary organizations, and other elements of the private sector are also key stakeholders providing essential services that must be restored to stabilize the community.

We have a distinct role shaped by unpredictable, ever-evolving threats and hazards and the diverse communities we serve. Experience has taught us that emergency management includes the collective efforts of everyone – all levels of government, individuals, communities, businesses, and nonprofit organizations. As FEMA employees, we are a part of that larger community. Whether before the first snow of the year, during the midst of hurricane season, or after a tornado damages a community – we are here helping people.

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*"...as patients poured in, there was no confusion, no panicking, no question over who was in charge of what. The medical center was ready for this, officials said. In October, it had participated in a citywide disaster training: a simulated mass shooter incident at the El Paso airport."*

**University Medical Center of El Paso prepared to save lives during a real active shooter incident after training with FEMA for mass casualty scenario**

**El Paso Mass Shooting  
August 3, 2019**

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# 4

## What We Do: Helping People Before, During, and After Disasters

Given the scope of our mission, it is helpful to describe what we do in a framework of “before,” “during,” and “after” a disaster. While categorized separately, many of the things we do are activities that occur simultaneously and are not exclusive to a particular phase of a disaster. Understanding what our Agency does helps you recognize the critical part you play in FEMA's success. You, our FEMA employees, make our mission possible every day.

*"U.S. Northern Command's close partnership with FEMA is vital. Whether for natural disasters or the nefarious actions of bad actors, we work together to manage the catastrophic consequences and keep Americans safe during their time of greatest need."*

General Terrence J.  
O'Shaughnessy  
Commander of U.S.  
Northern Command



## Before Disasters

**We help people understand risks to life and property and motivate them to take action – individually and collectively – to reduce these risks, build capabilities, and prepare for disasters.** We support national preparedness and self-sufficiency by helping everyone understand their disaster risk. We provide resources and guidance to help communities train, exercise, and build capabilities to reduce their disaster risk, and prepare for disasters should they occur. By educating, we empower the whole community to take action.

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*“There is so much about emergencies and disasters – and life, really – that we can’t control, and that’s scary. What we can do is prepare to help ourselves and others, just in case. We can save a little from each paycheck, we can learn first aid, and, most importantly, we can be active members of our community. All three are worthwhile, with or without a disaster.”*

**Katie Fox**  
**Former FEMA Executive**

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## Raise Risk Awareness

*We help identify and assess risks to life and property, and then collaborate with a wide range of partners to communicate risk information.*

Risk awareness is identifying and understanding different threats and hazards in an environment. Whether you are clarifying risk for yourself or your community, understanding different types of disasters and potential impacts is a critical first step in preparedness. Part of risk awareness is also assessing community vulnerabilities and gaps in capabilities to create a comprehensive picture of the risk environment. Our success in risk awareness is rooted in the diversity of our workforce, ensuring all perspectives are included in the identification and communication of risk.

Information is power and having information on local risks is invaluable. We work to ensure risk information is accessible, relevant, and actionable. We consider all stakeholders, including people with disabilities, people with limited English proficiency, people without computer access, among others, to ensure that we identify and assess the varying needs for all communities. While communities cannot completely control all risk, those that better understand their risks can make informed choices about where to prioritize action.

## Educate in Risk Reduction Options

*We educate individuals, communities, and the public to understand different options for reducing risk.*

Individuals and communities need to be aware that there are options for reducing risk. Through programs, tools, and outreach, we engage the public at an individual level to help educate in risk reduction options. We champion preparedness activities across communities, organizations, and businesses. Using media campaigns, we reach millions of people and engage the public in a variety of activities and events. We provide personnel and resources to support those preparedness events across the country. Our regional offices serve as a conduit to reach even more people in their day-to-day lives. We are focused on providing risk reduction education for all. Our programs and resources are for a variety of audiences, such as underserved and youth populations.

We provide best-practice guidance, technical assistance, and planning support to our partners to help them understand how they can plan for and mitigate risks in

## Publication 1

their local community. We issue planning guidance. Risk-informed planning and decision-making helps planners examine a hazard or threat and produce integrated, coordinated, and synchronized plans. We also encourage the adoption and implementation of current codes and standards. Codes and standards are one of the Nation's strongest defenses against natural disasters and are a cost-effective way of protecting important investments, like homes or businesses.

### Help to Take Action

*We help individuals, communities, and organizations take action to mitigate, reduce risk, and build capabilities to prepare for disasters.*

Individuals need to take action to address their risk. We offer resources and tools to help translate risk reduction options into tangible actions such as helpful checklists, communication plans, and risk management and mitigation opportunities. We also provide hands-on expertise and guidance in capability-building, to include training and exercises.

We work with individuals, organizations, communities, and governments to plan for the continuity of critical services when those normal services and functions are disrupted. As we guide our partners in taking coordinated action, we emphasize the shared responsibility of planning and preparing for disasters. We offer programs and services that allow communities to access Federal funds before a disaster strikes to train staff, purchase equipment, develop projects and plans, and mitigate future losses. These programs are made available as Federal assistance to states, territories, and tribes. Additionally, we offer flood insurance products in partnership with private sector providers.

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*“The most important thing I've learned as a member of FEMA's Youth Preparedness Council, is that everyone, including youth, can contribute to community resilience. It's a team effort and by working together we can get it done!”*

**Nyla Howell**  
**FEMA Youth Preparedness Council Representative**

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# FEMA In Action: Before



What We Do

## During Disasters



**We message, mobilize, and coordinate to support state, local, tribal, and territorial response efforts to stabilize communities.** By law, we are the primary coordination mechanism of the Federal Government for every presidentially declared disaster under the *Stafford Act*. Our responsibility during disasters is to coordinate and position the Federal interagency to apply and manage our Federal resources for immediate lifesaving and life-sustaining operations.

Disaster response should be managed at the lowest level possible. We actively engage our community partners at the local, regional, and national levels to effectively communicate an impacted community's needs and identify resources to rapidly fill those gaps. This is where the relationships and partnerships we have built prior to a disaster are most visible and most critical. Through a bottom-up approach, our field staff request resources and provide ground truth information up to the regional and national levels. That communication continues to the Federal interagency and private sector partners for coordination to help fill resource gaps and provide verified situational awareness for senior leadership decision-making. We use this information to provide the right resources to the right places at the right time.

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*"Disaster response is a fascinating ballet of chaos. FEMA helps us get our steps a little straighter and our work a little more organized by bringing a massive amount of resources and knowledge to the table."*

**Kimberly Stout**  
**American Red Cross Liaison**

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## Alert, Warn, and Message

*We bring valuable insight to our partners during a disaster using our national-level perspective.*

During and immediately following a disaster, our priority is to stabilize critical services within a community to alleviate immediate threats to human health, safety, and economic security. A large part of this stabilization is ensuring individuals and communities have access to lifesaving and life-sustaining information. Communicating directly with the public can be difficult during a disaster when standard forms of communications are compromised or inaccessible.

Individuals should always look first for information from their local officials. Using alert and warning systems, FEMA helps amplify local messaging by communicating critical information to disaster survivors and response officials. Timely, accessible, and actionable emergency alert and warning messages build resilience by providing individuals with information to make decisions and take action to effectively reduce the impact of a disaster. The former one-way flow of warnings, information, and updates to the affected public has become a two-way system that includes many partners, sources, and systems.

## Coordinate the Federal Response

*We organize ourselves and others to coordinate the Federal emergency response community.*

We bring together departments and agencies that have responsibilities, authorities, or expertise in a functional area. We have a unique authority to assign and fund other Federal agencies to support Federal response during *Stafford Act* disasters. Many of the arrangements by which departments and agencies participate are determined and formalized in pre-disaster planning efforts. Relevant stakeholders and experts are also brought together to identify and address needs, issues, and challenges. Effective response begins with a variety of preparedness activities such as planning, exercising, training, and constant communication between partners on capability gaps.

We work to establish a unified group that coordinates with the impacted state, territory, or tribe to establish shared priorities and objectives. This ensures unity of effort and shared situational awareness so Federal resources are employed to support and augment the disaster response requirements. In some larger or unique disasters, we mobilize the Federal Government's emergency response

## Publication 1

teams, systems, and capabilities to support FEMA's incident management personnel with information and operational support. We also coordinate with the international community, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector to meet the needs of impacted communities.

### Apply and Manage Resources

*We bring together and deploy Federal resources that supplement state, local, tribal, and territorial capabilities to stabilize the disaster.*

We receive and process requests to source and deploy various resources to the field for distribution. Federal resources can include commodities, equipment, or personnel. We aim to deliver Federal assistance that is timely, efficient, effective, and accessible. Our regional offices play a critical role in delivering these resources. We receive resource requests from our governmental partners in the field who have firsthand knowledge of the needs required to stabilize the community. Through this process, we work with our partners to determine the most effective and efficient ways to fulfill their requests.

We analyze all sourcing options by examining internal and external capabilities. Effective management of resources requires robust coordination and synchronization with governmental and nongovernmental partners on the ground. To be useful, resources must be physically delivered through the last mile when and where they are needed. We recognize we are only one member of the emergency management community; thus, communication is key to ensure we are not hindering one another in achieving the same goal.

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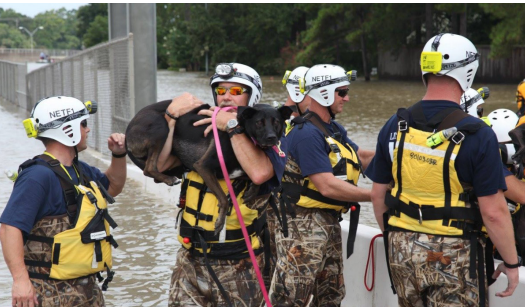
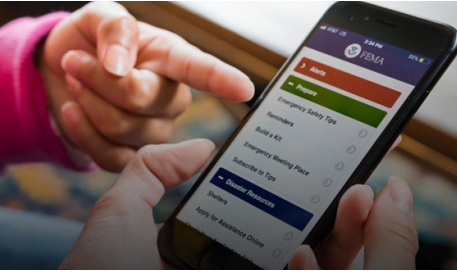
*"I believe one measure of our Agency's significance is the mass care resources our Agency provides for survivors to take their first steps into recovery. Whether it be a meal, a shelter, or a friendly face assuring survivors that they will pull through, mass care delivers hope to survivors and their loved ones."*

**Jessica Bettinger**  
**FEMA Employee**

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# FEMA In Action: During



What We Do

## After Disasters



**We help individuals and communities recover after a disaster and build back stronger.** Following a disaster, affected individuals and communities seek resources to address their short-, intermediate-, and long-term needs. These recovery activities must be accessible to survivors with disabilities and survivors with limited English proficiency, among others. Ultimately, outcomes for survivors extend beyond lifesaving and life-sustaining activities. Recovery includes the continuation or restoration of services critical to support the physical, emotional, and financial well-being of impacted community members.

The stabilization, restoration, and strengthening of government functions, community infrastructure, and critical business is also essential to the economic stability, vitality, and long-term sustainability of communities themselves. Following a Presidential disaster declaration, we can initiate various post-disaster recovery programs under the *Stafford Act*. We provide coordination, technical assistance, subject matter expertise, and funding mechanisms. We also stand ready to assist flood insurance policy holders in their recovery.

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*"I built our house in 1998. After all these years of paying for flood insurance, it paid off. We would be out on the street right now if it wasn't for the flood insurance. That's a dollar well spent, it's an investment really."*

**Flood Survivor  
Hurricane Florence 2018**

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### Coordinate Federal Recovery Efforts

*We help facilitate problem-solving, improve access to resources, integrate principles of resilience, sustainability, and mitigation, and foster coordination among our partners after a disaster.*

The Federal Government's supporting role is especially important during the early weeks after a large-scale disaster, when many communities are overwhelmed with response and short-term recovery efforts. We work to understand the needs and requirements of communities after a disaster, then bring together appropriate resources and partners to take well-informed actions to help meet those needs.

Each partner supports disasters in a different way. Many Federal agencies directly or indirectly contribute to meeting recovery needs by delivering assistance provided under their normal authorities. The duration and extent of Federal support is determined in part by the scale and enduring impacts of the disaster and on the ability of a community to sustain recovery efforts on its own. Our job is to provide expertise that enables communities to implement solutions that leverage both FEMA's and other Federal agencies' resources.

### Provide Resources

*We provide financial support and direct services to individuals, communities, governments, and nonprofit organizations to aid in their recovery.*

Along with our Federal partners, we also play an important role in providing accessible information to the public and all stakeholders involved in recovery, including information about grants and loans. Continuing to inform stakeholders throughout recovery enables awareness of the process and informs realistic expectations.

We directly assist survivors in getting back on their feet by providing financial assistance or direct services to eligible individuals. We support survivors and their families by providing resources to support needs such as housing, medical, dental, and funeral expenses, child care, crisis counseling, legal services, unemployment, and case management. Housing assistance helps to cover costs like rent and home repairs and offers survivors direct services in the form of temporary housing. Following a flood, we work with our flood insurance policyholders to settle their claims.

## Publication 1

We support communities in providing supplemental Federal disaster grant assistance for essential recovery initiatives, such as debris removal. We also support the repair, replacement, or restoration of disaster-damaged publicly-owned facilities, and the facilities of certain private nonprofit organizations such as schools and hospitals. We encourage protection of these damaged facilities from future disasters by providing resources for mitigation measures during the recovery process.

### Apply Insight to Reduce Future Risk

*We offer insight, standards, resources, and tools for communities, businesses, and individuals to build back stronger.*

Disasters can bring awareness to gaps in plans and capabilities as well as risks to infrastructure or the environment. Following a disaster, individuals, businesses, and communities may use this opportunity to take action that reduces or eliminates long-term risk to people and property so that they mitigate future impacts. There are opportunities to enhance plans and procedures, train and equip staff, and strengthen infrastructure. For example, preparedness resources available to ready families, planning guidance to develop continuity of operations plans for businesses, or grant opportunities to enhance communities' emergency management capabilities continue to be available to our stakeholders. It is important that we work to continuously improve ourselves and our communities as we strive to achieve a more resilient Nation.

Using our national-level experience, we share best practices and lessons learned to help communities reduce future risks. We encourage communities to incorporate mitigation, resilience, and sustainability into short- and long-term recovery goals to systematically address risk and enable a faster recovery against future disasters. Our mitigation resources following a disaster help rebuild or replace damaged facilities so that losses are avoided or reduced in the future. In addition, our mitigation resources can be used to invest in larger community-wide mitigation projects. Communities with mitigation plans in place prior to a disaster can use this opportunity to access funding that allows them to complete some of their priority projects.

# FEMA In Action: After



What We Do

## We Help People Before, During, and After Disasters

The work we do is challenging. We help one another find the courage to take action against these challenges every day. Individually we have specific roles within the Agency. It is the summation of all our work that helps us move closer to our shared goal of building a prepared and resilient Nation. When we act together, tiny drops can grow into ripples of change.

For many of us, emergency management is a movement or a calling. We pursue this calling by helping people before, during, and after disasters. Our success as an Agency depends on every single one of us working diligently on the task at hand with Compassion, Fairness, Integrity, and Respect.

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*“A huge wildfire consumed the forest where the hummingbird lived, and as the fire raged, all the animals left the forest and stood watching, transfixed and overwhelmed. They all felt so overwhelmed that they did not do anything, but the hummingbird decided, ‘I am going to do something about the fire.’ So it flew to the nearest stream, got a drop of water in its beak, and dropped it on the fire. Then it went back again, and again, dropping water on the fire as fast as it could. The other animals mocked the hummingbird, saying, ‘What are you doing? You are too small, your wings are too small, and the fire is huge.’ The hummingbird turned to them and said, ‘I am doing the best I can.’”*

**Wangari Maathai**  
2004 Nobel Peace Prize Recipient

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# 5

## How We Do It: Principles to Guide the Work We Do

As Federal leaders supporting the Nation in emergency management, our guiding principles deliver our mission. Our principles inspire confidence in FEMA and in one another. We follow clear policies and procedures that prescribe FEMA's role in the emergency management community. Whether we are operating in steady state or responding to a wide-scale disaster, living by our principles aligns us with our values and our mission. We employ our guiding principles, in accordance with our core values, in everything we do.

*"The professionalism, dedication, and genuine helpfulness of FEMA staff have been an impressive experience for us – and a profound inspiration."*

Henning Thiesen,  
Danish Emergency  
Management Agency  
Director General

## Guiding Principles

Principles are rules that have been woven into the way an organization delivers its business. They serve as a guide on how to operate and deliver an organization's core values.

To be successful in our mission, we have a set of guiding principles that direct how we interact, approach our work, and provide outstanding service. Our nine guiding principles are: Accessibility, Accountability, Empowerment, Engagement, Flexibility, Getting Results, Preparation, Stewardship, and Teamwork. These principles provide a framework and a lens for how we think through accomplishing typical day-to-day activities as well as how we solve more complex issues and challenges.



**Accessibility** is being easily reached, understood, or used by the whole community regardless of functional capabilities, disability, age, race, income level, or language. We will only be effective if the people we serve can find the information and assistance they need, when they need it. Accessibility and equal access are woven into our every program and service from the beginning and are vital to serving all survivors in times of need.

In Action:

- Incorporating principles of universal design to make our products and programs accessible from the beginning for communities
- Seeking to understand and mitigate our biases in the office and not intentionally leaving anyone out
- Making things easier for partners to understand and access by providing reasonable accommodations and recognizing diverse needs





**Accountability** is meeting expectations set by our colleagues, supervisors, and those we serve. Serving as Federal leaders in emergency management requires us to be trusted stewards of taxpayer dollars, follow ethical guidelines, protect and promote the civil rights of all disaster survivors, and provide the highest level of service to support our partners. Having a workforce that is dependable means that our Agency is productive and reliable when called on.

In Action:

- Promoting fair and equitable treatment of all disaster survivors
- Adhering to ethical standards in the workplace and always striving to be effective and efficient in accomplishing our tasks and meeting our goals
- Engaging with DHS, the White House, and Members of Congress on policy and resource decisions and program oversight



**Empowerment** is enabling an individual or group to have influence over decisions. We believe we are most successful when our own employees apply their varying experience and skills. Trusting our staff and colleagues to make informed decisions encourages them to continue to take initiative and drive change. This also rings true for our partners – locals know their own communities best and must feel empowered to lead disaster activities.

In Action:

- Understanding the unique needs of each community and providing the right tools for them to be self-sufficient and stable in the event of an emergency
- Encouraging employees to participate in professional development opportunities
- Promoting and rewarding innovative solutions at all levels of government that improve the way we operate together

### Engagement

**Engagement** is actively participating in dialogue with internal and external stakeholders to build partnerships and gather feedback on our programs and services. Practicing active listening and being present in the conversation enables us to effectively understand and address needs. We must also be trusted to deliver accurate and accessible information.

In Action:

- Providing the best available information to disaster survivors early and often
- Building consensus among Agency senior leadership when developing options and making critical decisions on strategy, policy, or resources
- Consulting with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders on program implementation and policy development

### Flexibility

**Flexibility** is rapidly adjusting to ever-changing environments and a wide variety of tasks and circumstances both at the office and in the field. Emergency management is rooted in uncertainty. We are expected to be able to adjust to new activities, quickly adapt to our surroundings, and embrace opportunities for continuous improvement.

In Action:

- Adapting our programs to a broad range of needs, whether they are for individual survivors, impacted communities, or partner organizations
- Pivoting to new roles and responsibilities when necessary because of a change in leadership direction, information, or environmental constraints
- Expanding our engagement efforts to include non-traditional partners to solve complex issues



**Getting results** is working towards a clearly defined outcome. Measuring against desired outcomes for both individual employees and the Agency at large helps to drive progress and hold us accountable. Assessing how we achieve our desired outcome enables us to improve our delivery of assistance.

In Action:

- Supporting survivors by being innovative and persistent when faced with roadblocks and working to fill gaps where there are opportunities
- Holding everyone accountable – from the larger Agency to individual staff members – for achieving progress against our strategic priorities and annual performance plans
- Assisting state, local, tribal, and territorial partners in filling capability gaps through grant funding, guidance, training, and exercises



**Preparation** is taking preventative action to better withstand unpredictable moments. Emergencies can happen at any time and help is not always nearby. Preparedness is the cornerstone of building strong, resilient communities that are better positioned to withstand and recover rapidly from disruption.

In Action:

- Pre-positioning essential items needed in disaster response to be readily available when needed by affected communities
- Encouraging conversations about individual and family preparedness – especially amongst our own employees – and motivating people to build emergency kits, learn CPR, and develop personal financial plans
- Promoting preparedness through planning, training, exercising, assessing, and engaging with our governmental and nongovernmental partners



### Stewardship

**Stewardship** is administering high-quality programs and services required by statute, regulation, and policy. As stewards of taxpayer dollars, we routinely assess our programs, policies, and actions to ensure that we operate effectively and efficiently to meet the needs and interests of our stakeholders. We are an Agency of trusted individuals that the Nation can turn to during its time of need.

In Action:

- Providing individuals and communities timely and appropriate Federal assistance following a disaster
- Creating and sustaining a workplace environment of continuous improvement in which we leverage data, best practices, and innovative ideas to better manage our programs and services with limited resources
- Encouraging risk reduction and risk management practices of government partners so that our Nation is better prepared and more resilient, ultimately saving lives and protecting property and the environment



### Teamwork

**Teamwork** is bringing together colleagues and stakeholders to accomplish a common goal. Collaboration early on can help achieve success. Working together better positions us to tackle disaster challenges when the Nation needs us the most.

In Action:

- Recognizing we are part of a larger emergency management community that must work together to meet the needs of all survivors
- Tapping into the valuable expertise beyond our own team by engaging another colleague from across the Agency
- Bringing together diverse stakeholders to approach simple and complex challenges in different work environments

# We face the unknown.

We have a distinct role shaped by unpredictable and ever-evolving threats and hazards.

# We are a team.

We unite to make a difference in the lives of others.

# We are leaders.

We are Federal leaders and together we help people before, during, and after disasters.

# We are FEMA.



#### Photo Sources from Cover:

First row (from left to right): 1) Disaster Survivor Assistance team member canvasses areas to speak with residents impacted by flooding of the Arkansas River. Lavaca, AR. June 15, 2016. Source: Jocelyn Augustino / FEMA. 2) FEMA employee works in the National Response Coordination Center. October 3, 2019. Source: Rudy Marshall / FEMA. 3) FEMA local hire as an applicant service specialist. Source: FEMA Instagram. 4) FEMA Corps member works with Mitigation on the Colorado flood. Denver, CO. November 8, 2013. Source: Michael Rieger / FEMA. 5) A FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance member in Humacao, PR. January 6, 2017. Source: Andrew Bajanda / FEMA.

Second row (from left to right): 1) FEMA employee speaks with a survivor. Source: FEMA Facebook. 2) A FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance representative helps a survivor register for assistance following Hurricane Michael. Panama City Beach, FL. October 17, 2018. Source: Jacklyn Farias / CAISE. 3) A FEMA employee smiles at the camera. Source: FEMA Media Library. 4) Disaster Survivor Assistance team member canvasses areas to speak with residents impacted by flooding of the Arkansas River. Lavaca, AR. June 15, 2016. Source: Jocelyn Augustino / FEMA. 5) The North Carolina Insurance Commissioner Office hosts an Insurance Camp event after the flooding from Hurricane Florence. New Bern, NC. September 26, 2018. Source: Mai Shintani / FEMA.

Third row (from left to right): 1) A FEMA Application Services Program specialist in Daytona Beach, FL smiles at a FEMA Disaster Recovery Center. October 31, 2016. Source: Steve Zumwalt / FEMA Media Library. 2) Disaster Survivor Assistance team member canvasses areas to speak with residents impacted by flooding of the Arkansas River. Fort Smith, AR. June 15, 2016. Source: Jocelyn Augustino / FEMA. 3) FEMA employee smiles with a disaster survivor after providing keys to a temporary home. Source: FEMA Media Library. 4) A FEMA employee speaks with a survivor. Source: FEMA Facebook. 5) FEMA Applicant Service Crew Leader in Detroit, MI shakes hands with a survivor after providing registration assistance. October 9, 2014. Source: Christopher Mardorf / FEMA Media Library.

Fourth row (from left to right): 1) FEMA employee in Boston, MA educates attendees at an America's PrepareAthon event. September 3, 2014. Source: Ellis Maynard / DHS Media Library. 2) FEMA Corps member canvasses areas to speak with residents impacted by flooding of the Arkansas River. Lavaca, AR. June 15, 2016. Source: Jocelyn Augustino / FEMA. 3) FEMA Community Relations Officer canvasses a Long Island neighborhood to check on Hurricane Sandy survivors. Long Beach, NY. November 19, 2012. Source: Andrea Booher / FEMA. 4) FEMA Corps member in Denver, CO works alongside mitigation experts during the Colorado Flood. November 8, 2013. Source: Michael Rieger / FEMA. 5) FEMA employee Minh Phan (right) talks with state officials about how the community is recovering from the devastation left behind by Hurricane Michael in Blakely, GA. November 1, 2018. Source: Luisa Rivera / FEMA.

#### Table of Contents:

P4: (From top to bottom) 1) Members of FEMA Corps embrace. Source: FEMA Facebook. 2) Flood waters remain high throughout neighborhoods in Kinston, NC as the result of Hurricane Matthew. October 14, 2016. Source: Jocelyn Augustino / FEMA. 3) Virgin Islands Territory Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) Deputy Director in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands gives a situation briefing to FEMA and VITEMA emergency workers in the Virgin Islands Emergency Operation Center. August 30, 2010. Source: Andrea Booher / FEMA Media Library. 4) FEMA leadership team in Guam discuss how best to support Guam and CMNI in assessing damages from Typhoon Dolphin. May 17, 2015. Source: FEMA Media Library. 5) A FEMA Representative in Cypress, TX signs in survivors at a Mobile Disaster Recovery Center. October 7, 2017 Source: Steve Zumwalt / FEMA.

#### Chapter 1: Who We Are

P8: (First row, from left) 1) Survivor from Loiza receives orientation by a FEMA staff during event in Parcelas Suárez Community. Loiza, PR. June 6, 2019. Source: Eduardo Martínez / FEMA. 2) FEMA employee assists a survivor in a local store. Source: FEMA Facebook. (Second row, from left): 1) A FEMA Recovery Center manager answers disaster questions at the Glenville Recovery Center in Glenville, DE. October 1, 1999. Source: Andrea Booher / FEMA. 2) FEMA Corps employees embrace. Source: FEMA Facebook.

P10 Compassion: Disaster Survivor Assistance specialist gets a hug from a survivor in Apalachicola, FL, after Hurricane Michael. November 3, 2018. Source: FEMA Facebook.

P11 Fairness: The Mayor of Tinian registers for FEMA Assistance after Super Typhoon Yutu damaged his home. Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. November 14, 2018. Source: Grace Simoneau / FEMA

P12 Integrity: A FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer swears in the first group of local hires at the FEMA offices in Durham, NC. October 25, 2018. Source: Liz Roll / FEMA.

P13 Respect: FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistant Specialists replace an American flag damaged by flood waters in late June, with a new one at a local church. Clendenin, WV. July 5, 2016. Source: Steve Zumwalt / FEMA.

#### Chapter 2: Why We Are Here

P15: A flag flies in front of a heavily damaged neighborhood in Panama City, FL from Hurricane Michael. Source: FEMA Facebook.

P16: American Red Cross fund drive for relief of the 1927 Mississippi Valley Flood victims, New York, NY. April 1927. Source: American Red Cross.

P17: FEMA representative at NATO, representing the U.S. on NATO's Civil Emergency Planning Committee. Source: George Hadrick and Joleen Jubela / FEMA.

P19: Federal Regional Center construction for Region VI in Denton, TX. August 31, 1962. Source: FEMA Region VI / FEMA Photo Library.

P20: Two FEMA employees canvass a neighborhood to register survivors for Individual Assistance. Source: FEMA Facebook.

P21: The Murrah Building following the Oklahoma City bombing in Oklahoma City, OK. April 26, 1995. Source: FEMA Photo Library.

P22: FEMA Region VIII Urban Search and Rescue team leader and Colorado Lieutenant Governor inspect the recovery operations underway at Ground Zero, the site of the World Trade Center collapse. Source: FEMA Media Library.

P23: (From top to bottom) 1): FEMA and the Alabama Emergency Response Team at the state's Emergency Operation Center monitor Hurricane Katrina as it makes landfall on the Gulf Coast. Source: FEMA Media Library. 2) Department of Homeland Security employees, who volunteer for FEMA community relation positions, inform Hurricane Sandy survivors at Rockaway Beach, N.Y. of how to register for FEMA assistance. New York, NY. November 19, 2012. Source: Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Patrick Ratcliff, USN/Released. P25: Assistant External Affairs Officer for Community Relations speaks with teams prior to deploying for Tropical Storm Irene. Hartford, CT. September 6, 2011. Source: Jocelyn Augustino / FEMA.

P26: FEMA worker surveys damage from a fire caused by a gas leak during Hurricane Sandy in Breezy Point, NY. November 1, 2012. Source: FEMA Facebook.

P28: Passengers board one of three chartered buses leaving each morning to take FEMA employees to Disaster Recovery Centers in Butte County, CA to assist Camp Fire survivors in their recovery. Source: FEMA Media Library.

#### Chapter 4: What We Do

P34: FEMA employees wear blue FEMA vests discuss mitigation options with survivors. Source: FEMA Media Library

P37: (First row): FEMA employees collaborate in a breakout group during a workshop. Source: FEMA Facebook. (Second row, from left): 1) FEMA employee educates a commuter about disaster preparation during National Preparedness month at an America's PrepareAthon event in Boston's South Station. September 3, 2014. Source: Ellis Maynard / FEMA Library. 2) Community Relations Team Leader in Lowland, NC reviews the areas where teams will go door-to-door in Pamlico County to reach survivors after Hurricane Irene. September 20, 2011. Source: Marilee Caliendo / FEMA News Photo. (Third row, from left): 1) Local volunteers load sandbags on a truck as they prepare to help efforts at levees in Winfield, MO. June 18th, 2008. Source: FEMA Media Library. 2) Pueblo, CO Fire Department runs decontamination drill. Source: FEMA Facebook. (Fourth row): FEMA Corps member working with community member. Source: FEMA Media Library.

P38: Helicopter combats California wildfires with water. Source: FEMA Media Library.

P41: (First row, from left): 1) FEMA phone application distributes updates on weather and other emergency events. Source: FEMA Media Library. 2) Virginia Task Force 1 in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. September 23, 2017. Source: FEMA Media Library. (Second row): Region VIII Geographic Operations Branch work together in the aftermath of Hurricane Florence. 2018. Source: Daniel R. Green. (Third row): FEMA Logistics specialist and Army staff at Dobbin Reserve Airforce Base. Atlanta, GA. September 16, 1999. Source: Andrea Booher / FEMA. (Fourth row, from left): 1) Members of FEMA's Urban Search and Rescue Nebraska Task Force One rescue people and pets. Source: FEMA Facebook. 2) A rescue squad prepares to help disaster survivors out of a helicopter and into waiting wheelchairs. Source: FEMA Facebook.

P42: A FEMA staff member surveys damage to several houses from a hurricane. Source: FEMA Facebook.

P45: (First row): FEMA-Ogala Sioux signing ceremony for DR-4237 in Pine Ridge, SD. 2015. Source: Christopher Mardorf. (Second row, from left): 1) A Disaster Survivor Assistance crew member takes down survivor information using a tablet. Source: FEMA Facebook. 2) FEMA Russian linguist and community relations specialists begin to canvass a neighborhood with a large Russian population in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, New York, NY. December 20, 2012. Source: Ed Edahl. (Third row, from left): 1) FEMA mitigation specialists at a local home improvement stores in Louisiana answering questions and providing tips to rebuild safer and stronger. Source: FEMA Facebook. 2) Mitigation team leader answers questions from a local TV news reporter in Dothan, AL. January 6, 2001. Source: Jason Pack / FEMA. (Fourth row, from left): 1) Roofing contractors apply and affix FEMA supplied blue tarp sheets onto a local home in Naples, FL. September 16, 2017. Source: Kenneth Bolton. 2) FEMA Region II Community Planning and Capacity Building Regional Coordinator is speaking with a community stakeholder to solicit ideas for the development of an island-wide recovery plan for St. Croix. Christiansted, St. Croix. April 18, 2018. Source: Matthew Campbell / FEMA CPCB Recovery Support Function.

P46: A sign thanks FEMA employees for their work. Source: FEMA Media Library.

#### Chapter 5: Guiding Principles

P48 Accessibility: A FEMA Application Services Program specialist speaks with a survivor using an assisted listening device at a FEMA Disaster Recovery Center. Source: FEMA Media Library.

P49 Accountability: First Cadre of Response Employees at the Transitional Recovery Office in Biloxi, MS take their oath before working in a range of long-term Hurricane Katrina recovery jobs throughout the coastal area. Source: FEMA Media Library. Empowerment: Earthquake simulator in Cordova, AK. Source: FEMA Facebook.

P50 Engagement: FEMA staff in West Virginia host a community town hall to ask questions about aid programs and recovery plans. Source: FEMA Media Library. Flexibility: Members of Indiana Task Force 1 search a neighborhood impacted by Hurricane Ike. 2008. Source: FEMA Media Library.

P51 Getting Results: FEMA Evacuation Team member in Washington, DC looks over Mt. Weather Fire and Rescue HAZMAT 21 truck on display at FEMA Headquarters during National Fire Prevention Week. October 5 - 11, 2008. Source: Barry Bahler / FEMA. Preparation: FEMA Staff reviews dates on a whiteboard for disaster planning. Source: FEMA Twitter.

P52 Stewardship: FEMA executive testifies to Congress on a hearing for the Agency's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System. Source: FEMA Media Library. Teamwork: FEMA personnel in Washington, DC at the National Response Coordination Center work side-by-side with other Federal agencies to help manage preparations for Hurricane Irene in 2016. Source: FEMA Media Library.

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