



FEMA

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS BULLETIN

Week of April 28, 2014
Important Dates and Deadlines:

[PrepareAthon! National Day of Action](#)
(April 30, 2014)

[Hazard Mitigation Grant Program](#)
(Due May 12, 2014)

[FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Awards](#)
(Due May 30, 2014)

FEMA Announces Change in Submission Requirements for State Mitigation Plans

FEMA has revised the mitigation planning regulations reducing the frequency of required updates for State Mitigation Plans from once every three years to once every five years. The revision provides states with greater flexibility to shift their resources to other important or pending mitigation efforts and relieves current regulatory requirements on plan updates. Aligning the state mitigation planning update frequency with those of participating federally recognized tribes and local governments also fosters closer coordination of mitigation planning and implementation efforts.

The change to the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (44 C.F.R. sections 201.3, 201.4 and 201.5) applies to both Standard State Mitigation Plans and Enhanced State Mitigation Plans. By law, states, tribal and local governments must have an approved Mitigation Plan in order to be eligible for certain non-emergency Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act) assistance and FEMA mitigation grants. This effort is included in the [DHS Final Plan for Retrospective Review](#), which evaluates existing regulations and invites the public to comment on whether any revisions should be considered.

Mitigation Plans must be approved by FEMA within five years from the last plan's date of approval to maintain eligibility for certain non-emergency Stafford Act assistance and FEMA mitigation grants. States, including territories and the District of Columbia, will receive additional information on this regulatory change by official letter.

FEMA Releases Public Assistance Program Appeals Procedures Manual and Directive

FEMA released *The Public Assistance Appeals Procedures Manual*, a Recovery Directorate manual that sets forth policies, procedures and responsibilities to help institute an organized, consistent and efficient system for responding to appeals within the Public Assistance (PA) Program. FEMA's PA Program provides disaster infrastructure repair or replacement assistance to qualifying state, local and tribal governments, and eligible non-profits.

The new manual describes the policies, procedures and responsibilities applicable to the FEMA Public Assistance Appeals Branch (PAAB) and PA Program staff for adjudicating appeals filed by PA applicants. It is designed to create and manage a system for responding to PA Program eligibility disputes. The manual's guidelines ensure that FEMA issues consistent appeal decisions within legally mandated response times and enhance communication with grantees and applicants. It also outlines PA staff responsibilities within the appeals adjudication process.

More information about the Public Assistance Appeals Branch is available at www.fema.gov/public-assistance-appeals-branch.

FEMA's Office of External Affairs provides this bulletin to highlight recent and upcoming program and policy activities and announcements. Feedback is welcome at fema-ea-bulletin@fema.dhs.gov.

Open Joint Field Offices
AK, CO, GA, MD, NC, NM, OK, OR, SC, VT, WA, WV
[Learn more.](#)

America's PrepareAthon!: #MayDayHouston

Houston, Texas is urging citizens to take the [pledge to prepare](#) and participate in #MayDayHouston. [Learn more](#) or join one of the [May Day events](#).

For more information about America's Prepareathon! events, see the special insert in this week's edition of the bulletin. [How are you going to participate?](#)

Seeking Input on Tribal Declarations Pilot Guidance

In January 2013, the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act (SRIA) provided federally recognized Indian tribal governments (tribal governments) the option to request a Presidential emergency or major disaster declaration independently of a state. To implement this historic provision, FEMA initiated a second round of consultation on the working draft of the Tribal Declarations Pilot Guidance with tribal governments, conducting working meetings across the country to collect thoughts and comments from tribal governments.

Comments on the working draft of the [Tribal Declarations Pilot Guidance](#) can be sent to tribalconsultation@fema.dhs.gov. More information about this consultation, including upcoming dates, is available at www.fema.gov/tribal. Together, we can support Indian Country in their efforts to build more resilient and better prepared communities.

Questions can be directed to FEMA's Intergovernmental Affairs Division at (202) 646-3444 or FEMA-IGA@fema.dhs.gov.

This bulletin is not intended to provide a comprehensive list of policies that are open for public comment, nor does it describe all of the instructions or requirements necessary to submit a comment. For a complete list of instructions and deadlines please click the hyperlinks included. FEMA does not endorse any non-government organizations, entities or services.

FEMA 101: National Business Emergency Operations Center

The National Business Emergency Operation Center (NBEOC) is a virtual organization that serves as FEMA's clearinghouse for two-way information sharing between public and private sector stakeholders in mitigating disasters.

In a crisis, close collaboration between FEMA and the private sector is critical to protecting citizens and rebuilding communities. The goal of the NBEOC is to bring together private sector information and resources to help restore business operations to affected areas, to determine impacts on the private sector's ability to provide services to the public and to improve situational awareness across affected areas.

All participation and coordination is handled virtually through conference calls, email and web platforms, with only NBEOC leadership serving in a physical capacity at FEMA Headquarters.

Participation in the NBEOC is voluntary and open to all members of the private sector, including large and small businesses, associations, universities, think tanks and non-profits. Organizations interested in joining or sharing ideas can contact FEMA-PSR@dhs.gov.

Reminder: Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Public Comment Period Still Open

FEMA has issued an advance notice of proposed rulemaking and is seeking public comment on implementing a provision of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act regarding State administration of the [Hazard Mitigation Grant Program \(HMGP\)](#). The HMGP provides grants to state, local, tribal and territorial governments to implement long-term hazard mitigation measures after a major disaster declaration.

Interested persons are invited to participate in this rulemaking by submitting written data, views or arguments on all aspects of the advance notice of proposed rulemaking. FEMA specifically invites comments that relate to the economic, environmental or federalism effects that might result from implementation of any final rule.

[Comments are due on or before May 12, 2014.](#)

Reminder: National Preparedness Grant Application Period Still Open

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced the release of FY 2014 Funding Opportunity Announcements for six DHS preparedness grant programs totaling over \$1.6 billion.

The Homeland Security grants assist states, urban areas, tribal and territorial governments, and nonprofit organizations as well as the private sector to strengthen our nation's ability to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies in support of the National Preparedness Goal and the National Preparedness System.

Completed final applications for these six preparedness grants are due no later than 11:59 p.m. EDT, May 23, 2014.

For more information, visit www.fema.gov/grants.

Reminder: 2014 FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Awards Application Period Still Open

FEMA has announced that the application period for the 2014 Individual and Community Preparedness Awards is now open. The awards highlight innovative local practices and achievements by recognizing individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions toward making their communities safer, stronger, better prepared, and more resilient.

To be considered for this year's awards, all submissions must be received by **May 30, 2014 at 11:59 p.m. EDT** and must feature program activities taking place between January 1, 2013 and May 30, 2014.

Please visit www.ready.gov/citizen-corps/citizen-corps-awards for more information about the awards and to download instructions for submitting an application.

The mission of the Office of External Affairs (OEA) is to engage, inform, and educate all of FEMA's stakeholders in support of the Agency's programs and initiatives to achieve its mission. OEA accomplishes its mission by coordinating and maintaining visibility of public and internal communications; advising FEMA program and support offices on decision-making regarding policies, plans, and actions that affect stakeholder, media, and Congressional audiences; and organizing outreach efforts targeted at principal stakeholders to include local, state, territorial, and tribal governments, the private sector, national organizations and associations, and the American public.





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Special Spotlight: America's PrepareAthon!

National Day of Action: April 30, 2014

www.ready.gov/prepare

All across the country, states, local, tribal governments, community organizations, and members of the private sector have embraced America's PrepareAthon! by planning events that will help their community to be more prepared in the event of a wildfire, hurricane, tornado or flood. To date, more than five million participants have registered to take part in an event.

There is still plenty of time to plan an event before the first **National Day of Action on April 30**. Below are several events happening in communities around the country, including some that you could participate in virtually.

Spotlight

[May Day Houston](#) – The Houston Community Preparedness Collaborative will implement May Day Houston, a citywide event that embraces May 1st as the city's official preparedness day. Individuals, companies, and groups join together to celebrate and promote preparedness in whatever way they can on **May 1**.

Nationwide

[#Petpared Twitter Challenge](#) – Complete pet preparedness actions, like creating a pet emergency kit and taking pets on an emergency drill. After finishing, take a picture of your pet and yourself and tweet it with the hashtag #Petpared by **April 30**.

State Governments

[Oklahoma City COOP Exercise](#) – This exercise will further refine and test agency and service areas COOP plans against an unplanned catastrophic event that shuts down the facility for up to one week. The exercise will be held on **April 29 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

[Colorado Federal Employee PrepareAthon! Exercise](#) – All federal agencies in Colorado will participate in a tornado and evacuation drill on **April 30**.

Local Governments

[Douglas County Citizen Preparedness Training](#) – Douglas County, Colorado, will conduct a citizen preparedness training session that focuses primarily on evacuations on **April 29 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.**

[Jefferson County Lunch and Learn Session](#) – Jefferson County, West Virginia, is hosting a "lunch and learn" session on personal financial preparedness for national disasters on **April 30 from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.**

Community Organizations

[Finger Lakes Disaster Volunteer Campaign \(Rochester, NY\)](#) – Finger Lakes Regional Volunteer Center will kick off a nine county virtual event to recruit non-medical disaster volunteers on **April 30**.

[Red Cross Community Presentation \(Culver City, CA\)](#) – Community ambassadors for the American Red Cross will be hosting a quarterly meeting to discuss community support for the Red Cross mission to prepare, respond and recover from disaster on **April 30 from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

Private Sector

[Local AM Radio Station Hosts Preparedness Talk](#) – WINY1350 in Putnam, Connecticut will host a one hour presentation on preparedness education. Listeners will be encouraged to join MRC, CERT, Red Cross, local EM, and volunteer EMS/Fire Departments. The presentation will air on **April 30 from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m.**

[Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center National Preparedness Awareness](#) – Brookdale will educate staff, communities, patients and their families of the importance of being prepared in an emergency and provide handouts on disaster planning and family emergency planning on **April 30**.



Teachers participate in a readiness event at an elementary school. Photo courtesy of Brett Nason.