

RECOVERY



Highlights

- The Federal Government has used the aftermath of Sandy as a catalyst to accelerate the transformation of disaster recovery programs and to encourage resilient post-disaster rebuilding. (Infrastructure Systems, p. 65; Economic Recovery, p. 66; Housing, p. 69)
- Regional coordination of infrastructure investments can increase cost efficiency and resilience. (Infrastructure Systems, p. 65)
- Coordinating post-disaster Federal housing assistance to meet the needs of the Nation's urban and rural populations remains a persistent challenge. (Housing, p. 69)
- Technology is increasing the resilience of health networks and improving assessments of disaster-affected natural resources. (Health and Social Services, p. 68; Natural and Cultural Resources, p. 71)

Trends The Federal Government has made substantial progress in maturing recovery leadership roles and coordinating structures outlined in the [National Disaster Recovery Framework](#), which provides a flexible blueprint through which the whole community coordinates disaster recovery. The six Recovery Support Functions in the framework enable this coordination and have helped states recover from approximately 12 significant incidents from 2011–2013. As shown in Table 1, the decision to activate these Recovery Support Functions is based on the needs of a particular incident. When one or more Recovery Support Functions activate, a Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator or other Federal official oversees their efforts, working closely with state and local counterparts to synchronize response and recovery operations.

Incidents	Community Planning & Capacity Building	Housing	Economic Recovery	Infrastructure Systems	Health and Social Services	Natural & Cultural Resources
2012-2013 Multi-state Drought	●	●	●	●	●	●
2012 Hurricane Sandy	●	●	●	●	●	●
2013 Oklahoma Tornado	●	●	●			
2013 Alaska Flooding	●	●				
2013 Colorado Flooding	●	●	●	●		●
2013 New Mexico Flooding	●			●		●

Table 1: In 2013, the Federal Government used Recovery Support Functions to support states affected by multiple incidents.

While all levels of government have increased their familiarity with the recovery coordinating structures, building the organizational capability to support recovery remains a challenge. In the 2013 State Preparedness Report process, states and territories rated themselves lower in Recovery capabilities than any other mission area. For the third year in a row, at least three of the five lowest-scoring capabilities focused on recovery. Similarly, states and territories cited significant training gaps in this mission area, including training personnel to be fully inclusive of disaster survivors with access and functional needs. FEMA sponsored a second training on implementing the *National Disaster Recovery Framework* for Federal, state, and local recovery personnel, and Federal stakeholders continue to identify capabilities needed to support recovery efforts.

Despite these ongoing challenges, lessons learned from Sandy have spurred notable progress implementing the *National Disaster Recovery Framework* by emphasizing the need for increased resilience nationwide. Mitigation and resilience have always been core elements of the framework, but policy changes enacted after Sandy are strengthening linkages between post-disaster recovery and pre-disaster mitigation in the rules and eligibility requirements of multiple Federal assistance programs.

By the Numbers

The 2012–2013 drought caused **\$30 billion in financial losses** in the agricultural sector and reduced national hydroelectric power generation by 10 percent.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is providing nearly **\$63 million** to help flood-impacted communities in Colorado with infrastructure repair, housing, and economic development.

Flooding accompanies an estimated **90 percent** of all disasters, yet only **18 percent** of Americans carry flood insurance.

Resilience Innovations

- The Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force launched the [Rebuild by Design competition](#) to encourage innovative rebuilding designs for the region that promote resilience to severe weather.
- NOAA, FEMA, and USACE released two [online tools about sea level rise](#) to inform local land-use decisions that bolster resilience to coastal flooding.
- FEMA is piloting a Recovery Coordination Cell in Colorado with the planning section organized around watershed boundaries from the 2013 floods rather than existing jurisdictional boundaries.

Preparedness in Action The severe national drought from 2012 to 2013 affected more than two-thirds of U.S. counties and was the first test of the ability of the Recovery Support Functions to coordinate recovery efforts nationally. Unique local conditions and the diversity of agricultural economies precluded a one-size-fits-all solution and posed significant long-term coordination challenges. Drought recovery activities unfolded through regional meetings on drought coordination with stakeholders from across the whole community, including academic partners and local, state, and regional representatives. These meetings focused on improving coordination and maximizing the effectiveness of existing resources. Solutions developed there revealed valuable lessons for public and private partners applying the *National Disaster Recovery Framework* to coordinate long-term recovery on a national scale.

Moreover, Sandy recovery efforts are helping to transform the Nation's approach to disaster recovery, by emphasizing mitigation and resilience, and focusing significant Federal resources on resilient rebuilding. In December 2012, the President established the [Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force](#), which developed a plan with state, local, and tribal governments to ensure that rebuilding mitigates risks from future incidents. The *Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013* (Public Law 113-2) and the *Sandy Recovery Improvement Act* (Public Law 113-2) also dedicated nearly \$50 billion to help rebuild the region after Sandy and other recent disasters, and amended the Stafford Act to streamline the delivery of Federal assistance.

Recipients are spending much of this additional funding in accordance with the recommendations in the [Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Strategy](#), published by the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force in 2013 to establish clearer guidelines for investing Federal funds in the Sandy-affected region. These guidelines seek to align spending with local priorities; cut red tape to deliver assistance more quickly; improve regional coordination; and promote the resilient rebuilding of housing, infrastructure, and local economies. In January 2014, the Sandy Recovery Office assumed responsibility for coordinating Federal support for the region's recovery. This office helps ensure that state and local priorities continue to guide Federal assistance and that projects adhere to new guidelines on resilient rebuilding.

Whole Community Accomplishments

Galena, Alaska: Complications from spring thawing severely damaged eight native communities near Galena, Alaska—five of which are inaccessible by overland routes. Throughout the summer, AmeriCorps, religious service groups, and whole community partners worked with native Alaskans to rebuild their homes before winter.

Moore, Oklahoma: When a tornado devastated Moore, Oklahoma, in 2013, the Joplin, Missouri, Chamber of Commerce sought to share lessons learned from its similar experience in 2011 with its counterpart in Moore. Influenced by this mentorship, the Moore Chamber of Commerce formed a partnership with First American Bank to sponsor nine community meetings to provide vital recovery guidance and information to survivors.

New York, New York: The New York Rising Community Reconstruction Program fosters the participation of local residents, elected officials, and other community and business leaders in developing a community recovery plan. With assistance from New York State and Federal agencies, these communities develop recovery plans that identify reconstruction projects and specify actions to increase preparedness and resilience.