



FEMA

JUL 24 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR: James Featherstone
Chairman, National Advisory Council

FROM: W. Craig Fugate Administrator 

SUBJECT: Response to National Advisory Council Recommendations from
October 18, 2012 Meeting

Thank you for your letter dated December 14, 2012, regarding the National Advisory Council (NAC) recommendations from the October 18, 2012 public meeting in Arlington, VA.

I have worked in conjunction with the Federal Insurance & Mitigation Administration, National Preparedness Directorate, Private Sector Office, and the Office of Response and Recovery to provide the following responses to the NAC recommendations.

FEDERAL INSURANCE AND MITIGATION ADMINISTRATION

National Flood Mapping Program

Recommendation 1: The NAC recommends that FEMA recognize the importance of accurate flood maps to develop viable mitigation and flood insurance programs. Further, the NAC supports the full funding of the National Flood Mapping Program as it is vital to the effective implementation of mitigation and flood insurance reform.

Response 1: FEMA agrees with the NAC recommendation. Accurate flood hazard data and maps are important supporting components of the National Flood Insurance Program, help communities manage their flood risk through sound floodplain management, and provide a forum and intelligence for hazard mitigation and recovery. FEMA also agrees that the mapping activity should be appropriately funded, and the President's FY 2014 budget identified funding for flood hazard mapping. Flood hazard mapping will be targeted in areas of highest risk, need, and opportunity for risk mitigation and reduction.

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS DIRECTORATE

Youth Preparedness Council

Recommendation 2: The NAC recommends that FEMA seek input from Generation X and Millennials and guidance from the Youth Preparedness Council as to how best to engage their peers. Hearing directly from these groups for best ways to engage youth to foster a culture of preparedness is better than Baby Boomers and Traditionalists guessing. This same concept should authenticate efforts to engage all stakeholders in the whole community. The NAC developed a few suggestions that should be validated with the Youth Preparedness Council; they include:

- a. Create a video game and/or smart device app on preparedness that appeals to youth. FEMA should inventory and promote through social media tailored to youth that is already in the market.

- b. Create a competition among schools by recognizing well prepared schools and schools with best practices. This could be done through awards and/or a point system.
- c. Use developmentally appropriate mechanisms to foster a culture of preparedness at all age levels. For example, the use of someone such as Justin Bieber, or other popular youth celebrity, could appeal to teenagers in a public awareness campaign to encourage individual and family preparedness.
- d. Collaborate with Odyssey of the Mind to participate in one of its annual Long-Term Problem-Solving competitions on disaster preparedness.
- e. Establish mentor program to bring together the NAC and Youth Preparedness Council.

Response 2: FEMA partially concurs with this recommendation. FEMA has made extensive efforts to more fully engage youth for several years. The Youth Preparedness Council (YPC) has been an excellent means to achieve this engagement and FEMA will discuss the NAC recommendations with the YPC at the next meeting. FEMA is particularly interested in the mentorship program recommendation and looks forward to pursuing a better forged relationship between the NAC and the YPC.

Emergency Management Institute (EMI)

Recommendation 3: Ensure course content development and revisions reflect functional/accessible needs considerations following current research and best practices. Ensure contractors who are used to develop and update course content have appropriate functional and access needs expertise, following current research and best practices.

Response 3: FEMA concurs with this recommendation. For all EMI resident and learning-at-a-distance products, addressing functional and access needs is a requirement of the EMI standard contracting statement of work/statement of objective as are all federal and technical requirements. Functional needs are addressed and provided in templates for all course developments/revisions (Section 508/504 and technical requirements). Templates are posted on the course developer's website. Distance Learning Branch reviews all course materials prior to posting and publication to be sure it meets all Section 508/504 requirements. EMI has multiple DHS Office of Accessible Systems & Technology (OAST) Trusted Tester certified specialists on EMI staff. Additionally, all functional and access needs for online courses are addressed by the web masters prior to posting any course materials on the training.fema.gov website. EMI has a course manager designated as a subject matter expert (SME) for functional and access needs who coordinates curriculum/course needs with the FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination (ODIC). All EMI training specialists received Section 508/504 and functional and access needs awareness training.

OFFICE OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Private Sector Division

Recommendation 4: The NAC recommends that the FEMA Private Sector Division should seek new and different ways and tools to leverage existing public-private relationships. The focus should be on the perspective of the private sector—bottom line impact, benefits of preparedness (e.g., intact work force protected assets, insurance incentives), and win-win, innovative and relevant solutions. Suggestions include:

- a. Some Fusion Centers have established robust public-private partnerships. The National Fusion Center Work Group should be used to engage the entire domain to shore up information exchange with the less-robust public-private partnerships.
- b. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Cities Readiness Initiative is promoted.

- c. Compile best practices and include in a tool kit for private sector and especially small businesses to utilize in establishing and evaluating their own preparedness efforts.

Response 4: FEMA concurs with the recommendation to focus on the perspective and needs of private sector stakeholders. As part of our seasonal preparedness education efforts, we are conducting outreach to a sample of national partners to identify their communications interests and needs. Their responses helped to shape our strategic communications planning efforts for Hurricane Preparedness Week.

Another current FEMA Private Sector Engagement effort focuses on engaging members of the National Business Emergency Operations Center (NBEOC) in a non-disaster environment. As a result of needs identified during a post-disaster call in January, we worked with FEMA Office of Response and Recovery (ORR) to hold an in-person NBEOC meeting on April 23, 2013. Results of this meeting will be shared with the NAC when available. We anticipate that future web-enabled meetings will be held regularly throughout the year, focusing on different areas suggested by members of the NBEOC.

- a. Fusion centers focus on intelligence sharing, especially related to terrorism and law enforcement activity, while the partnerships we work on are typically open to a broader spectrum. However, we can see a number of potential areas to explore that would benefit both types of partnerships. For example, some topics might include information collection and sharing techniques, managing a public-private partnership effectively throughout the year, identifying and recruiting partners, and bridging broader homeland security initiatives and emergency management operations. We thank the NAC for this suggestion. FEMA has a liaison with DC's fusion center, the Washington Regional Threat and Analysis Center, through our Senior Law Enforcement Advisor; we will work with them and our colleagues at DHS for more information.
- b. Through our Office of External Affairs, we fully support a range of outreach initiatives from across DHS and our federal partners. We appreciate the suggestion on the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Cities Readiness Initiative. Recently, the Individual and Community Preparedness Division started working on a more integrated government-wide approach to promoting and branding preparedness efforts throughout the year. Along with External Affairs, we will support this effort and anticipate that programs like the Cities Readiness Initiative will be wrapped into this outreach.
- c. Small business is an increasing area of focus for us. In response to the limited time and resources small business have to invest in protecting their businesses, we are currently compiling an online small business toolkit that consolidates some of the leading free government programs, tools, and resources to one platform. This resource will enable small businesses to quickly determine programs and tools are right for their business. We have had initial discussions with the Small Business Administration and will be collaborating closely with the agency and its entrepreneurial partners in the creation and marketing of the toolkit. In addition, we have been working with several external partners to identify opportunities to promote small business preparedness, especially through corporations that have a significant small business customer base.

RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

International Urban Search and Rescue Teams

The NAC was asked to provide guidance on eliminating restrictions on the use of specialized international urban search and rescue teams in the United States following a catastrophic disaster.

Recommendation 5: The NAC recommends that FEMA ensure coordination of efforts with, and break down silos between, the multiple working groups that are focused on the liability and insurance obstacles to international mutual aid that may include White House, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Association, U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). FEMA must ensure appropriate levels of coordination, cooperation and information sharing between these groups. The NAC recommends that FEMA evaluate whole community nongovernment centric solutions through partnerships with private sector and non-governmental organizations.

Response 5: FEMA concurs with this recommendation. FEMA is aware of working group efforts, has participated in those working groups with respect to these issues, and has already coordinated with some of these entities on possible legislative fixes, including National Security Staff (NSS), HHS, and USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). FEMA will continue such coordination with these entities and others as appropriate on international urban search and rescue efforts.

Recommendation 6: On the licensure issue, the NAC recommends that FEMA:

- a. Engage with HHS to jointly examine opportunities to work with state medical and emergency medical licensing authorities to either pre-credential members of international teams, or establish protocols to quickly credential members of international teams that are responding into the United States.
- b. Partner with HHS and National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) to poll states and identify those that already have laws or authorities that permit the Governor (or designee) to either waive state license requirements or recognize international licenses during a local or statewide state of emergency or public health emergency.
- c. Consider an amendment to the Stafford Act to deal with the licensure issues in a manner similar to how licensure is dealt with in state-to-state mutual aid under Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). The Stafford Act could provide that a state will recognize licenses if an international team is dispatched into a state in response to a state request for direct federal assistance.

Response 6: FEMA concurs with this recommendation. FEMA wants to highlight that the licensure issue is broader than strictly a medical focus and impacts other groups such as structural engineers. FEMA has ongoing discussions with HHS on this matter, and notes that FEMA has already received summary information from the NEMA regarding states' authorities to waive such requirements.

Recommendation 7: On the liability issue, the NAC recommends that FEMA:

- a. Partner with NEMA to poll states and identify those that have existing laws or authorities that provide appropriate liability protections for responding international teams;

b. Consider an amendment to the Stafford Act to deal with the liability issue in a manner similar to how liability is dealt with in state-to-state mutual aid under EMAC. The Stafford Act could provide that a state assumes the liability risk for an international team that is dispatched into a state in response to a state request for direct federal assistance.

c. Consider federal legislation that would permit FEMA to deploy members of international teams as the equivalent of temporary federal workers or FEMA reservists, thus shifting the liability risk to the federal government.

Response 7: FEMA generally concurs with the recommendations. Making such responders Federal employees raises other complications on the licensure side; however, FEMA is exploring various models for legislative solutions to the liability concerns.

I want to thank you and the Council for the recommendations and your continued commitment to improve FEMA and emergency management. I look forward to additional feedback and recommendations at the next NAC meeting.