

# Hurricane Katrina: 10 Years Later

As of 7/30/2015

This year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the devastating 2005 Atlantic Hurricane Season. One after the other, Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma dealt a forceful blow to the U.S. Gulf Coast. Through a decade of partnerships, progress continues to be made to build better, more resilient communities.

In the aftermath of the 2005 hurricane season, the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA) of 2006 gave FEMA clear guidance on its mission and priorities, and provided the authorities and tools needed to become a more effective and efficient agency, and a better partner to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments.

Ten years into the recovery, FEMA continues to support communities and families, working side-by-side with state, local, and tribal partners. Through teamwork, we are rebuilding the communities that are the economic engines and lifeblood of the Gulf Coast.

## *Solidifying and Strengthening Partnerships*

- **The National Planning Frameworks:** The National Planning Frameworks, part of the National Preparedness System, describe the coordinating structures and alignment of key roles and responsibilities to create a shared understanding about how all levels of government, the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, and the public at-large work together to build and sustain the capabilities we need to prevent, protect, mitigate against, respond to, and recover from those threats and hazards. The National Planning Frameworks focus on five mission areas: Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery. They are available online at <http://www.fema.gov/national-planning-frameworks>.
- **Support to States and Tribes Ahead of Disasters:** FEMA improved its ability to provide support to states and tribes ahead of a disaster. Since 2005, FEMA has gained statutory authority to surge resources to states, tribes, and territories ahead of a disaster should the capacity of states or tribes become overwhelmed. This authority expedites FEMA's ability to respond to disasters if and when a state/tribe requests support and is declared by the President of the United States.
- **Search and Rescue:** Hurricane Katrina demonstrated a national need for better understanding of the diverse search and rescue resources available at federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial levels that could be leveraged and integrated in response to catastrophic incidents. Following Hurricane Katrina, the federal community established a Federal Search and Rescue Coordinating Group (FSARCG) to coordinate diverse search and rescue resources in the field. During the responses to Hurricanes Irene and Sandy, the FSARCG was instrumental in improving communication and fulfillment of search and rescue requirements.
- **Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMATs):** FEMA's IMATs are mobile, highly-trained teams of qualified and experienced federal emergency management personnel that are deployed by FEMA to lead federal disaster response and recovery efforts. FEMA created the IMATs to expand upon and integrate the roles and responsibilities of a previous set of response teams at the national and regional levels. Today, FEMA's IMATs better reflect the core capabilities required for effective response and recovery operations and they include personnel who are accountable for coordinating the federal response regardless of type of incident. The value of these teams has most recently been demonstrated in the federal response to the 2014 Unaccompanied Children

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crisis and the 2015 Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) response. While these incidents did not receive traditional Presidential disaster declarations under the Stafford Act, FEMA and the IMATs were called upon to provide coordination support for the federal response.

- **Hurricane Preparedness Tools and Training:** Through its National Hurricane Program, FEMA, in partnership with the National Hurricane Center (NHC) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), provides planning, training and technical assistance to coastal states. FEMA also has a permanent year-round presence at the National Hurricane Center and deploys a Hurricane Liaison Team during the hurricane season for the purposes of helping federal, state, local, local, and territorial emergency managers understand, interpret, and take protective actions (e.g., evacuation orders) based on storm advisories and other analysis. FEMA also provides training and access to hurricane tracking and decision support tools for emergency managers. These tools combine live feeds of tropical cyclone forecast information with data from evacuation studies to assist state, tribal, local, and territorial emergency managers in determining the most prudent evacuation decision time and the potential for significant storm effects such as wind and storm surge.
- **FEMA's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS):** Since 2006, FEMA adopted standards, protocols and integrated commercial technologies to allow public safety officials, at all levels of government, to send life-saving information through existing communication technologies. These technologies include: radio and television stations via the Emergency Alert System (EAS); cellular phones via Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA); National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's All-Hazards National Weather Radio (NWR) via the IPAWS-NOAA gateway; internet applications and websites via the IPAWS All-Hazards Information Feed; and unique local systems (e.g., digital road signs, sirens). At the same time, they created an environment for the seamless integration of emerging technologies to make alert and warning more effective. For more information visit <https://www.fema.gov/integrated-public-alert-warning-system>.
- **Increasing Communications with the Private Sector:** In response to the recommendations in PKEMRA, FEMA established a Private Sector Division (PSD) within the Office of External Affairs. PSD leads FEMA's engagement with the private sector by building bridges to businesses and other non-governmental organizations and by developing meaningful public-private partnerships. FEMA's growing engagement with Fortune 500 companies supports our citizens and first responders before, during and after disasters. During presidentially-declared disasters and emergencies FEMA's National Business Emergency Operations Center (NBEOC) serves as a situational awareness clearinghouse enabling information sharing with the agency and almost 300 businesses from all sectors and sizes. PSD also manages an effort called Tech Corps—a nationwide network of skilled, trained technology volunteers who can address critical technology gaps during a disaster. Tech Corps members include Cisco Systems, Google, Humanity Road, Information Technology Disaster Resource Center, Intel, Joint Communications Task Force and Microsoft. Furthermore, FEMA co-sponsors the *Building Resiliency through Public-Private Partnerships Conference*. This annual event shares best practices and trends, and builds relationships between the private sector and government, including the DHS Private Sector Office, DHS Office of Infrastructure Protection, and the U.S. Northern Command (Northcom) Private Sector and NGO Office. For more information: [http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1852-25045-2704/fema\\_factsheet\\_nbeoc\\_final\\_508.pdf](http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1852-25045-2704/fema_factsheet_nbeoc_final_508.pdf)

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- **Department of Homeland Security Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships (DHS Center):** In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, FEMA increased its engagement with a broader cross-section of faith-, and community-based groups in all stages of the disaster continuum. The Department of Homeland Security Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships (DHS Center) supports engagement among emergency managers, faith- and community-based groups to create a number of partnerships with diverse religious and cultural traditions. In addition, the DHS Center has worked in partnership with communities across the country to develop a research and practice-based engagement process that builds resilience with diverse communities.
- **Seeking Input from Stakeholder Advisors:** As a result of PKEMRA, FEMA established the National Advisory Council (NAC) to incorporate state, local, tribal and territorial government, private sector, and non-governmental partner input in the development and revision of FEMA policies and strategies.
- **Planning Inclusive of the Needs of all Members of the Community:** The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Americans with Disabilities Act, and Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 mandate the equal access, non-discrimination, integration and inclusion of people with disabilities into all emergency management efforts. To uphold these federal laws, FEMA established the Office of Disability Integration and Coordination (ODIC) in 2010 to provide technical assistance and guidance for a wide range of emergency management activities to achieve equal access to emergency programs and services and meet the access and functional needs of the whole community, including: preparedness, exercises, emergency alerting, accessible transportation and shelter accessibility guidance, assistive technology devices for accessible communication, accessible housing, grant guidance to states for accessibility, and partnership and stakeholder outreach. The ODIC team includes disability integration advisors, American Sign Language Interpreters and Certified Deaf Interpreters. FEMA provides advisors throughout disaster response and recovery and interpreters and materials in accessible formats at disaster recovery centers, community and town hall meetings, and other public venues, conveying FEMA's information so that it is accessible to people who require these accommodations.
- **Limited English Proficiency (LEP):** FEMA now ensures that information made available to individuals affected by emergencies and disasters also is made available in formats that can be understood by persons with limited English proficiency and individuals with disabilities. Currently, FEMA can provide written translations in more than 180 different languages. The languages that are among the most frequently encountered are: Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese, Arabic, Korean, Tagalog, Hindi, Russian, Italian, and Urdu.
- **Providing Access to Critical Information to the Public:** Since Katrina, FEMA continues to increase access and transparency to vital information. Through FEMA.gov, the public can explore a series of interactive visualizations – using historical data in our new data visualization tool – that allow a viewer to probe different types of disasters that have occurred in their community. The FEMA App (smartphone app for mobile devices) allows users to receive alerts from the National Weather Service, and also contains disaster safety tips, interactive lists for stocking your emergency kit emergency meeting location information, and a map with open shelters and open FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs). Disaster survivors can now also apply for help from FEMA and other federal partners directly through their web enabled mobile devices, such as Android®, and Apple® systems.

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- **Increasing Opportunities for Youth:** Disasters like Hurricane Katrina highlighted an opportunity to engage with youth. FEMA partnered with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and AmeriCorps to develop FEMA Corps that promotes civic engagement and offers an educational and financial opportunity for young people aged 18-24 years old. FEMA Corps members prepare for careers in emergency management by working full-time with FEMA for ten months on federal disaster response and recovery efforts.
- **Engaging Our Youth:** FEMA, the Red Cross, and the Department of Education launched the [\*National Strategy for Youth Preparedness Education: Empowering, Educating and Building Resilience\*](#). This document outlines a vision for a nation of prepared youth and provides nine priority steps one can take to help make that vision a reality. To date the strategy is being implemented by 50 state, local, tribal, and territorial partners.
- **Collaborating with our Rising Leaders:** FEMA created the Youth Preparedness Council in 2012, which brings together youth leaders from across the country that are interested in advocating on behalf of youth preparedness and making a difference in their communities.
- **Teaching our Children about Preparedness:** Since Hurricane Katrina, FEMA redoubled its efforts to advance personal and community preparedness. The Ready Campaign, launched in 2003, intensified its focus on preparedness for children through the development of a **Ready Kids** school curriculum and Ready Kids family emergency plan information available at [www.ready.gov/kids](http://www.ready.gov/kids).
- **America's PrepareAthon!:** With a focus on preparing for the future, in 2013, FEMA launched **America's PrepareAthon!**, a national, year-round, community-based campaign, which focuses on promoting preparedness actions such as drills, group discussions and exercises. Twice a year—on April 30 and September 30—the campaign promotes National PrepareAthon! days to bring national attention towards creating a more resilient nation.

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