



### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### **GENERAL**

##### **1. What are the FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Awards?**

Now in its eighth year, the FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Awards Program is a national recognition program that highlights innovative local practices and achievements by recognizing individuals, organizations, and jurisdictions that have made outstanding contributions toward making communities safer, better prepared, and more resilient.

##### **2. What is the deadline for award submissions?**

The deadline for award submissions is March 28, 2016 11:59 P.M. E.T.

##### **3. What are the application requirements?**

Applicants, or those nominating others, must complete a FEMA 2016 Individual and Community Preparedness Application Form and Checklist (available at <http://www.ready.gov/preparedness-awards>). The Description of Achievement *should be at least two pages, but no more than five pages in length and typed in Arial font at size 12.*

##### **4. What is the eligible time period for achievements to be considered for a 2016 FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Award?**

All submissions must feature achievements occurring between January 1, 2015 and March 28, 2016.

##### **5. Are there different award categories? What are they?**

There are eleven competitive award categories and one honorary award conferred by the selection committee.

#### **Outstanding Citizen Corps Council**

Presented to a Citizen Corps Council (community, county, regional, tribal, or state) that demonstrates whole community collaboration to achieve innovative and sustainable practices in emergency management to make the jurisdiction safer, stronger, better prepared, and more resilient (e.g. in the areas of plan review and exercises, public education, training and engagement; government/non-governmental partnerships and integration of services, capacity building, etc.).

#### **Community Preparedness Champions (Presented to two awardees)**

Presented to an individual or an organization in recognition of their outstanding commitment, achievements, and leadership beyond their daily responsibilities (additional efforts) in disaster preparedness and response in their community.



### **Awareness to Action**

Presented for the effective use of outreach and messaging techniques not only to raise awareness about hazards and disaster preparedness, but also to persuade members of the public, organizations, and whole communities to take action to prepare.

### **Technological Innovation**

Presented for creative and effective use of current technology, newly developed technology, or social media that improves the ability of individuals and communities to prepare for, respond to, or recover from disasters.

### **Outstanding Achievement in Youth Preparedness**

Presented to an organization, program, or jurisdiction that increases youth preparedness; engages youth to educate others in disaster preparedness; or, incorporates the voice of youth in development, outreach, and assessment of preparedness programs. The organization or program selected must align with the National Strategy on Youth Preparedness Education (<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/96107>).

### **Preparing the Whole Community**

Presented to an organization, program, or jurisdiction that successfully engages the whole community to improve disaster preparedness and resilience; encourages and explores ways to develop whole community partnerships; and advocates a grassroots approach to emergency planning.

The recipient of the Preparing the Whole Community award will receive The John D. Solomon Whole Community Preparedness Award. Named for the late creator of the groundbreaking blog, [In Case of Emergency, Read Blog: A Citizen's Eye View of Public Preparedness](#), the John D. Solomon Whole Community Preparedness Award is conferred by the selection committee for special recognition in whole community preparedness in the spirit of the inclusive and collaborative nature of his work.

Mr. Solomon's work was striking in its reporting, analysis, engagement, and impact in preparing the public, informing professionals, and bringing about change in both the public and private sectors. Mr. Solomon organized conferences, proposed legislation, posted interviews, evaluated how government and non-government organizations were using social media tools, promoted others' initiatives to policy makers, organized contests to foster citizen preparedness, and interviewed emergency management leaders, including FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate, for preparedness tips for his video series "What Should I Tell the Public?"



Administrator Fugate once stated that Mr. Solomon “set the standard for what it means to be part of our nation’s emergency management team.”

### **Outstanding Inclusive Initiatives in Emergency Management**

New this year, this award is presented to an organization, program, or jurisdiction that has excelled in working with populations that are disproportionately impacted by disasters due to risks associated with economic status, limited English proficiency, cultural diversity, or access and functional needs in order to better prepare them for disasters.

### **Outstanding Private Sector Initiatives**

New this year, this award is presented to a small business that has demonstrated outstanding creativity and made a measurable impact in engaging employees and local communities in improving disaster preparedness and resilience.

“Small business” applicants must comply with business size standards provided by the Small Business Administration (SBA). The SBA has established two widely used size standards – 500 employees for most manufacturing and mining industries and \$7.5 million in average annual receipts for many nonmanufacturing industries. However, there are a number of exceptions so applicants should also refer to the “Table of Small Business Size Standards Matched to North American Industry Classification System Codes” [https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/files/Size\\_Standards\\_Table.pdf](https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/files/Size_Standards_Table.pdf) or “Summary of Size Standard by Sector” <https://www.sba.gov/content/summary-size-standards-industry-sector> to ensure size compliance before applying.

### **Outstanding Community Emergency Response Team Initiatives**

Presented to a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) or CERT Program that has made a significant contribution to response or recovery efforts during a disaster; has demonstrated innovation in operations, outreach, or training practices; or, excels in educating community members about disaster response skills and preparedness.

### **Outstanding Citizen Corps Partner Program**

Presented to a Citizen Corps Partner Program that demonstrates excellence and innovation in achieving the program’s mission. Eligible programs include: Fire Corps, Neighborhood Watch, Medical Reserve Corps, CERT and Volunteers in Police Service. Volunteer recruitment and sustainment, capacity building, and return on investment are factors for evaluation.

### **America’s PrepareAthon! in Action**

New this year, this award is presented to an organization or community that has implemented a registered America’s PrepareAthon! event using America’s



PrepareAthon! resources, which incorporates specific actions taken by individuals to strengthen preparedness and resilience in the face of disasters. Activities may include any of the America's PrepareAthon! [10 Ways to Participate](#) or other initiatives, which showcase individual preparedness.

### **6. Are there any new award categories for the 2016 FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Awards?**

Yes. As stated above, there are three new award categories:

- Outstanding Inclusive Initiatives in Emergency Management
- Outstanding Private Sector Initiatives
- America's PrepareAthon! in Action

### **ELIGIBILITY AND CRITERIA**

### **7. Who can apply for a 2016 FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Award?**

Six award categories have designated applicant requirements:

- Outstanding Citizen Corps Council Award: Open to registered Citizen Corps Councils.
- Community Preparedness Champions: Designated for an individual or a small group of individuals (10 or less).
- Outstanding Private Sector Initiatives: Open to a for-profit small business. "Small business" applicants must comply with business size standards provided by the Small Business Administration (SBA). Please reference question five for additional information on business size standards.
- Outstanding Community Emergency Response Team Initiatives: Open to registered CERTs and CERT Programs.
- Outstanding Citizen Corps Partner Program: Open to Fire Corps, Neighborhood Watch, Medical Reserve Corps, Volunteers in Police Service, and CERT.
- America's PrepareAthon! in Action: Open to an organization or community that has used America's PrepareAthon! resources and has registered their event via the America's PrepareAthon! website at <http://www.community.fema.gov/>.

The other five award categories are open to any individual, program, organization, or jurisdiction engaged in individual and community preparedness. This includes local government officials and community organizations (e.g. tribal councils, mayors, local emergency managers, local emergency planning councils, homeland security task forces, faith-based, civic, or volunteer organizations, private sector entities, registered Citizen Corps Councils, CERTs, Citizen Corps Partner Programs and Affiliates, and other volunteer programs).



### **8. Can I submit an application for my own organization or does my organization need to be nominated by someone else?**

You may submit an application for your own organization, be nominated by someone else, or nominate an organization you believe deserves recognition.

### **9. Can applicants apply for more than one award category?**

Applicants can apply for up to two award categories, but must submit only one application package (including one description of achievement).

### **10. Do applications need to specifically address the award category in the application?**

Yes. Applicants should select award category(ies) and write their Description of Achievement to demonstrate excellence for their selected award category(ies). Applicants should highlight specific initiatives, events, programs, and outreach efforts aligned to the category(ies) for which they are applying.

### **11. Does a Citizen Corps Council have to be registered to be nominated for an award?**

Yes. All nominated Citizen Corps Councils must be registered and approved on the Citizen Corps registration site, <https://www.citizencorps.fema.gov/cc/secure/index.do>, as of March 28, 2016 11:59 P.M. E.T. to be considered for a FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Award.

### **12. Can a local Citizen Corps Partner Program or Affiliate (e.g. CERT, Medical Reserve Corps, Fire Corps, Volunteers in Police Service, Neighborhood Watch) be nominated for a FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Award?**

Yes. Any local Citizen Corps Partner Program or Affiliate may apply for or be nominated for a FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Award.

### **13. Can a CERT and Medical Reserve Corps team be jointly nominated for a FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Award?**

Multiple individuals and organizations may be jointly nominated for an award.

### **14. Can previous applicants try again this year?**

Yes. Only winners of a 2015 Individual and Community Preparedness Award are ineligible to apply in 2016.

### **15. Can previous winners apply again this year?**

Winners of a 2015 Individual and Community Preparedness Award are not eligible to apply in 2016, but winners from previous years may apply again this year. Winners of a



2015 Individual and Community Preparedness Award may nominate others for a 2016 award.

### **16. Can anyone endorse or write a letter of recommendation for a FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Award applicant?**

Written endorsements and letters of recommendation must come from a local government official or community organization (e.g. tribal leadership, a Citizen Corps Council, Partner Program, or Affiliate). Letters of endorsement may strengthen your application, but are not required.

### **SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION**

### **17. How do I submit an awards application?**

Applicants, or those nominating others, must email their Application Form and supporting materials to [citizencorps@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:citizencorps@fema.dhs.gov) with the subject line: “2016 FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Award Application” by March 28, 2016 11:59 P.M. E.T.

### **18. How will an applicant know his or her award submission was received by FEMA?**

Once an award application is submitted and received by FEMA, an e-mail notice of receipt will be sent to the applicant.

### **19. What if I have questions or don't receive a confirmation notice that FEMA received my application?**

Should you encounter any problems or difficulty in submitting your application materials or if you have any questions, please contact us at [citizencorps@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:citizencorps@fema.dhs.gov).

### **20. In addition to my Description of Achievement, I would like to include supplemental materials with my application. Are there any restrictions?**

Supplemental materials are not required, but you may submit additional materials to make your application stronger. If included, supplemental materials should not exceed three attachments and your total email submission should be no larger than five megabytes (5 MB). You may also indicate website links to supporting materials, videos, and informational products in the “Attachments” section of the Application Form instead of attaching the materials themselves.

### **21. How can I reduce the file size of attachments to comply with the supporting material file size guidelines?**

The following are a few recommendations for condensing files and instructions on how to do so:



Compressing pictures by reducing the resolution (Instructions based on Microsoft Office 2010):

1. Click the picture that you want to reduce the resolution.
2. Go to the **Format tab** at the top right and click **Compress Pictures** in the Adjust group. This should bring up the Compress Pictures dialog box.
3. In the Compress Pictures dialog box, under Compression options, ensure that the **Apply only to this picture** option is checked.
4. In the Compress Pictures dialog box, under Target Output, select the **E-mail (96ppi): minimize document size for sharing**.
5. Click **Okay**.

*Note: By reducing the resolution of the picture, it will reduce the quality of the picture.*

Converting files to PDF (Instructions based on Microsoft Office 2010):

1. Click on the **File tab** on the top left.
2. Select the **Save As**. This should bring up the Save As dialog box.
3. In the **Save as Type** drop down menu, select **PDF**.
4. Next to **Optimize for**, select **Minimum Size** to reduce the file size.
5. If you want to open the file immediately after saving it, select the **Open File after Publishing** (this option is available only if you have a PDF reader installed on your computer).
6. To specify various options for the file, click **Options**. Once you are finished, click **OK**.
7. Click **Save**. If you want to make changes to the PDF after saving it, return to your original Microsoft Office 2010 file make the changes and save the file as PDF again.

## SELECTION PROCESS AND AWARDS

### 22. Who will review the award submissions?

Award submissions will be reviewed by FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Division (ICPD) staff and Regional Offices, FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination (ODIC), FEMA Private Sector Division, representatives from the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM), the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA), the American Red Cross, Target, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Additionally, the finalists for the “Preparing the Whole Community” award category will be reviewed by members of the John D. Solomon family.



### 23. What criteria will be used to review the applications?

Reviewers will assess each application based upon the following criteria:

- **Clarity:** Is it clear what the applicant is trying to convey about the value and impact of the program, partnership, activity, initiative, etc., they are highlighting?
- **Mission:** Does the applicant use a community approach to develop strong resilience in their area? Does the applicant's program, partnership, initiative, or activity support the mission of ICPD?

#### **Mission Statement:**

"The Individual and Community Preparedness Division works to strengthen our Nation's resilience by preparing individuals, organizations, and communities for any disaster or emergency. The Division conducts research to better understand effective preparedness actions and ways to motivate the public to take those actions; develops and shares preparedness resources; and coordinates comprehensive disaster preparedness initiatives that empower communities to prepare for, protect against, and respond to disaster. We achieve this mission through close coordination with the FEMA Regions; Federal, state, and local agencies; and nongovernmental partners from all sectors."

- **Innovation:** Does the applicant display originality, creativity, and/or the ability to make the most of limited resources or find alternative/unconventional solutions?
- **Background:** Does the applicant support their claims with quality results, sustaining documentation, findings, sufficient evidence or examples?
- **Category Alignment:** To what extent does the applicant's program, partnership, initiative, or activity align and support the category for which it is being considered?

### 24. When will winners of the 2016 Individual and Community Preparedness Awards be announced?

Winners of the 2016 FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Awards will be announced in the fall of 2016.

### 25. Are there any monetary rewards associated with the awards?

There are no cash awards associated with the FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Awards.

### 26. Is there an awards ceremony?

One representative for the winner of each award category will be invited to attend an awards presentation and community preparedness roundtable. The representative is welcomed to invite two additional guests at the representative's expense, as FEMA will only pay for one representative. Winners will receive their awards during the ceremony and will also share their experiences, ideas, solutions and questions on community



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preparedness with other award winners and selected officials. The date and location of the ceremony and roundtable will be confirmed after the winners are announced.

### **27. Can I view last year's winners and finalists or those from previous years?**

You can learn more about the Individual and Community Preparedness Award honorees from previous years by visiting <http://www.ready.gov/preparedness-awards>.

*Please e-mail additional questions to [citizencorps@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:citizencorps@fema.dhs.gov).*