



Mission Area Overview

# RESPONSE

Focused on ensuring that the Nation is able to respond effectively to all types of incidents, including those of catastrophic proportion that require marshalling the capabilities of the entire Nation

## ..... Key Finding Highlights .....



- A severe wildland-fire season led states and the Federal Government to supplement firefighting capabilities with volunteers and international support.
- Establishment of regional Ebola and other special pathogen treatment centers by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) following the 2014 Ebola virus disease outbreak has enhanced the Nation’s response capabilities for emerging infectious disease.
- Highly pathogenic avian influenza prompted action by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, industry, and states and revealed gaps in waste management and biosecurity practices.

## Core Capabilities in Practice .....

The Response mission area describes capabilities necessary to save lives, protect property and the environment, and meet basic human needs after an incident. The *National Response Framework* describes 15 core capabilities, including how they guide the Nation’s response to disasters and emergencies.

To effectively respond to an incident, emergency management officials within an affected community implement critical tasks under **Planning** to engage stakeholders in establishing objectives and strategies for the response, and they implement those under **Operational Coordination** to ensure that actions are carried out in an organized fashion. Through **Public Information and Warning**, officials deliver clear, actionable, and accessible information about relevant threats and hazards to the community. **Operational Communications** ensures emergency managers and responders can promptly exchange critical information. Throughout the response, decision makers use **Situational Assessment** to understand the extent and nature of the hazard and make informed choices.

Trained personnel conduct **Mass Search and Rescue Operations** to locate and rescue persons in distress. When a large number of deaths occur, **Fatality Management Services** recover fatalities and share information to help reunify families. During the response, officials protect both response workers and the public through **Environmental Response/Health and Safety** operations and **On-scene Security, Protection, and Law Enforcement**. For incidents involving fires, **Fire Management and Suppression** efforts protect lives, property, and the environment.

Public, private, and community-based organizations provide **Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services** and **Mass Care Services** to address the health and sheltering needs of survivors, including those with access and functional needs such as children, individuals

## CORE CAPABILITIES IN THE RESPONSE MISSION AREA

- Critical Transportation
- Environmental Response / Health and Safety
- Fatality Management Services
- Fire Management and Suppression
- Infrastructure Systems
- Logistics and Supply Chain Management
- Mass Care Services
- Mass Search and Rescue Operations
- On-scene Security, Protection, and Law Enforcement
- Operational Communications
- Operational Coordination
- Planning
- Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services
- Public Information and Warning
- Situational Assessment

with disabilities, and older adults. Furthermore, officials use **Critical Transportation** and **Logistics and Supply Chain Management** to ensure that affected communities receive essential commodities and services. This aids owners and operators of **Infrastructure Systems** in restoring and revitalizing systems and services for the community. The following are examples of actions taken in 2015 that highlight the relationship among a select number of the 15 Response core capabilities:

#### Operational Coordination, Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Fire Management and Suppression, and Situational Assessment

In 2015, wildland firefighting operations successfully coordinated the deployment of local, regional, national, and international resources to support response efforts. The U.S. Forest Service worked with jurisdictions to mobilize their All-Hazard Incident Management Teams, which are multi-agency, multi-jurisdiction teams activated for major or complex incidents. For example, a team from San Diego helped coordinate structural firefighting resources from five states to protect communities in Washington State threatened by wildland fires. To help responders allocate resources, the Civil Air Patrol flew 163 missions to provide aerial photography of wildland fires in five states.

#### Operational Communications and Situational Assessment

In January 2015, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted rules that improve location information obtained from 9-1-1 calls made indoors. Additionally, Federal, state, local, and tribal authorities continued to take steps to implement Next Generation 9-1-1, which will provide a nationwide, Internet Protocol-based emergency communications infrastructure that allows for voice and multimedia communications and improve emergency services for the public, dispatchers, and first responders. In January 2015, FCC chartered a task force, which issued four reports with recommendations for how Public Safety Answering Points (i.e., 9-1-1 centers) can optimize their [security](#), [operations](#), and [funding](#) as they migrate to Next Generation 9-1-1.

#### Mass Care Services

From October 1 to December 31, 2015, over 17,000 unaccompanied children crossed into the United States, more than double the number who arrived over the same period in 2014. To ensure sufficient shelter, the Office of Refugee Resettlement within HHS increased the capacity of shelter providers from 7,900 beds to approximately 8,400 beds in November, and added 1,400 temporary shelter beds in December.

#### Planning

Catastrophic planning received renewed attention in 2015. Throughout the year, FEMA conducted various events with state, local, and private-sector partners (e.g., orientations, planning meetings) in building towards a four-day exercise in June 2016 that will address a 9.0-magnitude earthquake in the Cascadia subduction zone—a 700-mile seismic fault line off the Pacific Northwest coast. In addition, a high-profile media article echoed this priority by detailing the potential devastation resulting from a large earthquake in the Cascadia subduction zone and subsequent tsunami. As shown in Figure 1, this was one of several efforts to improve catastrophic planning and preparedness.

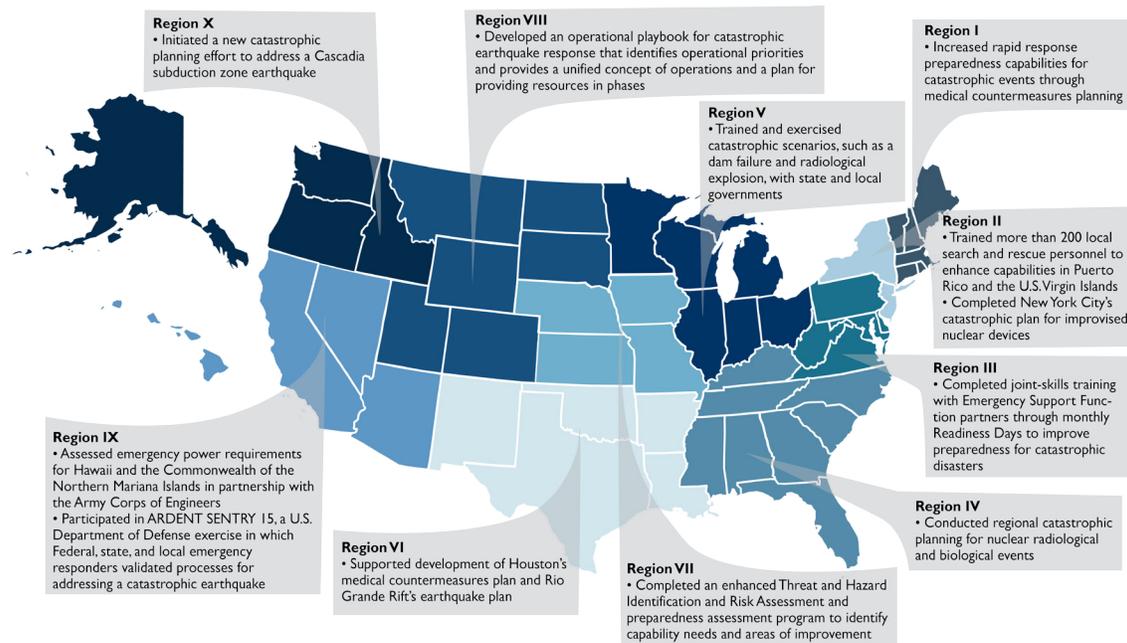


Figure 1: In 2015, efforts to strengthen catastrophic preparedness occurred in each of FEMA's 10 regions.



## THEN and Now

### Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear Response Enterprise

The 2012 *National Preparedness Report* discussed a growing number of assets under the U.S. Department of Defense's (DoD's) Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear Response Enterprise. Since then, the enterprise has achieved full operational capability. DoD has focused on ensuring effective integration of these assets with Federal, state, and local organizations through guidance and exercises such as VIGILANT GUARD and VIBRANT RESPONSE.

### Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)

In 2011, commercial television and radio broadcast stations and cable television systems participating in IPAWS were able to deliver public information and warnings to 84 percent of the U.S. population. By 2015, this grew to more than 90 percent.

### Distribution of Medical Countermeasures

The 2012 *National Preparedness Report* discussed how the HHS Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted annual technical assistance reviews to assess state and local plans to receive and distribute medical assets from CDC's Strategic National Stockpile. While successfully used for a decade to assess planning, the assessment did not accurately reflect the ability of these jurisdictions to implement and execute their plans. As a result, CDC implemented a new review process designed to also assess operational capabilities in July 2015.

## BY THE NUMBERS

**465,869 HOURS**

**OF DISASTER RESPONSE ASSISTANCE**  
Members of FEMA Corps teams provided 465,869 hours of disaster response assistance across 22 states and Guam.

**5,000 FAITH LEADERS**

**AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS**  
As of December 2015, the U.S. Department Homeland Security Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships conducted 10 regional trainings and more than 30 in-person and virtual presentations to educate more than 5,000 faith leaders and government personnel on the *Guide for Developing High-Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Houses of Worship*.

**2,664 COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM PROGRAMS**

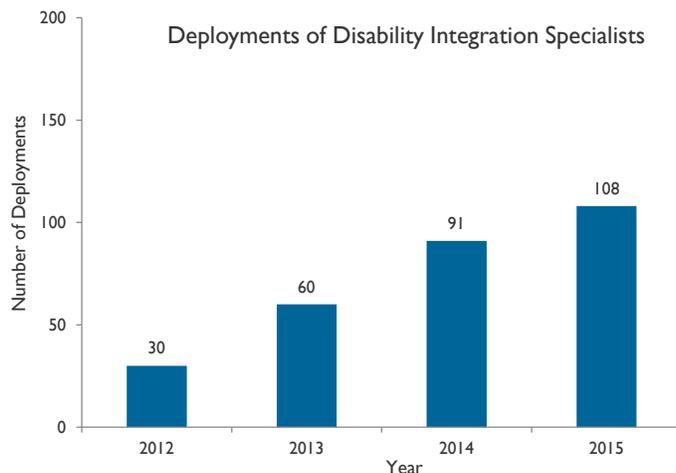
FEMA registered 181 new Community Emergency Response Team programs, which train community members in basic disaster response skills and organize them into teams of volunteers, raising the total number of programs to 2,664.



## PREPAREDNESS TRENDS AND FIGURES

### Building National Capacity for Inclusive Emergency Management

To support the equal physical access, effective communication access, and programmatic access of individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, the FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination established a cadre of disability integration specialists, who are providing guidance and technical assistance to ensure that disaster response and recovery efforts are fully inclusive. Between 2012 and 2015, FEMA deployments of disability integration advisors supported disaster responses, exercises, training, mitigation activities, and long-term recovery efforts. During this period, these deployments increased by 260 percent—from 30 deployments in 2012, to 108 in 2015. The cadre includes full-time Disability Integration Advisors on each of FEMA's National Incident Management Assistance Teams, as well as a full-time Regional Disability Integration Specialist in each of the 10 FEMA Regions.



## PREPAREDNESS SNAPSHOTS



### SAIPAN

In Saipan, Typhoon Soudelor rendered 48 percent of the island's power grid inoperable, leaving residents without power and with limited access to potable water. In response to the water shortage, DoD distributed more than 300,000 gallons of water. United 4 Saipan, a grassroots volunteer group, provided water and food to survivors and continues to organize debris removal events. Ten AmeriCorps Disaster Response Team members and a Corporation for National and Community Service member worked with voluntary organizations active in disasters from Saipan to establish a volunteer coordination structure and train local volunteers. Thirty personnel from the Guam Power Authority supported power restoration efforts on Saipan, and the California Utilities Emergency Association and Pacific Power Association worked directly with the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation to contract materials and supplies.

### WASHINGTON AND CALIFORNIA

A member of the Muckleshoot Teen Community Emergency Response Team from the Muckleshoot Indian Reservation in

Washington State and native youth from Sherman Indian High School—a Bureau of Indian Education school in Riverside, California—presented projects they have implemented in their communities at the National Congress of American Indians annual conference. Projects included developing a video on active-shooter preparedness, creating a poster in the languages of Native Americans living in California to alert native citizens of fault lines in the state, and making emergency backpacks for community elders.

### NATIONAL VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN DISASTERS

In 2015, the [National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters](#) launched VOADnet, an online, interactive platform for member organizations. This platform enables members to communicate and coordinate requests for and sharing of needed resources during disasters, as well as share best practices and lessons learned. Members used the website for disasters such as the South Carolina floods, western wildland fires, and the Pacific typhoons.

## STATE PERSPECTIVES ON PREPAREDNESS

### 2015 State Preparedness Report Results

- Response core capabilities with higher priority ratings generally had higher proficiency ratings. Both On-scene Security and Protection and Environmental Response/Health and Safety, however, were among the top 10 capabilities in proficiency (among all 31 core capabilities), but fell outside the top 10 in priority.
- Except for Infrastructure Systems, states and territories rated themselves as less proficient in every Response core capability in 2015 (compared to 2014). Public Health and Medical Services, and Mass Care Services experienced the largest decreases in proficiency among all Response core capabilities, at 3.2 and 3.0 percentage points, respectively.

Notes: Vertical red lines ( | ) indicate the average rating for all core capabilities. The chart and statements do not include contributions from the three cross-cutting core capabilities—Planning, Operational Coordination, and Public Information and Warning.

