

# FEMA Announces Strategic Plan Progress, Positions Agency for Year of Resilience

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WASHINGTON -- Today, FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell announced progress on the 2022-2026 FEMA Strategic Plan during 2023, highlighting the importance of stakeholder feedback and building resilient communities. Last year's efforts positioned the agency to continue building a resilient nation that can withstand the imminent threats of tomorrow.

"2023 was a year of records. From atmospheric rivers to once-in-a-century fires, even a tropical storm in California, FEMA spent last year working hard to deliver help to disaster survivors across the country," said Administrator Criswell. "Throughout the year, FEMA stayed true to our commitment to improve the work we do so we are the agency our country needs and deserves. We also want to stop the cycle of response, recovery, rinse and repeat. And thanks to increased investments from the Biden-Harris Administration, we have more resources than ever to help communities prepare for and mitigate the impacts of disasters. I look forward to putting the important work of creating a more resilient nation at the top of FEMA's to-do list in 2024."

In 2023, FEMA made progress in each of its strategic goals by responding to stakeholder needs and providing technical and financial resources to mitigate, respond to and recover from disasters. You can learn about some of these initiatives in our [2023 Strategic Plan Video](#).

The following are updates to the three pillars of our strategic goals:

## **Instilled Equity as a Foundation of Emergency Management**

**Streamlined Assistance Application:** In 2023, we redesigned the registration process on [DisasterAssistance.gov](#) based on user research and feedback. With this new and improved website, disaster survivors only need to provide



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information relevant to their individual needs making the application process quicker and easier. This change is expected to decrease application time by approximately 15%.

**Strengthened relationships with Tribal Nations and built resilience across Indian Country:** In 2023, FEMA collaborated closely with Tribal Nations, including more than 260 in-person meetings and engagements. We conducted 20 tribal consultations and listening sessions gathering Tribal Nation input to improve FEMA programs and policies. Additionally, FEMA hosted the 8th Annual Tribal Nations Training Week at the Center for Domestic Preparedness, which had more than 200 leaders, emergency managers and responders from more than 70 Tribal Nations in attendance to discuss emergency management principles as well as development and implementation of comprehensive emergency management systems. FEMA also released its first [National Tribal Strategy Progress Report](#), launched a [web-based Tribal Affairs Hub](#) and issued a number of joint response, recovery and mitigation projects through its strengthened tribal relationships. Lastly, 2023 saw FEMA develop a [Tribal Cybersecurity Grant](#), making \$18 million available for Tribal Nations to build cybersecurity resilience.

**Prioritized disability integration throughout the disaster lifecycle:** FEMA's new Disability Integration Vision identifies 14 potential points of inequity that can lengthen the disaster lifecycle for people with disabilities. This document helps FEMA and other organizations plan for the needs of people with disabilities throughout the disaster lifecycle. This vision was shared through 63 engagements with internal and external stakeholders, including two national webinars attended by more than 1,400 disability stakeholders.

**Leveraged faith-based, community and volunteer partnerships to improve survivor outcomes:** FEMA and the [DHS Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships](#) engaged with diverse communities across the country to better understand how to meet their needs for disaster management support. FEMA engaged communities in preparedness efforts by sharing resources and direct access to disaster management experts. These efforts included:

- The Protecting Places of Worship Briefing -- providing six steps to Enhance Security Against Targeted Violence -- and Weeks of Action Virtual Event. These were attended by more than 7,400 registrants who continue to receive regular updates from FEMA.



- The Nonprofit Security Grant Program implemented a number of actions to reduce barriers for underserved communities to apply, including an enhanced outreach plan, that led to a 50% increase in applications. This outreach included 67,000 contacts that received information on the program through a webinar series about how to apply for a grant.
- Partnerships with organizations serving a diverse group of communities and needs, including: LGBTQI+ persons, African Americans, people with disabilities, older adults, Latinos, Native American, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, religious organizations and mental health support groups.

**Increasing readiness resources for older adults:** For the first time, the Ready Campaign focused efforts on reaching older adults. Connecting with this community led to a formalized partnership with the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers and new resources for caregivers and older adults. The [Disaster Preparedness Guide for Older Adults](#), an easy-to-read guide that walks individuals and caregivers through a self-assessment to identify specific needs and checklists that create a personalized plan, has been downloaded more than 6,000 times since its publication. The “[Take Control](#)” PSA focused on empowering older adults and their caregivers to take simple steps to prepare for an emergency was launched Nov. 16, 2023 and has already received over 632,000 broadcast impressions and 50.8 million digital impressions.

### **Led Whole of Community in Climate Resilience**

**Funding Nationwide Resilience:** FEMA dedicated nearly \$3 billion in climate resilience funding, including \$1.8 billion for critical resilience project funding by the [Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities \(BRIC\)](#) program through the BRIC National Competition and \$642 million for Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) community-scale flood mitigation projects. Thanks to [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) signed by President Biden, this is the most money that has ever been committed to these programs and will fuel crucial mitigation projects, decreasing disaster risk in 55 states and territories. This historic funding supported the following projects:

- Strengthening the electrical grid in Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, including equipping poles and wires to withstand 150 mph winds.
- Installing new sewer mains in Detroit’s Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood to protect over 600 homes from flooding. The area has seen repeated major



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flooding since the 1950s.

- Reducing extreme heat conditions in Portland, Oregon, by planting 10,500 trees over three years to reduce the impacts of heat islands, mitigate urban flooding during extreme rainfall events and improve overall air quality.

In the third year of the BRIC Direct Technical Assistance (BRIC DTA), FEMA expanded the total number of entities benefiting from non-financial assistance to 74 communities, territories and tribes nationwide by announcing 46 additional selections, including 20 Tribal Nations.

FEMA obligated more than \$52 million to the first round of Flood Mitigation Assistance Swift Current funding to make homes safer and more resilient for National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) policyholders with repetitively and substantially flood-damaged properties. Swift Current aims to speed up the award of Flood Mitigation Assistance funding.

**Provided Key Engagements to Enhance Climate Resilience:** In December, Administrator Criswell attended the U.N. Climate Change Conference (COP28), a convening of global leaders to discuss ways and means to strengthen resilience to climate change, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. This is the first time a FEMA Administrator has attended COP, demonstrating the agency's commitment to climate mitigation and adaptation and collaborating with the international community to combat the effects of climate change.

**Announced Community Disaster Resilience Zones:** On Sept. 6, 2023, FEMA announced the designation of 483 census tracts as Community Disaster Resilience Zones (CDRZs). Those CDRZs will be eligible to receive targeted federal support to become more resilient to natural hazards and extreme weather worsened by the climate crisis. FEMA will use these CDRZs to focus resilience activities as well as encourage other federal agencies, the private sector, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations and private equity to invest in resilience projects. This initial announcement of designations is for all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

### **Promoted and Sustained a Ready FEMA and Prepared Nation**

**Cared for our Workforce:** FEMA is committed to supporting the mental health and resilience of our workforce. For the first time in our history, FEMA has



licensed mental health professional positions in all of the agency's 10 regions and Puerto Rico. These professionals provide proactive services that promote education, training and wellness, helping both employees and their ability to support survivors.

**Provided actionable preparedness resources through Ready Campaign**

**firsts:** FEMA's Ready Campaign organized its first ever Summer and Winter Ready Campaigns to give individuals and emergency managers tips for staying safe during extreme weather. The #SummerReady Campaign included an Extreme Heat Summit attended by leaders throughout state, local and federal partners. More than 500 people attended and a recording of the summit has been viewed 1,300 times. The #WinterReady Campaign, launched in mid-November, includes podcasts, [a partner toolkit](#), community outreach and U.S. Fire Administrator visits to fire stations across the nation through the winter months.

**Provided direct assistance to survivors:** In 2023, FEMA responded to more than 100 new disasters, providing \$1.3 billion in direct assistance to survivors. This included responding to the Maui wildfires, Typhoon Mawar in Guam, Hurricane Idalia, and tornadoes in Mississippi and Arkansas. FEMA conducted geospatial damage assessments during response to Typhoon Mawar, helping the agency deliver critical disaster aid and assist teams on the ground with damage location information. In addition to Individual Assistance, in 2023, the NFIP processed over 21,000 claims, resulting in more than \$833 million in payouts that helped disaster survivors recover more quickly than without insurance. This included customers who faced significant damage from Hurricane Ian, which made landfall in late 2022.

**Supported communities' disaster response and recovery:** FEMA awarded more than \$11.8 billion under its Public Assistance (PA) program to help rebuild disaster-damaged roads, public buildings and infrastructure. Two new Public Assistance Navigator Teams in Hawaii and New Hampshire provide targeted, on-site approaches to assisting communities with the Public Assistance application process.

More information about FEMA's strategic plan can be found at [2022–2026 FEMA Strategic Plan | FEMA.gov](#).



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