

THE STRATEGIC CHALLENGE FACING EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Future federal budget projections, including Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) disaster and non-disaster grant funding, are decreasing while natural hazards are increasing in frequency, severity, and cost. Nationwide, emergency managers will be asked to build and increase capabilities while receiving less federal funding. For the following charges, the NAC should strive to not let the current emergency management system unduly influence its thoughts and future vision for emergency management.

CHARGE 1: EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT 2045

What should be the future vision of emergency management and FEMA in 2045? How should FEMA and its non-federal partners address an outlook of increasing disasters and downward pressures on federal funding?

THESIS

FEMA should adopt a more thorough quantitative understanding of risk and have the ability to clearly assign funding and responsibility for different risks to relevant stakeholders, as would an insurance provider. Understanding financial vulnerabilities allows FEMA to better focus funding and technical assistance to address those risks. Based on this thesis, the NAC will also address these other sub-charges:

1. How can FEMA transfer more risk to the private sector and encourage states to do the same? What incentives can FEMA create to achieve more insurance adoption?
 - a. The risks FEMA face would be quantified more precisely so risk transfer would be a clearer pricing discussion.
 2. How can FEMA drive the appropriate level of resiliency investment at state and local levels? How can FEMA improve its grant programs to create a more resilient nation?
 - a. Enhanced risk understanding would allow investments to focus on the highest risk areas.
 3. What is the best way to reduce the Public Assistance (PA) program Category E expenditures on public infrastructure?
 - a. Understanding the risks these facilities face would make transferring that risk to the private sector easier, which would then reduce PA expenditures.
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CHARGE 2: BUILDING CAPACITY

Given downward federal budget pressures and upward natural hazard trends, what are the best ways to build capacity in response, recovery, preparedness, and mitigation at the local, tribal, territorial, and state levels?

THESIS

One way to build local capacity is to make federal funding programs easier to access and less burdensome and resource intensive. Another is to build local capability by supporting planning and partnerships to address the key vulnerabilities communities face. A more thorough quantitative risk management framework, along with training,

technical assistance, exercises, and policy framing, are also important. Based on this thesis, the NAC will also address these other sub-charges:

1. How can FEMA build the relationships it needs to effectively support local governments?
 2. How should FEMA deliver training and technical assistance to ensure that it effectively prepares local emergency managers? Nationally, most emergency managers are part-time positions and have limited time and ability to travel for training.
 3. What is the best way to fund local hazard mitigation plan development?
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DELIVERABLE

The NAC should provide a report clearly describing the challenges facing the field of emergency management over the next 20 years, given the trends of declining federal funding and increasing frequency, severity, and cost of natural hazards.

This report should examine each thesis and provide conclusions, including alternative solutions should the NAC disagree with the thesis. The report should then outline, in specific detail, an implementation plan.

THE EQUITY CHALLENGE IN FEMA PROGRAMS

Vulnerable populations are disproportionately affected by disasters and frequently have less access to recovery resources after an event, whether through their own means, family or community networks, or government support programs.

CHARGE 3: ENSURING EQUITY IN OUTCOMES

What actions should FEMA take to ensure marginalized and vulnerable communities can recover quickly? How can FEMA better structure its programs to meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations, especially women and children?

THESIS

FEMA should simplify its programs to ensure everyone can access them, whether rural communities without professional grant writers or low-income families that cannot miss work to complete paperwork. FEMA should also support these communities and groups directly with planning and other support, and FEMA should partner with external organizations that already work in marginalized communities to magnify these efforts.

DELIVERABLE

The NAC should provide a report outlining the challenge of marginalization and equity in emergency management and providing recommendations for any necessary changes to FEMA policies, programs, or statutory authorities that address this challenge.