



2020 National Preparedness Report

[Based on Data as of December 31, 2019]

December 22, 2020



Homeland Security

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Preparedness Report (NPR) summarizes the progress made, and challenges that remain, in building and sustaining the capabilities needed to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the threats, hazards, and incidents that pose the greatest risk to the Nation. As a requirement of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA) of 2006, and as a key element of the National Preparedness System, this annual report offers all levels of government, the private and nonprofit sectors, and the public practical insights into preparedness that support decisions about program priorities, resource allocation, and actions that can create more resilient communities.

The NPR includes analysis based on data available as of December 31, 2019, that helps decision-makers understand the risks facing the Nation and the country's ability to address those risks. Additionally, the report includes content that can inspire action and identify areas of focus. The report provides an annual picture of the risks the Nation faces; the capabilities the Nation has—and needs—to prepare for those risks; and data-driven analysis of current, critical considerations in emergency management.

Catastrophic risks will truly stress national resources and should not be confused with incidents that may result in regional impacts only. Systemic risks affect interconnected systems, such as cybersecurity threats or impacts to established supply chains. Emerging risks are either new risks or familiar risks that evolved due to new or unfamiliar conditions; and, therefore, often lack the historic data traditionally used to assess risk. These emerging risks are a category of risk as well as a call for preparedness. The whole emergency management community must work together to build resilience to be adaptable to new threats and hazards with unknown impacts.

Capabilities are the ways that the Nation manages risks. Goals related to capabilities can be characterized by capability targets, which include actions and time frames. In 2019, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), along with other stakeholders, defined a series of capability targets through the National Risk and Capability Assessment (NRCA) to establish

The report covers the calendar year 2019 and contains the following sections:

- **Introduction:** A summary of the background and purpose of the NPR.
- **Risk:** A discussion of the risks the Nation faces and how those risks drive the Nation's capability requirements. This section also includes overviews of three critical risk management challenges: Catastrophic Risks, Systemic Risks, and Emerging Risks.
- **Capabilities:** A discussion of how the Nation uses capabilities to manage risks. This section also provides a high-level overview of the Nation's current capabilities.
- **Critical Considerations in Emergency Management:** A discussion on four identified focus areas: Cascading Impacts, Public-Private Partnerships, Vulnerable Populations, and Housing.
- **Conclusion:** A summary of the contents of the analysis.

The Nation's risks drive the Nation's required capabilities to manage those risks. Risks can be managed through avoidance, control, transference, or acceptance. The NPR focuses on three categories of risk:

1. **Catastrophic Risks**, distinguished by magnitude;
2. **Systemic Risks**, distinguished by interconnectedness; and
3. **Emerging Risks**, distinguished by novelty or evolution due to new or unfamiliar conditions.

a baseline for assessing national preparedness. Communities—which include states, territories, tribes, and urban areas—identify their targets and capabilities to FEMA through the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and the Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR). FEMA used this community-level capability information to assess national capabilities related to the NRCA targets.

National targets are based on nationally catastrophic scenarios that would stress the capabilities and resources of the Nation. Community-level capabilities are not likely to meet the needs of the national target. Despite this, community-level capabilities for communities directly affected by national scenarios are within 70–100 percent of the national goal for eight target impacts. When factoring in possible mutual aid, that number rises to 24 target impacts. The Capabilities section of the report discusses these targets at length.

Although there are many challenges and successes that this report could highlight, there are four areas that merit a more detailed discussion; identified through analysis of the THIRA/SPR submissions, Federal and regional data call submissions, and open source research. Each of these research streams yielded key findings that fell into these areas of critical consideration; highlighting some of the persistent challenges the Nation faces, how the Nation is working collectively to solve those challenges, and what the Nation must continue to do to build on those successes. These four areas are:

Cascading Impacts—Increasingly connected systems raise the risk of cascading impacts, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and inhibiting the stabilization of complex interactions among Community Lifelines. Cascading impacts can result in longer and more costly recovery.



¹ “Access and functional needs refer to persons who may have additional needs before, during, and after an incident in functional areas, including but not limited to maintaining health, independence, communication, transportation, support, services, self-determination, and medical care. Individuals in need of additional response assistance may include those who have disabilities, live in institutionalized settings, are older adults, are children, are from diverse cultures, have limited English proficiency or are non-English speaking, or are transportation disadvantaged.” Source: FEMA, National Response Framework, 4th ed., 2019, https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1582825590194-2f000855d442fc3c9f18547d1468990d/NRF_FINALApproved_508_2011028v1040.pdf, accessed April 14, 2020.

Public-Private Partnerships—Disasters disrupt preexisting networks of supply and demand. Well-developed relationships between emergency managers and the private sector are important for quickly reestablishing key supply chain networks and ensuring the flow of goods and services.

Vulnerable Populations—Disaster preparedness and response start at the individual level, and as resilience increases among individuals, so does the collective resilience of the Nation. However, even in communities with a high level of preparedness, there are individuals and families that are particularly vulnerable to disasters due to access and functional needs (AFN),¹ a lack of financial savings or insurance, or other circumstances.

Housing—For the past eight years, the NPR has reported on communities' low capability to provide long-term housing. External forces in the housing market, including supply, demand, availability, and costs, affect communities' ability to provide long-term housing after an incident.

National preparedness is an ongoing, iterative process. Establishing national targets is a new step toward measuring preparedness that will help FEMA and stakeholders further assess capabilities as they relate to risks. Future iterations of the NPR will continue to serve as a mechanism for reporting on the findings of the NRCA, including the National SPR, as this work progresses.