

# Mutual Aid for Building Departments

The Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018, Section 1206 (DRRA-1206) authorizes FEMA Public Assistance grant funding to support recovery staffing needs of local building code and floodplain management departments following a major disaster declaration. Affected communities can deploy trained professionals capable of assisting with various post-disaster recovery tasks, including assistance to: conduct building safety evaluations and substantial damage determinations; review disaster-related development in the floodplain and applications for permits; and issue permits to adequately administer and enforce adopted building codes and floodplain ordinances.

After a disaster, requesting communities can seek out trained and certified mutual aid responder teams of designers, building inspectors, building code officials, and floodplain managers through intrastate or interstate mutual aid, via the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) or state equivalent. The costs of these mutual aid services incurred by the affected community may be reimbursable through DRRA-1206.

## Intrastate and Interstate Mutual Aid Programs





An **Intrastate Mutual Aid Compact (IMAC)** is a mutual aid agreement or system in which political subdivisions within a state or territory agree to share their resources during emergencies. An IMAC, unlike EMAC, exists in many different forms throughout the country, and not all areas have one.

The **Emergency Management Assistance Compact (the Compact, or EMAC)** is an interstate mutual aid agreement which all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have passed. The Compact establishes a mutual aid system allowing participating jurisdictions to share personnel during emergencies, and allowing them to give and receive liability protections and reimbursements for those shared personnel.

## Private Sector Utilization

Historically, mutual aid laws and regulations generally do not allow for private sector resources. Now, many states recognize the need for more private sector inclusion.

- Some states legislate liability protections & EMAC deployment eligibility for certain classes of private personnel.
- Other states designate certain private personnel as government agents/employees within mutual aid compacts.
- This series provides summaries of selected liability protections and other laws and regulations. Additional criteria, restrictions, or other qualifiers may be present in the official text but absent from the summaries throughout this series.

	<b>Statewide opt-out program:</b> the state creates a mutual aid program and automatically incorporates all political subdivisions into it, leaving the burden on jurisdictions to opt out if they so choose. Some states even forego an opt-out provision. This is the most robust form of an IMAC system.
	<b>Statewide opt-in program:</b> the state creates a mutual aid program but leaves the burden on individual jurisdictions to opt in to the program. This is less robust than an opt-out program.
	<b>Individual compacts:</b> Individual jurisdictions enter into mutual aid agreements with each other, often in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding or Memorandum of Agreement. This is the least efficient approach because of the geographic limitations of each individual agreement and the possibility for variations among individual agreements within a given area.
	<b>No known significant IMAC program.</b>



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## Mutual Aid Utilization for Building Safety, Code Enforcement and Administration, and Floodplain Administration

Volunteer-led, mutual aid disaster-response teams to conduct building safety evaluations, post-disaster code enforcement and administration, as well as floodplain administration, are established among state chapters of professional organizations, including:



- Emergency Management Assistance Compact
- American Institute of Architects (AIA)
- Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM)
- International Code Council (ICC)
- National Council of Structural Engineers Associations (NCSEA)

Professional associations provide training on how to form volunteer emergency response teams. These teams are capable of helping local jurisdictions across state lines. Members of state chapter teams typically consist of:

- Public Works personnel
- Floodplain Administrators
- Planners
- Building Code Officials
- Architects and Engineers
- Surveyors

It is important to know that **not all mutual aid teams or volunteer personnel are deployable through EMAC**, as many states' EMAC laws do not provide protections or monetary reimbursement for private sector personnel (see **Private Sector Utilization** section above). Before requesting or providing mutual aid assistance, it is important to **make sure that the EMAC laws in the requesting and assisting states provide for the use and protection of private sector and volunteer responders**. The fact sheets provided in this series are designed to help inform stakeholders of state mutual aid legislation limitations that could hinder the use of such mutual aid personnel during post-disaster events.

This series of fact sheets, one for each FEMA region, will analyze state and territory EMAC and IMAC systems, as well as any laws and regulations in place related to private and volunteer emergency response utilization and protections for building departments.

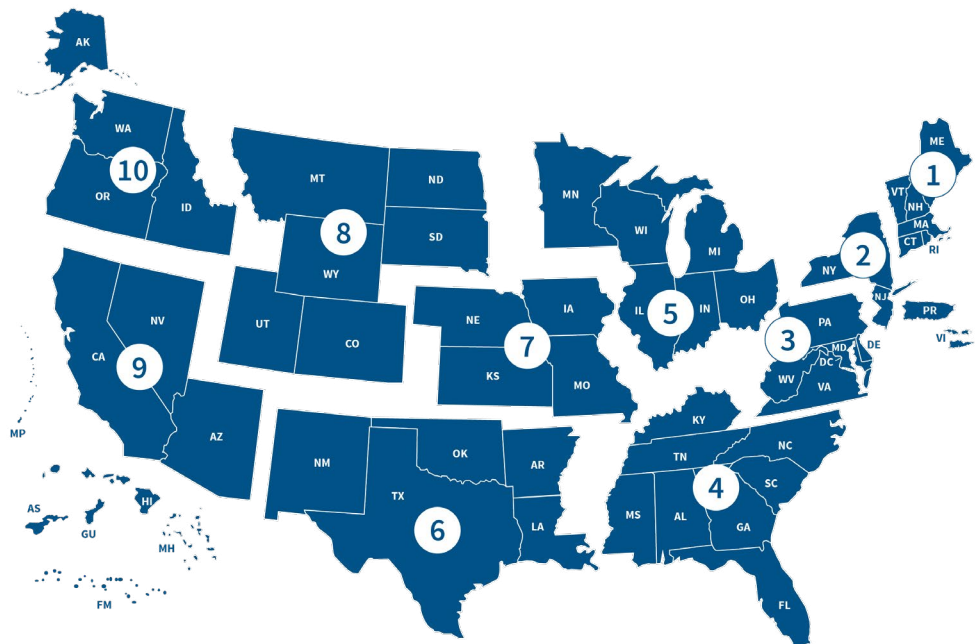


Figure 1. FEMA Regions Map

*This document contains references to non-federal resources and organizations. The references are solely for informational purposes and are not an endorsement of any non-federal entity by FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, or the U.S. government.*