

# National Qualification System Implementation Objectives

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FEMA was tasked with implementing 6 USC 320 Credentialing and Typing in the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA) and developed the National Qualification System (NQS). The NQS provides:

- Foundational guidelines for jurisdictions on the qualification of personnel resources within the National Incident Management System (NIMS);
- A common language and standardized approach for qualifying, certifying, and credentialing incident management and support personnel;
- Tools for jurisdictions and organizations to share resources seamlessly.

The ability to provide mutual aid accurately and rapidly is critical during disasters, but mutual aid partners often lack a common language and standardized approach to support the sharing of qualified personnel. Using the NQS ensures personnel deploying have demonstrated the minimum capabilities to perform the duties of their assigned incident roles.

## Benefits of NQS Implementation

By using the same terminology and qualification criteria, Authorities Having Jurisdictions (AHJ) can:

- Request and deploy personnel who have the qualifications needed for the job;
- Supplement their teams with confidence; and
- Strengthen their recruitment, hiring, training and professional development programs.

## Emergency Management Performance Grant

The NQS Implementation Objectives reflect the concepts and principles contained in NQS doctrine and aim to promote consistency in NQS implementation nationwide. The NQS Implementation Objectives provides guidance for implementation in the **2021 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG)** Notice of Funding Opportunity. EMPG Program recipients are strongly encouraged to implement components of the NQS and may use their EMPG Program funds to support NQS implementation efforts. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2022, FEMA intends to make the



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implementation of NQS a requirement of award for EMPG Program funding. In a phased approach over three years, EMPG recipients should achieve or work toward achieving each of the objectives listed in this document to be considered NQS compliant.

For the purposes of these Implementation Objectives, “incident workforce” is defined as incident management, incident support, or emergency management personnel. For purposes of these Implementation Objectives, “work toward” means that only 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico shall begin implementation efforts in FY22. All other jurisdictions may satisfy the requirement to “work toward” in FY22 by planning for phases 1 and 2. In FY’23 all jurisdictions must be compliant in both phases 1 and 2.

The audience for these implementation objectives is EMPG recipients.

Federal departments and agencies can refer to the [NIMS Implementation Objectives for Federal Departments and Agencies](#) for information about NQS implementation.

## NQS Guidance and Tools

FEMA provides NQS guidance and tools to assist the Authority Having Jurisdiction and to help ensure the integrity of the resource management and mutual aid system.

- The 2017 **NIMS Guideline for the National Qualification System** provides guidance on building and maintaining a process for creating a deployable workforce of qualified, certified and credentialed personnel to manage and support incidents of all types and sizes.
- **NQS Job Title/Position Qualifications** define the minimum criteria that personnel serving in specific incident-related positions must attain before deploying to an incident.
- **NQS Position Task Books (PTB)** identify the competencies, behaviors and tasks personnel must demonstrate to qualify for specific incident-related positions.
- **Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Skillsets** provide a modified PTB approach to qualify EOC personnel while remaining flexible to accommodate diverse EOC organizational structures.
- **OneResponder and Other Supporting Technology** provides tools jurisdictions and organizations can use to implement qualification and certification processes.

Phase I NQS Implementation Objectives for FY’22	Example Indicators
1. Ensure that incident workforce personnel qualifying for a position meet the minimum training requirements from the Job Title/Position Qualification for that position.	Official training guidance that specifies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Issuance of PTBs; documenting performance criteria for each position, include competencies, behaviors and tasks.</li> <li>▪ Which training courses incident workforce personnel must take;</li> </ul>

Phase I NQS Implementation Objectives for FY'22	Example Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How long they have to complete the training after they join the jurisdiction or organization; and,</li> <li>▪ Frequency of refresher training</li> <li>▪ Minimum criteria that trainees must meet to be qualified in a specific position.</li> </ul> <p><i>The NIMS Training Program clarifies recommended training for incident personnel (NIMS Training Program page 10)</i></p>
<p>2. Use of a resource management or qualification tool system to track the qualification, certification and credentialing of incident workforce personnel.</p>	<p>Resource management systems such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ OneResponder is a web-based application hosted in a cloud environment. It allows AHJs to management qualifications of personnel.</li> <li>▪ IROC provides a modern tool to support the interagency wildland fire community in ordering, tracking, and managing resources in response to wildland fires and all-hazard incidents.</li> </ul> <p>Locally hosted tools such as:                      Microsoft Excel spreadsheet                      Microsoft Access database</p>

Phase 2 NQS Implementation Objectives for FY'23	Example Indicators
<p>3. Develop organizational qualification system procedures, certification program and credentialing standards for incident workforce personnel in alignment with the NIMS Guideline for the National Qualification System.</p>	<p>Procedures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establishment of a Qualification Review Board, or equivalent review processes for incident workforce personnel qualifications.</li> <li>▪ Individual and team coach and evaluation processes for incident workforce personnel qualifications.</li> </ul>

Phase 2 NQS Implementation Objectives for FY'23	Example Indicators
	<p>The NIMS NQS Supplemental Guide for Qualification Review Boards and NIMS NQS Supplemental Guide for Coaches and Evaluators provides guidance for establishing and maintaining these programs.</p>

Phase 3 NQS Implementation Objectives for FY'24	Example Indicators
<p>4. Design, develop and conduct exercises in accordance with the <a href="#">Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program</a> (HSEEP) for incident workforce personnel.</p>	<p>Documentation and/or after-action reports that indicate participation in an HSEEP sponsored exercise or real-world incident.</p>