




FEMA

June 3, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR: W. Nim Kidd
Chairman, National Advisory Council

FROM: Deanne Criswell 
Administrator

SUBJECT: Response to National Advisory Council Reports
2020-2021 Recommendations

The Federal Emergency Management Agency values the longstanding partnership with the National Advisory Council (NAC) and is pleased to respond to the November 2020 and December 2021 NAC Recommendations Reports. This memorandum formally addresses opportunities and recommendations raised in the reports. I appreciate the continued leadership by the NAC as we navigate the future of FEMA and build a more resilient and responsive emergency management community.

As spotlighted in our strategic plan, we are bringing equity to the center of our mission. As FEMA Administrator, I have directed agency leadership to continue to put people first in the way we deliver our resilience, response, and recovery assistance. Our pledge to equity starts by recognizing that every community is unique, and that we must deliver our assistance in a way that meets their needs, not ours. From launching culturally competent disaster preparedness campaigns, to ensuring our app technology is user-friendly, we will meet people where they are. We have also done this through policy changes to our Individual Assistance program by removing longstanding bureaucratic barriers and expanding access to support to those survivors who need it the most.

This past year, you put forward recommendation *2021-05: Alternative Proof of Home Ownership*, and I am proud to say that we have implemented this recommendation. It is now easier to prove home ownership in communities where traditional documentation is lacking, and survivors who were previously unable to qualify for benefits from FEMA have received assistance after disasters. This progress illustrates our commitment to instill equity as the foundation of emergency management and reduce barriers that prevent individuals from accessing our programs. FEMA remains committed to ensuring all citizens and communities can effectively prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

FEMA strives to empower states, local governments, tribes, and territories to drive climate resilience, build understanding in communities of long-term climate risks, and develop mitigation solutions. Key to this is climate literacy and creating knowledge about how climate change impacts our nation. Recommendations *2020-12: Enhance Partnerships with Leaders in Research and Data Science* and *2021-16: Develop a National Risk Framework* align with the prevailing climate research

and data science. We are excited to pursue and develop new relationships across the public and private sectors that enable the agency to meet its climate resilience objectives.

The FEMA commitment to its emergency management workforce is unwavering. We need to support emergency managers as they seek to build long and sustainable careers. This past year, we initiated an assessment of the various training and education opportunities across FEMA to influence and inform future investment in the professional development of our employees. Moving forward, the considerations outlined in recommendations *2021-20: Create Professional Pathways within Existing FEMA Workforce* and *2021-21: Improve Pathways and Pipelines for Future Emergency Managers* will be instrumental to our continued success.

Lastly, in 2021, FEMA responded to a subset of your 2020 recommendations. The tables that follow include our responses to the remaining recommendations.

Again, thank you for your dedication and continued partnership to improving FEMA and the emergency management community.

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FEMA Response to NAC Report 2021 Recommendations

Equity Subcommittee Recommendations	
2021-01 – Core Values and Equity	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	Partially Implemented
<p>In accordance with the directive set forth in <i>Executive Order 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government</i>, FEMA conducted an initial equity analysis on multiple programs across the Agency to identify barriers to access in public-facing FEMA programs and services, intended versus actual outcomes, and the courses of action FEMA plans to take to reduce or eliminate identified barriers.</p> <p>FEMA also conducted Agency-wide and field events to ensure stakeholders understand that equity and FEMA core values are at the heart of how the Agency supports disaster survivors.</p> <p>FEMA-wide events included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The first FEMA Equity Day, which brought the entire FEMA workforce together to understand how FEMA will advance equity enterprise-wide through the advancement of the <i>2022-2026 FEMA Strategic Plan</i>, Goal 1: Instill Equity as a Foundation of Emergency Management. 2. The second FEMA Civil Rights Summit, which engaged a diverse group of stakeholders to identify actual and perceived biases impacting equitable access to, and distribution of, FEMA programs, services, and benefits. <p>Field-focused events included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A 3-day pause in day-to-day work to focus on in-depth equity training for field leadership to promote equity awareness and perspectives. 2. Training provided by the Racial Equity Institute (REI) for Federal Coordinating Officers, National Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT) Leaders, and the External Civil Rights Division and Civil Rights Cadre within the Office of Equal Rights (OER), to inform and provide consistent awareness of root causes of racial equity issues. 3. A facilitated session on FEMA core values during workforce academy training to set expectations for leaders on behaviors and values to exemplify and model. 	

Further, FEMA strives to establish unified technology, workforce tools, and equity datasets to advance program and regional analytics, as well as develop guidance to integrate equity into FEMA doctrine, policies, and processes, and establish mechanisms to track accountability and progress towards achieving equitable outcomes.

In addition to the work we have done to educate and empower our workforce on equity, we have made changes to existing programs to expand equitable access for disaster survivors. In 2021, FEMA broadened the range of accepted homeownership and occupation documentation while simultaneously expanding housing assistance for survivors. As of May 25, this has resulted in more than 96,000 individuals receiving over \$350 million in assistance.

FEMA is further committed to operationalizing equity-based disaster preparedness training for FEMA staff and state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) jurisdictions to address the significant, compounding effects of all hazards in underserved communities. FEMA seeks to deepen several areas of inter-disciplinary learning, which could include identifying climate adaptation planning methods aligned with the diverse needs and values of individual communities, understanding available data tools addressing risk and future conditions, and conducting outreach with all levels of society to build social cohesion.

Finally, the FEMA Grant Programs Directorate (GPD) will improve grant effectiveness measurement and verify the inclusion of equity with each program, as appropriate, using logic models. GPD is also leading a review of FEMA's discretionary grant programs to assess inequities and barriers to underserved communities in receiving, applying for, and accessing federal grant funds. GPD has taken a first step in this area by awarding bonus points to fiscal year 2022 Nonprofit Security Grant Program applicants located in a high or very high area of social vulnerability as identified in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Social Vulnerability Index. Additionally, GPD will expand language options and search functionality for its FEMA grants website, procurement resources guidance, and procurement training to enable more accessibility to underserved communities.

2021-02 – Increased Hazard Mitigation Assistance to Local, Tribal, and Territorial Communities

FEMA Response Decision:

Agree

FEMA Implementation Status:

Partially Implemented

FEMA recognizes the importance of equity in building and strengthening community resilience through hazard mitigation. FEMA is committed to instilling equity as a foundation of emergency management by using a people-first approach to eliminating access barriers.

FEMA provides SLTT governments clear guidance and resources¹ on Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant program availability and requirements, particularly to provide support to underserved areas and strengthen resilience, as well as on available funding to meet cost-share requirements for assistance. For many underserved communities, cost-share requirements established in statute remain a barrier. Legislative changes are required to fully implement this recommendation and reduce the cost-share burden.

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) also works to address equity through its HMGP Forward Strategic Plan and HMGP guidance for COVID-19 disaster declarations. HMGP has expanded the available resources and support for local, tribal, and territorial governments, including project-type specific application support materials, a webinar series, and technical assistance for applicants. In the Spring of 2022, HMGP completed their webinar series that included webinars on topics such as Cost Estimation, a Benefit Cost Analysis introduction, Nature-Based Solutions Projects, and a general introduction to HMGP.

FEMA is also increasing hazard mitigation assistance through the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program. The BRIC grant program prioritizes disadvantaged communities by favorably weighting applications, providing an increased cost-share to eligible Economically Disadvantaged Rural Communities, increasing the “Tribal Set Aside” from \$20 million in FY2020 to \$25 million in FY2021 grant cycle, increasing support through capacity- and capability-building grants, and increasing technical assistance. Additionally, in 2021 FEMA made progress toward this recommendation by including a weighted point structure for social vulnerability for applications to the competitive Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Program. FEMA continues to evaluate opportunities to increase the equitable distribution of funds and assistance to disadvantaged communities pursuing more resilient outcomes to the effects of natural hazards.

2021-03 – Expand the Declaration Criteria

<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Disagree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	N/A

FEMA recognizes disasters have a disproportionate impact on lower income persons, families, and communities that are historically under-resourced, underserved, and underrepresented. We

¹ FEMA, BRIC Resource List for the BRIC Grant Program. (<https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/building-resilient-infrastructure-communities/resources>)

have continued to identify ways for our programs to expand opportunities for those who need it most.

This recommendation is titled “Expand Declaration Criteria,” and its supporting language states “When there are individual damages or lifeline disruptions, FEMA should automatically declare Individual Assistance on any major disaster declaration.” The Stafford Act does not permit automatic Individual Assistance (IA) for every disaster declaration as there must be a finding that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the affected State and local governments.² However, as part of our commitment to instill equity as a foundation of emergency management, FEMA will reevaluate IA declaration recommendation criteria and look for opportunities to incorporate equity considerations into an objective methodology for use by SLTT partners when requesting the IA program.

2021-04 – Tiered Approach to Individual Assistance

<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Partially Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	N/A

To deliver assistance through a people-first approach, FEMA is conducting assessments to identify ways to reduce barriers, simplify programs, and improve program delivery and customer experience. FEMA does not formally tier its approach to Individual Assistance; however, it is constantly evaluating in real time the needs of the state, local, tribal, and/or territorial government and the availability of its regional and national resources. Recent challenges, such as the 2017 Hurricane Season and the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, have given FEMA the opportunity to exercise its flexibility through new capabilities such as remote operations (e.g., virtual Preliminary Damage Assessments or virtual Joint Field Offices). FEMA will review these capabilities and determine which should be implemented during an IA operation as part of a tiered approach to assistance (given the magnitude of the disaster and the needs of the community).

² Regulations governing the factors considered when evaluating a request for a major disaster declaration for Individual Assistance are found in 44 CFR § 206.48(b). (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-44/chapter-I/subchapter-D/part-206/subpart-B/section-206.48>)

2021-05 – Alternative Proof of Home Ownership	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	Implemented
<p>FEMA recognizes the need to expand its outreach to underserved populations consistent with the findings of the <i>Study to Identify Methods to Assess Equity: Report to the President</i> (Office of Management and Budget, July 2021). FEMA aspires and intends to serve all people equitably, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), disability, age, or economic status. Based on public feedback through a Request for Information (RFI) published in the Federal Register, in September 2021, FEMA implemented policy changes to expand the types of eligible documentation that disaster survivors can provide to FEMA to verify home ownership and occupancy status.</p> <p>FEMA now accepts letters or documentation from social service organizations, local schools, and federal or state benefits, among others, to verify an applicant's pre-disaster ownership and/or occupancy of their damaged dwelling. FEMA will also now accept receipts for major repairs or improvements and letters or similar documentation from public officials, federal or state courts to verify an applicant's pre-disaster ownership. Additionally, as a last resort, FEMA will accept a written self-declarative statement from survivors who experience challenges with obtaining traditional forms of documentation to prove their ownership or occupancy, such as individuals who live in mobile homes or travel trailers, individuals living in insular areas, islands, or tribal lands, or individuals with heirship properties.³ FEMA also amended its current policy to provide assistance to survivors who incurred a disaster-related disability and require special modifications to make their damaged home safe and functional, such as ramps or grab bars, regardless of whether those modifications were in the survivor's home before the disaster.</p>	

³ FEMA, Amendment to FP 104-009-03, *Individual Assistance Program and Policy Guide, Version 1.1* memorandum. (https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_iappg-1.1.pdf)

Expedite Disaster Assistance Subcommittee Recommendations	
2021-06 – Decrease Public Assistance Bureaucracy	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	Partially Implemented
<p>The FEMA Public Assistance (PA) Program regularly evaluates and streamlines its programs in support of removing barriers through a people-first approach. FEMA has reestablished the PA Steering Committee for relevant stakeholders to provide support and feedback, which provides structured stakeholder engagement and program direction as FEMA works to improve our customer experience. The Committee met on May 31, 2022 and plans on convening twice a year.</p> <p>FEMA also initiated a comprehensive assessment of the PA Program to identify areas for programmatic enhancements, reduce barriers to accessing recovery funding, and expedite disaster assistance. The initial phase of the assessment, which began in March 2022, is designed to implement immediate programmatic changes to reduce burdensome requirements identified in the PA process. Examples of these changes include simplifying and reducing documentation requirements and removing burdensome deadlines. In the long-term, broad stakeholder feedback will drive changes within PA, specifically targeting administrative barriers and addressing consistency in the review and approval of PA funding to applicants.</p>	
2021-07 – State Led Approach	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	Partially Implemented
<p>FEMA continues to work with SLTT partners to ensure they have the resources and ability to drive their own recovery. Removing barriers to FEMA programs through a people-first approach and unifying coordination and delivery of federal assistance directly relate to increasing the state-led approach.</p> <p>Policies and procedures created in response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency have allowed the FEMA PA Program to simplify and streamline the grant application process through the development of the Streamlined Project Application, and by enabling direct application submissions by applicants to reduce the administrative burden on applicants. In addition, the Agency continues to coordinate with FEMA Regions to support outreach to states, tribes, and territories, and to identify training needs to enhance local capacity and execute recovery operations.</p>	

FEMA also works with states, tribes, and territories as they implement the state-led approach to deliver technical assistance to address localized needs and ensure consistency in the application and review of sub-awards to applicants. FEMA has given states more control over recovery by focusing on closer coordination between FEMA headquarters and regional staff, states, tribes, and territories, as well as by making improved technical support and training readily accessible, both in-person and virtually. FEMA continues to identify ways to improve technology, process, and training to support simple program delivery.

2021-08 – “Getting to Yes” in Public Assistance

<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	Partially Implemented

FEMA will continue to deliberately evolve its programs and services to meet community needs. This includes designing simple policies and processes that FEMA decision-makers and recipients can use to maximize assistance available to communities. While statutory limitations continue to exist, FEMA has and will continue to adjust areas of policy within our control to ensure assistance is maximized.

FEMA is addressing this priority through a comprehensive reevaluation of the PA Program to identify programmatic enhancements, reduce barriers to accessing recovery funding, and expedite disaster assistance. The PA evaluation will also look at further skill-building and training for FEMA PA staff on program eligibility and discussing eligibility issues with recipients and applicants, when appropriate, prior to issuing determination memorandums. FEMA now requires that all determination memos during field operations be reviewed by the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO). It is vital that FEMA’s most knowledgeable and seasoned field and regional staff are engaged in these reviews and are knowledgeable about when Public Assistance is and is not able to meet a community’s intended outcomes. In addition, FEMA is currently working on the next version of the *PA Program and Policy Guide* (PAPPG), which seeks to align policy with the latest statutory and regulatory authorities, maximize funding for applicants, build equity into the program, and streamline requirements. FEMA looks forward to engaging the NAC on the review of the next version of the PAPPG.

2021-09 – Consistency in Public Assistance Delivery

<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Partially Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	Partially Implemented

The consistent delivery of FEMA PA with clarity and ease of access to programmatic guidance is essential to ensure equitable outcomes for the people and communities FEMA serves. Building in programmatic flexibility is a critical part of addressing the unique needs

and histories of all communities. We also recognize that meeting the needs of disaster survivors means being fair and providing tailored support based on the context of the disaster. In pursuit of equitable and consistent program delivery, FEMA has initiated a PA Assessment. PA is assessing its program, the Consolidated Resource Centers (CRCs), and the PA delivery model, to evaluate the impact on applicants and to identify short, medium, and long-term recommendations for change that improve effectiveness and offer the maximum level of efficiency and support to FEMA partners. Assessment priorities are focused on improving consistency, reducing access barriers to recovery funding, and expediting disaster assistance. The assessment is also identifying methods to strengthen the communication and coordination between CRCs, Regions, and field staff.

As FEMA develops version 5 of the PAPPG—the Agency’s one-stop-shop for PA policy—FEMA commits to ensuring the eligibility conditions defined in the PAPPG align with the intent of the Stafford Act and corresponding regulations as it applies to modern day disaster-related issues and ensuring consistency of PA delivery in all 10 FEMA Regions. The program will continue streamlining and consolidating information on its website to ensure applicants can easily find information related to relevant PA authorities and guidance. Prior to finalizing the PAPPG version 5, a draft will be posted for public comment and review later this year.

FEMA respectfully disagrees with the following comment in the recommendation: “Removing requirements not within the mandate of FEMA, including but not limited to, environmental and historic preservation (EHP) requirements. FEMA has adopted and enforces additional EHP requirements despite not being an environmental or historic preservation agency or a regulatory agency at all. This often creates conflicting EHP reviews. There should be only one environmental or historic preservation review at the federal level.”

The *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) mandates that all federal agencies assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions or obligating grant money. FEMA is required to ensure that all Agency actions and Agency-funded actions comply with NEPA and all other applicable EHP laws, implementing regulations, and Executive Orders. These obligations apply to all federal agencies, not just regulatory agencies or agencies directly engaged in environmental protection or historic preservation. To do this, FEMA must consult with the relevant federal agencies and state, tribal, and territorial governments to determine whether EHP compliance can be achieved.

2021-10 – Equitable Access to Modern Systems	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	Partially Implemented
<p>FEMA works to enhance technology, tools, and access to secure data in the delivery of our mission and provide technical assistance as needed. Resources and data made available to support grant applicants will directly contribute to unifying coordination and delivery of federal assistance. FEMA agrees with the recommendation to provide modern digital data to applicants and provides FEMA PA funding related to project management and design activities directly related to a specific disaster.</p> <p>To streamline the grantee experience, FEMA developed FEMA Grants Outcomes (FEMA GO), a new web-based grants management system that will support all FEMA grant programs, including the PA Program. FEMA GO promotes uniformity across all core grant management processes and eliminates reliance on multiple systems operating across multiple platforms. It provides a single collaborative platform for applicants and recipients and for FEMA grant managers to support the full lifecycle of grants management activities, including applications, reviews, awards, payments, reporting, monitoring and closeout. This shared view of grant data enables improved technical assistance for the recipient. FEMA GO will simplify the grants management lifecycle process, improve the timeliness of grant awards for applicants and sub-applicants, reduce data complexity, and allow for easy access to authorized external users without additional cost to the recipient, thereby helping to achieve Administration equity goals. FEMA GO is currently supporting all fire grants (Assistance to Firefighters Grant, Fire Prevention and Safety, and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response programs) and two mitigation grants (Building Resilience Infrastructure and Communities and Flood Mitigation Assistance). It is expected to reach full operational capability supporting all remaining FEMA grant programs by the end of FY2023 and transfer all legacy grant data by the end of FY2025. FEMA GO plans to provide a standard Application Program Interface that will enable data to be shared bi-directionally through an open data standard with recipient grant management systems.</p>	
2021-11 – Single Secure Platform for Grant Lifecycle and Creation of Resilient Open Architecture for Digital Data	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	Partially Implemented
<p>FEMA recognizes the need for a single, secure platform for grants management. With improvements to the applicant and recipient experience, including dynamic and remote</p>	

customer support, clearer logical flows, and better data management, reporting, and visualizations, FEMA can provide a more effective and efficient customer experience.

FEMA developed a FEMA Grants Outcomes (FEMA GO), a new web-based grants management system that will support all FEMA grant programs, including PA, to streamline the grantee experience. FEMA GO promotes uniformity across all core grant management processes and eliminates reliance on multiple systems operating across multiple platforms, each utilizing different technologies that are non-standard, including many platforms which are no longer well supported.

FEMA GO will simplify the grants management lifecycle process, improve the timeliness of grant awards for applicants and sub-applicants, reduce data complexity, and allow for easy access to authorized external users without additional cost to the recipient. The development of FEMA GO is an incremental, iterative approach to delivering high-quality software functionality with frequent deliveries to ensure value throughout the process for stakeholders. FEMA GO is expected to reach full operational capability by the end of FY2023 and transfer all legacy grant data by the end of FY2025. FEMA GO plans to provide a standard Application Program Interface (API) that will enable data to be shared bi-directionally through an open data standard with recipient grant management systems. The API design will be developed collaboratively with our recipients and industry.

Current DHS cybersecurity measures do not allow for an open technical capability to connect to external, commercial software, or the ability to upload large data files without thorough security vetting and approval. FEMA's Chief Information Officer (CIO) continues to evaluate ways that secure data sharing can be appropriately implemented as an important mission enabler for FEMA and its stakeholders.

2021-12 – Application Programming Interface (API) for Systems Integration

FEMA Response Decision:

Agree

FEMA Implementation Status:

Partially Implemented

OpenFEMA is the most established and widely used open API within FEMA, which provides guidance and insight into continuing API development and data sharing strategies. The OpenFEMA API Framework is actively used by the public and serves as a model for API data interoperability within FEMA. FEMA encourages standardization of both metadata and software, which can lead to a wide data aperture and more effective, uniform data sharing.

DHS cybersecurity policies on technical connections of DHS systems to external, commercial software is restricted. This includes commercial software purchased by recipients and uploading large data files. Stakeholders wishing to connect an external system with a federal

technology system must be FEDRAMP certified. FEMA GO plans to provide a standard API that will enable data to be shared bi-directionally through an open data standard with recipient grant management systems.

2021-13 – Greater Mitigation Program Flexibility

FEMA Response Decision:

Agree

FEMA Implementation Status:

Partially Implemented

FEMA agrees with focusing programmatic efforts on increasing community resilience. To build more resilient communities, FEMA PA works towards identifying opportunities in policy and process to maximize recovery from disasters in a resilient manner, including the following:

- Building to the latest published edition of consensus-based codes and standards that incorporate hazard resistant design.
- Maximizing the use of PA mitigation funding.
- Instituting enhanced structure elevation requirements in floodplains.
- Streamlining cost-effectiveness analyses for PA mitigation.
- Developing internal capabilities and processes to better discuss and promote these opportunities with applicants.

FEMA supports communities using multiple funding streams to achieve resilience outcomes and supports smart investments in system-based, community-wide projects to protect those with the most severe and persistent risk. FEMA PA and mitigation programs regularly collaborate to make resilience a matter of practice, including coordinating on resilient recovery policy development, improving applicant experience in program delivery, and strengthening our workforce. FEMA programs have distinct requirements and statutory authorities, but FEMA can evaluate leveraging the flexible match concept with other federal agencies that have funding authorities to satisfy cost-share requirements of federal grants. As an example, FEMA allowed recipients to use the Department of the Treasury's Coronavirus Relief Fund payments to meet the non-federal cost share requirements for the Emergency Management Preparedness Grant (EMPG) and EMPG-COVID Supplemental programs.

2021-14 – Reduce the Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) Discount Rate

FEMA Response Decision:

Partially Agree

FEMA Implementation Status:

N/A

OMB has stated that Appendix C discount rates cannot be used for benefit-cost analyses for the FEMA mitigation programs. The use of discount rates from Appendix C of the Office of

Management and Budget (OMB) *Circular A-94* is inconsistent with the memo⁴ that accompanies the annual release of the discount rates, which notes that these rates “do not apply to regulatory analysis or benefit-cost analysis of public investment.” FEMA recognizes that the 7% discount rate makes achieving a positive BCA is challenging for some communities and projects, is actively exploring efficiencies for the BCA requirement, and is committed to easing the burden for communities.

Vision Subcommittee Recommendations

2021-15 – Adequately Resource Logistics Distribution Hubs

<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Partially Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	N/A

FEMA Logistics has four primary CONUS distribution centers located in California, Texas, Georgia, and Maryland with three more in Guam, Hawaii and the Caribbean prepared to respond to disasters. FEMA regularly exercises its authorities to deploy and stage equipment and commodities to communities ahead of impacts, a formal declaration, or resource request in order to further reduce delivery times. During a large disaster response in CONUS, we ship commodities out of all four locations.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Humanitarian Response Laboratory hosted a thesis on “Stochastic Modeling to Allocate and Assess Disaster Response Capacity in Logistics Networks”⁵ using the location of FEMA commodities for disaster response as one of two case studies. The study modeled 258 weather-related disasters from 1990 to 2013 with a goal of minimizing response time to survivors, and concluded that warehouses in Fort Worth, Texas and Atlanta, Georgia optimized delivery time to survivors compared to a more geographically dispersed set of warehouses related to FEMA regions (WA, CA, MT, FL, MA).

⁴ White House, Memorandum for the Heads of Departments and Agencies, *2020 Discount Rates for OMB Circular No. A-94*. (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/M-20-07.pdf>)

⁵ Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Humanitarian Response Laboratory, *Stochastic Modeling to Allocate and Assess Disaster Response Capacity in Logistics Networks*. (<https://dspace.mit.edu/handle/1721.1/98656>)

2021-16 – Develop a National Risk Management Framework	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Partially Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	N/A
<p>FEMA lacks the authority to create a national marketplace and would require explicit statutory authorization in order to do so. Additionally, the significant programmatic development to implement such an action is not currently a part of FEMA’s program support. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and other government agencies participate in an existing global marketplace. Current legal authorities limit FEMA and the NFIP to purchasing reinsurance for the NFIP only. FEMA could consider providing recovery and mitigation guidance on risk transfer for SLTT governments to consider their options in the existing global marketplace. For example, Florida Power & Light, the California Earthquake Authority, and numerous state government Fair Access to Insurance Requirement (FAIR) plans secure forms of risk transfer.</p>	
2021-17 – Link the National Risk Index to the proposed National Risk Management Framework	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Partially Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	N/A
<p>The National Risk Index (the Index),⁶ a risk awareness and education tool, allows users to quickly identify differences in natural hazard risk across the United States. In addition to natural hazard frequency, exposure, and historic loss information, the Index incorporates Social Vulnerability and Community Resilience data to help FEMA understand which locations across the United States are disproportionately impacted by natural hazards. As additional climate hazard data becomes available, the Index enables FEMA to build a climate resilient nation, empower risk-informed decision making, and help posture FEMA to meet current and emergent threats.</p> <p>The Index directly supports the idea of a National Risk Management Framework that is developed and deployed to measure risk, provide common taxonomy and data sets, and harmonize approaches to risk. In its current iteration, however, the National Risk Index cannot directly support improving national insurance and risk transfer buying power.</p>	

⁶ FEMA, National Risk Index. (<https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps/products-tools/national-risk-index>)

2021-18 – Harmonize Risk and Resilience Frameworks	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	Partially Implemented
<p>As recently discussed at briefings to the NAC on recommendations coming out of the Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center (HSOAC) on Streamlining Emergency Management Constructs, FEMA is prioritizing the alignment and coordination of risk and capability assessments, including the alignment of <i>Hazard Identification and Risk Assessments</i> (HIRA) and <i>Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessments</i> (THIRA). FEMA is continuing to assess how best to reduce burden on reporting communities while considering the unique purpose of each assessment. FEMA has established a working group to examine potential paths forward and associated timelines, considering both data sharing opportunities as well as regulatory, policy and grant requirements.</p>	
2021-19 – Review and Address Insurance Redlining	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Partially Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	Partially Implemented
<p>FEMA has implemented the Risk Rating 2.0 methodology for the NFIP, having analyzed the actuarial soundness of existing FEMA-funded insurance vehicles to deliver updated insurance rates. FEMA is not, however, currently positioned to analyze moral hazard or indemnification principles.</p>	
2021-20 – Create Professional Pathways within Existing FEMA Workforce	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	Partially Implemented
<p>FEMA planning is underway to modernize career pathways and professional development to support and sustain a ready FEMA and a prepared workforce. This plan renews investment in, and focus on, policies, resources, and tools that will guide career journeys for a wide array of skillsets and individualized professional goals of FEMA staff members, based on the results from the 2021-2022 <i>Professional Development Pathways Assessment</i> (PDPA).</p> <p>FEMA is engaged in a multi-year plan to establish a system of Agency-wide career path standards and provide our workforce with tools to visualize individual career goals with defined career paths via the Career Path Tool. The recommendation to develop a formal mentoring program for the incident workforce is in line with FEMA development strategies.</p> <p>In FY2021, FEMA hired 4,462 individuals out of 210,721 applicants for 2,463 job announcements. The total FEMA workforce consistently grew during each of the past six</p>	

years. Applicants are given information on their job application status at set points through the hiring process. With the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) USAJobs.com, applicants can check their status and subscribe to receive automated notifications. FEMA's Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) also requested additional staff to support Agency growth efforts in the coming years.

2021-21 – Improve Pathways and Pipelines for Future Emergency Managers

FEMA Response Decision:

Agree

FEMA Implementation Status:

Partially Implemented

FEMA takes coordinated steps to strengthen every element of the human capital pipeline, including expanding recruitment, reducing time to hire, improving cadre management, and ultimately increasing retention. This comprehensive approach is leveraging new ideas, as well as strengthening recent successful initiatives, such as tripling the average conversion rate of FEMA Corps graduates through Fast-Track Hiring (FTH), resulting in 800 FEMA Corps alumni joining the Agency since May 2016.

FEMA is developing a Strategic Recruitment Plan to be completed by August 2022. The intended outcome is an enterprise-wide approach to providing clear and consistent guidance on recruitment practices, processes, and support, as well as internal strategies and tools to educate and assist hiring stakeholders in increasing diversity and retention, and targeted outreach to address diversity gaps.

FEMA's Emergency Management Institute's "EMI Anywhere" approach seeks to work with post-secondary institutions and SLT'T agencies as prospective satellite campus partners to make EMI training and education more widely available across the country. This will help increase awareness of emergency management career fields while providing greater access to training opportunities for prospective emergency managers. EMI's Independent Study Program is available to all, and its courses are used by numerous higher education institutions and some high school level emergency management and homeland security career programs.

In addition to EMI initiatives, the National Training and Education Division (NTED)'s Higher Education Program engages with and supports over 741 emergency management and related academic programs across 277 institutions, from the associate to doctoral level, to collaborate and help meet the challenges that confront the nation. This includes programs at 11 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), 36 Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), and one Native American-Serving Non-Tribal Institution (NASNTI).

FEMA Response to NAC Report 2020 Recommendations

Focus on Equity Recommendations	
2020-06 – Include Social Capital in Training Programs	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	Partially Implemented
<p>Social capital (i.e., relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively) is recognized as a key element of preparedness, and included in learning through curriculum delivery, community engagement, and other means aimed at building a culture of preparedness for the nation. FEMA’s training and education enterprise is addressing this requirement. The enterprise is comprised of the U.S. Fire Administration’s National Fire Academy and the National Preparedness Directorate’s Emergency Management Institute, Center for Domestic Preparedness, and National Training and Education Division (NTED), which focus on the national workforce, along with our Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer and Field Operations Directorate, which focus on the FEMA workforce. Through processes including stakeholder engagement, focus groups, research, and analytics, FEMA is developing increasingly effective learning solutions which, with adequate resources to support development and delivery, could effectively address gaps in social capital for both the national workforce and the FEMA workforce through learning.</p> <p>FEMA also recognizes the importance of social capital in disaster response and recovery. Currently available training and education programs incorporate social capital learning objectives, including FEMA core values, into training curriculum aimed at building a ready FEMA and prepared nation. Future updates to NQS and FQS Position Task Book requirements will continue to include social capital focused modules. In addition, FEMA Office of Response and Recovery’s (ORR) core values team is working to expand capabilities and tools that provide social capital education and training to all ORR staff, including FEMA Regions, field leadership and staff.</p>	

Focus on Outcomes Recommendations	
2020-10 – Educate Incoming Political Leadership About Emergency Management	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Partially Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	Partially Implemented
<p>Foundational emergency management functions are sustained by emergency managers, public safety organizations, and other preparedness and response partners within a jurisdiction. Decision-making authorities (e.g., elected officials or political leadership) require targeted education and training focused on key emergency management issues that are unique to their level of government.</p> <p>FEMA maintains regular contact with governors and key staff through direct support, regular engagement at conferences, and communication with their Washington, D.C., and home offices. Each election cycle, FEMA ensures that new governors and their appointed state emergency management directors and homeland security advisors have information on the disaster declaration process and FEMA disaster assistance programs, ensuring that they are prepared to respond to disasters from their first day in office. FEMA works with the National Governors Association (NGA) to support their New Governors Seminar. The event brings new and experienced governors together shortly after their election to discuss homeland security and emergency management issues with DHS senior leadership, including the FEMA Administrator.</p> <p>FEMA understands the unique needs of educating elected officials and political leadership, and currently offers some solutions through the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) and other members of the FEMA training and education enterprise. EMI provides the National Emergency Management Executive Academy and the Vanguard Program, which both offer a dynamic curriculum to develop strategic- and policy-level executive leadership.</p> <p>Further, NTED provides the Center for Homeland and Domestic Security (CHDS) Executive Leaders Program, which is a unique educational opportunity for senior-level homeland security and public safety leaders who are at the forefront of the Nation’s homeland security mission. CHDS also offers educational opportunities around the country through mobile executive teams comprised of nationally recognized experts from a variety of fields related to homeland security. The CHDS teams work with requesting government agencies and associations to customize educational content and structure to meet participant needs and objectives. While we recognize that these efforts might not reach all elected officials and political leaders, we are fully committed to developing new approaches such as micro-</p>	

learning, half-day seminars, targeted consulting, and more, to provide critical information that is readily accessible to elected officials.

2020-12 – Enhance Partnerships with Leaders in Research and Data Science in other Federal Agencies, the Private Sector and Academic Research University Programs

FEMA Response Decision:

Agree

FEMA Implementation Status:

Partially Implemented

The *Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018* (Evidence Act) calls upon the federal government to utilize the best available evidence in its decision making. The Learning Agenda that accompanied the 2022-2026 FEMA Strategic Plan and other research questions lay the foundation for rigorous evidence-building over the next several years. These efforts require FEMA to work closely with public and private sector research and data science organizations as they proceed. Accordingly, FEMA is developing new relationships to help understand the complex, intersectional issues linked to equity, climate resilience, and readiness—topics central to the 2022-2026 FEMA Strategic Plan—and examine the effectiveness of our programs.

This year, FEMA is developing an engagement plan for mapping stakeholders, forecasting critical strategic issues, anticipating collaboration milestones, and identifying desired outcomes. Across the FEMA training and education enterprise, collaborative engagement continues with partnered federal agencies, state and local agencies, academic institutions, non-profit organizations, and public and private sector research and policy groups.

Collaborative relationships between FEMA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), and higher education partners including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are active and yield data to better understand risks, challenges, and innovative approaches to addressing emergency management challenges. In addition, FEMA is working closely with the U.S. Census Bureau, NOAA, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to curate datasets and indices that will help inform equitable decision making before, during, and after disasters. FEMA is also partnering with other federal agencies and the private sector to research and understand best practices and challenges in data management, data sharing, and data inventory implementation to maximize the value of FEMA data for both internal and external consumers.

2020-13 – Invest in FEMA-Wide Data Management System to Track and Monitor Outcomes	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	Partially Implemented
<p>FEMA is making strides advancing a comprehensive, enterprise data management infrastructure. The Enterprise Data and Analytics Modernization Initiative (EDAMI) Program is focused on making improvements in people, process, and technology through data utilization and analytics. A critical improvement will be the FEMA Data Exchange (FEMADex), which will enable real-time, data-informed decisions throughout the lifecycle of a disaster. This platform is an innovative, collaborative way to maximize the use of emergency management data, generating robust business intelligence and analytics for the Agency.</p> <p>FEMA has further invested in developing and maturing necessary personnel and process infrastructure. As outlined by the Evidence Act, FEMA has assigned a Chief Data Officer and an Evaluation Officer to work closely with program offices throughout the Agency to define programmatic outcomes for which FEMA should collect, distribute, and analyze data. FEMA also supports program evaluations designed to assess efficacy with respect to these defined outcomes. Production of an annual FEMA Evaluation Plan begins in 2023.</p>	
2020-14 – Develop Scientific and Technology Professional Development Training for Emergency Management	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	Partially Implemented
<p>To meet current and emergent threats, including the impacts of climate change, FEMA recognizes the benefits of developing science and technology professional development training for emergency managers. As FEMA continues to modernize its information technology portfolio, the agency is committed to ensuring that its workforce is trained to make the best use of cutting-edge technological and analytical capabilities. In addition, FEMA continues to incorporate data and analytically focused roles into its incident management workforce and is in the process of standardizing training curriculum for these positions. FEMA is coordinating internally and leveraging our collaborative relationship with DHS S&T to define the scope and focus areas for new training curricula.</p>	

Focus on Coordination Recommendations	
2020-15 – Review FEMA Headquarters Versus Regional Responsibilities	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Partially Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	Partially Implemented
<p>Collaboration is continual and ongoing to ensure successful mission coordination. FEMA headquarters (HQ) and regional leadership are committed to assessing and redefining needs on a continual basis, by refining policy, workforce requirements, and budgetary considerations.</p> <p>In 2015, FEMA produced a <i>Regional Office Roles and Missions Report</i>, resulting in better-aligned program implementation, performance measurement, priority setting, and resource planning across the Regions and HQ. In addition, the FEMA Office of Chief Counsel established a comprehensive <i>Delegation of Authorities to the FEMA Regional Administrators</i>. The Delegations are regularly reviewed and formally updated every three years. Most recently, at the Administrator’s direction, Regions are represented as co-chairs with HQ counterparts in all aspects of Agency business through governance boards and enterprise steering groups, to ensure coordinated priority setting and regional inclusion in policy development and budgetary decisions. Also, as part of the Programming phase of the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) process, HQ offices engage the Regions in development of resource requests with potential regional implications. For development of our Fiscal Year 2024-2028 budget submission to DHS and OMB, FEMA utilized a new wraparound cost analysis tool which will be expanded to fully integrate regional costs associated with recruiting, hiring, onboarding, equipping, and enabling new PFT and CORE positions across the agency. All such costs to both HQ and Regions were incorporated in our initial submission to DHS, and FEMA will stand up a working group in June 2022 to further address these regional considerations.</p>	
2020-16 – Establish FEMA as a Cabinet-Level Agency Reporting Directly to the President	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	N/A
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	N/A
<p>FEMA has a close working relationship with DHS, regularly executes our mission in accordance with our various statutory authorities and engages directly with all levels of government including the Executive Office of the President. While FEMA is not currently a Cabinet-level agency, the FEMA Administrator is the principal advisor to the President, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary for all matters relating to emergency management in the United States (6 USC 313, Title 6).</p>	

2020-17 – Establish Unified Coordination	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	N/A
<p>FEMA’s role in federal response and recovery operations is established by a variety of statutes, Presidential Directives, National Security Memoranda, and policies. Depending on the situation, there are several other federal agencies that have direct statutory authority and the requisite subject matter expertise to serve as the lead federal agency for response or recovery operations. Many of these situations, defined as emergencies by various statutes and regulations, are ably handled by these agencies and supported by specific and dedicated appropriations. As demonstrated over the past several years, FEMA’s expertise is routinely sought and employed to serve in either a lead, support, or coordination role for a wide-range of emergencies, including the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, the irregular migration patterns on the Southwestern U.S. Border, and the Russia-Ukraine Unified Coordination Group.</p> <p>Consistent with Congress’ direction in <i>Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022, Pub. L. No. 117-103</i> (2022), FEMA is in the process of increasing its capacity to support non-Stafford Act operations without degrading the Agency’s readiness for its traditional Stafford Act responsibilities. For example, FEMA will be establishing a Non-Stafford Act Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT) that will be available to provide incident management for a wide variety of emergency situations consistent with the needs of the President, DHS Secretary, and FEMA Administrator. FEMA remains committed to supporting the emergency needs of the Nation whenever called upon.</p>	
2020-18 – Create a National Supply Chain Strategy	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Partially Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	Partially Implemented
<p>FEMA has found that the capability of the private sector to create, operate, and adjust commercial supply chains is exponentially larger than the federal government. To complement the efforts of the private sector, the federal government is implementing the <i>National Strategy for a Resilient Public Health Supply Chain</i> (July 2021). As part of this strategy, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is leading an initiative to create a <i>United States Medical Countermeasures Stockpiling Plan</i> for SLTT governments that will address stockpiling at the SLTT level. FEMA has requested funding to support the development of a Supply Chain Center of Excellence.</p>	

2020-19 – Enhance National Disaster Supply Chain Support & Coordination	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Partially Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	N/A
<p>FEMA operates the National Business Emergency Operations Center (NBEOC), which enhances supply chain coordination by working with national associations and major businesses to stabilize business before, during, and after disasters. Through the <i>Defense Production Act Section 708 Voluntary Agreement for the Manufacture and Distribution of Critical Healthcare Resources</i>, FEMA responded to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency and hosted more than 100 national-level meetings in the past 18 months furthering this effort. FEMA has requested funding to support the development of a Supply Chain Center of Excellence.</p>	
2020-20 – Expand Disaster Supply Chain Coordination	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Partially Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	Partially Implemented
<p>FEMA and National Response Coordination Center team partners have worked with stakeholders since 2019 to provide focused supply chain analysis before, during, and after major disasters. This includes reviewing lessons learned and potential improvements as we prepare for stabilizing supply chains and ensuring business continuity during future events.</p> <p>FEMA promotes private sector integration in emergency management and works with SLTT partners to establish Business Emergency Operations Centers, and for the past two years included the private sector in National Level Exercises. FEMA has also published the <i>Building Private-Public Partnership Guide</i> for the SLTT community.</p>	
2020-21 – Support Establishing SLTT and Private Sector Stockpiles	
<i>FEMA Response Decision:</i>	Partially Agree
<i>FEMA Implementation Status:</i>	N/A
<p><i>Executive Order 14001: A Sustainable Public Health Supply Chain</i>, and the subsequent <i>National Strategy for a Resilient Public Health Supply Chain</i> in July 2021 generated tasks for action, including to “create an enduring federal, SLTT, and private-sector stockpiling plan,” with the DHHS Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response as the lead. This may include disaster supplies beyond healthcare supplies, and FEMA may include training and awareness programs.</p>	

Many businesses are planning—and some advancing ahead of the government—stockpiling critical disaster supplies for their specific proprietary lines of business.

2020-22 – Increase Private Sector Supply

FEMA Response Decision:

Agree

FEMA Implementation Status:

N/A

FEMA supports and coordinates with businesses before, during, and after disasters through its Office of Business Industry, Infrastructure, and Integration (OB3I). The Business team communicates with companies through the NBEOC and daily calls during disasters. Using a hurricane as a typical disaster, the Business team focuses its communication on weather impacts focused on business operations such as risks to major roads, access to fuel, and power outages. FEMA's disaster-related information enables the private sector to make internal business decisions for their operations. For example, a home improvement retailer may increase their inventory for mops, sponges, buckets, and plywood based on information about an inbound storm. In general, FEMA supports businesses through disaster information exchange and businesses make their decisions on what they stock, manufacture, and purchase based on their own assessments.

Focus on What Works Recommendations

2020-25b – Partner with Industry to More Effectively Use Technology by Launching a Recurring FEMA Challenge to Inspire the Creation of Transformative Solutions

FEMA Response Decision:

Agree

FEMA Implementation Status:

N/A

FEMA recognizes the benefits of partnering with industry to obtain a broader perspective of available solutions to problem areas by leveraging the expertise and input of external partners, including academia. FEMA will work with key partners such as DHS S&T to define focus areas for a FEMA Challenge. This activity supports posturing FEMA to meet current and emergent threats.