

# FEMA Celebrates Women's History Month

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WASHINGTON -- With nearly half of the agency's staff being female, FEMA is proud to celebrate today as International Women's Day and the entire month of March as [Women's History Month](#).

This is also the first time the agency has been led by a female administrator, since Deanne Criswell took the oath of office in April 2021.

Criswell began her journey in emergency management as a firefighter during a time where the field started slowly opening up to women. At her entrance exam, she was told how unlikely she was to pass but rose to the challenge, finishing with high marks.

"By challenging ourselves and stepping outside of our comfort zones, women can help grow and represent diversity at all levels of leadership across the emergency management enterprise," Criswell said. "This starts by envisioning ourselves as leaders, and telling ourselves 'you can and you must.' The more we implement strategies to achieve diversity, the more effective we can be in reflecting the communities we serve."

Approximately half of FEMA's workforce is female, and from 2016 to 2021, FEMA increased the number of women in the agency by more than 6,700.

In addition to FEMA's highest-ranking position, many other leadership posts are held by women in our agency. Nearly 46% of supervisors and managers in the agency are women. These leadership positions include roles in disaster response, which has historically been a male dominated discipline.

This year, FEMA is commemorating Women's History Month with a series of events that reflect the theme: 'Daring FEMA Women -- Leading with Courage and Vulnerability.' The series includes health and wellness sessions, a professional development seminar and a panel discussion focused on companionate



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leadership. The activities are available to FEMA employees and empower our employees with a better understanding of how gender and stereotypes affect the workplace.

These events are hosted by FEMA's Women's Forum Employee Resource Group. This group works throughout the year to engage, educate and empower FEMA employees to advance the interests of women.

