

FEMA and MDEM Highlight Crisfield, MD's Commitment to Reducing Flood Risk with Tour during “Year of Resilience”

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PHILADELPHIA— Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Senior Officials Victoria Salinas and MaryAnn Tierney and Maryland Department of Emergency Management Secretary Russ Strickland visited Crisfield, Maryland on Monday to learn how the city is working with county, state, nonprofit, academic and federal partners to reduce their flood risk through FEMA’s Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)- Direct Technical Assistance (DTA) program. With its location along the Eastern Shore of Maryland, the city experiences flooding regularly and has been working for years to address it.

The BRIC-DTA program provides non-financial, tailored support to communities and Tribal nations through a range of activities over a period of up to 3 years. In the past year, FEMA has worked with city leadership, state and local partners to develop a mitigation strategy that Crisfield can implement. The plan includes infrastructure improvements that will reduce flood risk from storm surge, tidal and fluvial flooding and will also give the city additional protection and allow floodwaters to recede quicker. The plan also includes nature-based solutions that will mimic natural wetlands. FEMA is also supporting Crisfield’s efforts to engage residents and stakeholders about this project to ensure an equitable and favorable solution to the city’s flooding.



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Page 1 of 5



FEMA and MDEM Senior Leaders meet with Somerset County officials, Crisfield leaders and local partners to discuss the city's participation in FEMA's BRIC-Direct Technical Assistance Program.

Monday's visit kicked off with a roundtable discussion between FEMA, MDEM, Somerset County and Crisfield officials followed by a tour in the afternoon. During the tour, Crisfield highlighted areas throughout the city that have experienced severe flooding in the past and projects they are hoping to accomplish with the help of future federal funding. Crisfield has applied for a BRIC grant to fund the projects conceptualized through the BRIC-DTA program.

The visit to Crisfield is also a part of FEMA's "Year of Resilience" where the agency is focusing on sharing best practices, advancing new innovative ideas, and protecting more communities from disasters.

"The City of Crisfield serves as an example of how communities benefit when all levels of government work together to build resilience," said Victoria Salinas, FEMA's Senior Official Performing Duties of Deputy Administrator for Resilience. "Crisfield's participation in FEMA's BRIC Direct Technical Assistance program has



helped identify flood risk reduction strategies using 2050 climate projections that, when implemented, will reduce the devastating impacts of repetitive flooding from storm surge, heavy rains, and sea level rise on residents and business owners.”

“Our visit to Crisfield was a great opportunity to see the work that Mayor Darlene Taylor and her team are doing alongside the state and FEMA to address flood risk in their community,” said FEMA Region 3 Regional Administrator MaryAnn Tierney. “FEMA’s Direct Technical Assistance program is a great way for communities and Tribal nations to get started in mitigation work and discover ways to become more resilient to future disasters. By building capacity at the local level, BRIC-DTA supports the development of holistic, equitable hazard mitigation solutions that advance community-driven objectives.”



(From left) FEMA Region 3 Regional Administrator MaryAnn Tierney, FEMA Senior Official Performing Duties of Deputy Administrator for Resilience Victoria Salinas, MDEM Secretary Russ Strickland, MDEM Disaster Risk Reduction Directorate Director Sara Bender and Crisfield Mayor Darleme Taylor.

FEMA leaders were joined by the Maryland Department of Emergency Management who also plays a role in the technical assistance program, by ensuring that the City’s mitigation strategy aligns with state priorities. MDEM staff



have been an essential part of the BRIC-DTA team.

“As communities such as Crisfield face increasing risk from weather-related events, it is important that we work with local and federal partners and the non-government sector to mitigate these effects and increase resilience,” said Russ Strickland, MDEM Secretary. “The Moore-Miller Administration is committed to resilience and sustainability across Maryland, and our work here in Crisfield is evidence of that commitment.”

Crisfield was one of the first BRIC-DTA communities in Region 3 and is now one of seven in Region 3 and one of [74 nationwide](#). You can learn more about their flood mitigation efforts [here](#).

“The City of Crisfield is extremely grateful for FEMA Leadership’s site visit, and for the phenomenal collaborative support we have received through the FEMA BRIC DTA program,” said Crisfield Mayor Darlene Taylor. “This program has been instrumental in helping to level the ‘resiliency’ playing field by providing the capacity for our small town to assess, analyze, and potentially address our number one climate challenge, flooding. Already seeing increases in flooding frequency and severity with potentially devastating future impacts, the implementation of BRIC DTA solutions is crucial to preserving our small rural, waterfront community and could prove to be the most consequential effort Crisfield has ever participated in.”

The deadline for communities to apply for Direct Technical Assistance for Fiscal Year 2023 is February 29, 2024. You can find more information on the program [here](#).

If you have any questions, please contact FEMA Region 3 Office of External Affairs at femar3newsdesk@fema.dhs.gov.

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Victoria Salinas is the Senior Official Performing Duties of Deputy Administrator for Resilience at FEMA and MaryAnn Tierney is the Regional Administrator for FEMA Region 3.

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