



Individuals & Communities • Private Sector • Non-Governmental Organizations



# Strategic Plan

Helping People. Together.

Federal Partners • State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Partners • FEMA

2018-2022

# Strategic Plan

*Federal Emergency Management Agency*



FEMA

*“[I find] the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand,  
as in what direction we are moving.”*

– Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.

# FOREWORD

I am extremely proud to present to you the 2018-2022 Federal Emergency Management Agency Strategic Plan. This is not just an internal guide. The most important lesson from the challenging disasters of 2017 is that success is best delivered through a system that is Federally supported, state managed, and locally executed. **This plan seeks to unify and further professionalize emergency management across the Nation and we invite the whole community to join us in embracing these priorities.** We must all work as one through this strategy to help people before, during, and after disasters to achieve our vision of a more prepared and resilient Nation.

This plan reflects the ideas, suggestions, and perspectives that staff and stakeholders have shared with me since my arrival at FEMA. We used online forums like IdeaScale, in-person Discovery Change Sessions with employees, and many day-to-day conversations with disaster survivors and communities to gain a better understanding of how we can turn great ideas into reality. We also reached out to our state, local, tribal, and territorial partners, along with non-profit organizations and the private sector, because they are critical partners to this plan's success.

This plan is just the beginning. It describes a vision that we can all pursue – together – to build a better FEMA and galvanize the emergency management profession.

This new Strategic Plan includes three ambitious, but achievable, goals for 2018-2022. The Strategic Goals are focused on our FEMA Vision – a prepared and resilient Nation.

## **Strategic Goal 1: Build a Culture of Preparedness**

## **Strategic Goal 2: Ready the Nation for Catastrophic Disasters**

## **Strategic Goal 3: Reduce the Complexity of FEMA**

Each of these goals represents a major undertaking. FEMA will not be able to accomplish them without the help of the entire community. Achieving this vision of a prepared and resilient Nation is a shared responsibility and, while recognizing FEMA's essential role, meaningful improvements will occur only when we work in concert across Federal departments and agencies, as well as with leaders from state, local, tribal, and territorial governments and non-governmental organizations and the private sector. **Likewise, we need to help individuals and families understand their personal roles in preparing for disasters and taking action – they are our true first responders.**

This Strategic Plan is the central document for guiding our actions over the next several years. We are going to be talking about it – a lot – and acting on it. **I am making changes to FEMA to reflect these priorities and I am going to use our resources to drive progress.** That doesn't mean that all other work will stop, but it does mean that I expect all of us to be actively engaged in Building a Culture of Preparedness, Ready the Nation for Catastrophic Disasters, and Reducing the Complexity of FEMA. Together.



Brock Long  
Administrator



*Administrator Long speaks at a FEMA-wide Town Hall about the Agency's Strategic Plan.  
Source: Colt Hagmaier*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The FEMA 2018-2022 Strategic Plan provides a framework for supporting the United States before, during, and after disasters and improving the Agency's execution of its fundamental mission of helping people. From 2018 to 2022, FEMA will focus on three main Strategic Goals and invite the whole community to adopt these shared priorities as well. FEMA will drive progress through 12 supporting Strategic Objectives. These Strategic Objectives highlight meaningful ways the Agency can focus on its workforce, simplify processes and procedures across FEMA, provide enhanced stewardship of funds, and better engage and support survivors. FEMA will develop individual strategies to help guide and shape each Strategic Objective and direct resources and funding to support these important areas.



## STRATEGIC GOAL 1: BUILD A CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS

Resilience is the backbone of emergency management. The Nation's ability to weather storms and disasters without experiencing loss significantly reduces our risk. The most successful way to achieve disaster resiliency is through preparedness, including mitigation. Building a Culture of Preparedness within our communities and our governments will support a National effort to be ready for the worst disasters – at the individual, family, community, state, local, tribal, territorial (SLTT), and Federal levels.

Strategic Goal 1 promotes the idea that everyone should be prepared when disaster strikes. To be prepared, however, we must all understand our local and community risks, reflect the diversity of those we serve, and foster partnerships that allow us to connect with a diverse Nation. People who are prepared will be able to act quickly and decisively in the face of disasters, thereby preventing death and injuries, minimizing loss of property, and allowing for a more rapid and efficient recovery.



## STRATEGIC GOAL 2: READY THE NATION FOR CATASTROPHIC DISASTERS

Catastrophic disasters, including low- and no-notice incidents, can overwhelm the government at all levels and threaten National security. They are life-altering incidents for those impacted, causing a high number of fatalities and widespread destruction. Catastrophic disasters disrupt lives and hurt our communities – economically and socially. Readiness is critical for FEMA and our partners to ensure that the response and recovery missions are appropriately executed and successful.

Strategic Goal 2 builds on the preparedness through Strategic Goal 1 and focuses us on enhancing our collective readiness. The Nation's readiness depends on emergency management professionals who execute the mission on behalf of Federal and SLTT governments. This requires a scalable and capable National incident workforce that can adapt and deploy to a changing risk landscape, greater integration with our partners at all levels, and the ability to communicate and coordinate effectively in every situation.



## STRATEGIC GOAL 3: REDUCE THE COMPLEXITY OF FEMA

The Nation faces an evolving threat and hazard environment. FEMA must be flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of individuals and communities, and it must deliver assistance and support in as simple a manner as possible. We must innovate and leverage new technology to reduce complexity, increase efficiency, and improve outcomes.

Strategic Goal 3 promotes simpler, less complex processes to streamline our Agency and the support we provide to individuals and communities. By making it easier for employees to do their work, the Agency can better care for those we support. A simplified FEMA – one that streamlines survivor and grantee experiences and provides straightforward processes and policies for staff – will decrease administrative burdens, improve the stewardship of Federal taxpayer dollars, and allow for a more efficient and effective execution of our mission.

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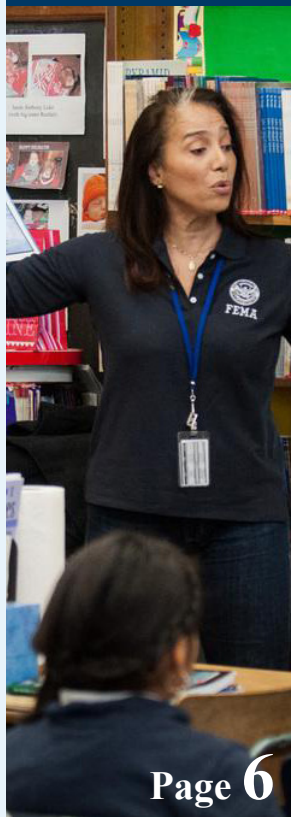
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Images (from left to right): 1. FEMA for Kids Community Relationship specialist Gia Galeano reads to students for the Reading Our Hearts Out Celebration at P.S. 96 in the Bronx, New York. Source: Kenneth Wilsey. 2. Attendees at the Salmon Jam summer festival identify higher ground, their destination in the event of an earthquake. Source: John O'Sullivan. 3. Members of AmeriCorps NCCC and FEMA Corps help pack up grocery bags with items like rice, beans, and milk to be handed out in neighborhoods in Jayuya, Puerto Rico. Source: Eliud Echevarría. 4. Disaster Survivor Assistance specialist Bernardo García (right), helps a survivor register with FEMA in Villa Nevárez, Puerto Rico. Source: Yuisa Rios.





FEMA

# 2018 - 2022 FEMA STRATEGIC PLAN: INTRODUCTION



*A disaster survivor gets a hug after she receives FEMA disaster survivor registration information at her home following Hurricane Harvey. Source: Christopher Mardorf*

## FEMA Mission Statement

Helping people before, during, and after disasters.

## FEMA Vision

A prepared and resilient Nation.



*Two firefighters battle wildfires in California. FEMA played a significant role during California's 2017 wildfires. Source: Wally Skalij, LA Times*

## I. FOUNDATIONS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2019, FEMA will mark 40 years of helping people before, during, and after disasters. As FEMA continues to support and collaborate with stakeholders, the Agency's focus is building and developing a culture of preparedness across the country and unifying all levels of community and government into an integrated approach to emergency management.

This Strategic Plan outlines the goals and objectives that FEMA must implement to strengthen the Agency and our mission. It will build upon the foundation established by FEMA's previous two Strategic Plans. The 2011-2014 plan focused on building a whole community inclusive approach to emergency management – enabling community leaders to act when needed. The 2014-2018 plan built on that idea by institutionalizing whole community efforts to position FEMA and its partners to improve outcomes for disaster survivors and communities. The 2018-2022 Strategic Plan will mobilize that whole community to build a culture of preparedness, ready the Nation for catastrophic disasters, and reduce the complexity of FEMA.

**Whole community and shared responsibility, across all layers of government and down to the individual, is also a hallmark of this Strategic Plan.** It is an essential premise of these Strategic Goals and Objectives that each will require the collaborative commitment of individuals and organizations outside of FEMA, and we invite all of our partners and stakeholders, both within and outside the Federal Government, to join us in adopting and embracing these priorities. In this sense, it is the continuation of the whole community concept introduced and formalized by the previous Strategic Plans.

## II. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

### Shared Responsibility

FEMA is part of a larger team of Federal agencies, SLTT governments, and non-governmental stakeholders that share responsibility for emergency management and National preparedness. Those closest to impacted areas are the true first responders during any emergency or disaster – individuals, families, neighbors, and local communities.

**“FEMA's Strategic Plan is ambitious, achievable, and will build a stronger emergency management community.”**

**- Administrator Long**



*Flood survivors attend a community town hall meeting to ask questions about aid programs and recovery plans. Source: Steve Zumwalt*

**“The optimal framework for response and recovery is one that is Federally supported, state managed, and locally executed.”**

**- Administrator Long**

The most effective form of emergency management is one in which every member of the community understands his or her important and indispensable role. **Likewise, the most effective strategies for emergency management are those that are Federally supported, state managed, and locally executed.** FEMA's role is to coordinate Federal Government resources to supplement SLTT capabilities. FEMA does this by coordinating through the hierarchical layers of government, meaning that states, tribes, and territories are our primary coordinating partners. It is through these sovereign layers that requests for assistance are made and through which FEMA coordinates the delivery of Federal assistance.

FEMA's role is to build relationships with our emergency management partners, ideally before disasters occur, so that the Agency can understand their unique conditions and needs. FEMA is responsible for identifying best practices and working within the emergency management community to encourage proactive risk assessment, preparedness activities, and mitigation investments. Post-disaster, FEMA's responsibilities primarily involve coordinating and assigning Federal assets to support SLTT partners and providing grant assistance to help SLTTs, individuals, and private non-profit organizations cope with disaster losses and recover. However, FEMA does not and cannot serve as the sole or primary responder.

To that end, pre-disaster coordination and communication among partners is critical to improving response and recovery outcomes. Equally important are mitigation and actions that we can take to enhance the resilience of our communities before disasters occur. In order to be resilient, communities must make efforts to protect lives and property before disasters occurs. In every phase of emergency management, success requires the cooperative contributions of the whole community.

#### Lessons from 2017 Disasters

To improve the Nation's preparedness for catastrophic events and to build a culture of learning within FEMA, continuous improvement must be a cornerstone of our work. Large scale, complex incidents, including FEMA's responses to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, as well as the 2017-2018 California wildfires, underscore the criticality of our shared mission and remind us of the importance of learning from past disasters.



Incidents of this type highlight the need for a focus on scaling a response for catastrophic incidents, scalable surge staffing, sustained logistics operations, sheltering and initiating housing operations, and responding to long-term infrastructure outages, especially communications. We have integrated these themes within this FEMA Strategic Plan, and set aspirational goals to drive change and continuous improvement.

### National Security and Department of Homeland Security Strategies

The FEMA Strategic Plan advances and expands upon the first pillar of the president's National Security Strategy, "Protecting the American People, the Homeland, and the American Way of Life." Within this pillar is a focus on "Promoting American Resilience," which speaks to the Nation's ability to absorb the shock of a disaster and quickly recover. As the National Security Strategy notes, "a democracy is only as resilient as its people," so as a diverse and united people, we must be prepared.

The President, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and FEMA all recognize the importance of Building a Culture of Preparedness and reducing the Nation's risk. This requires a dedicated effort by the whole community to ensure that we are working to educate the public regarding their risk, developing methods to mitigate the impact of those risks, and helping people understand how to prepare to meet disasters when they arrive. There is recognition at all levels that we must foster a National culture of preparedness that will reduce the impact of a catastrophic event and increase overall community resilience.

**One lesson we learned from the catastrophic 2017 hurricane season is that no one department or agency can undertake this effort alone.** DHS deployed thousands of employees from FEMA and other components of DHS, as well as members of other Federal Government agencies, to support the response and recovery efforts of our SLTT partners. This collaboration is critical, not just during a crisis, but before as well. As Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen noted on the 15th Anniversary of the establishment of DHS, "we need all levels of government, non-profit organizations, private sector businesses, and individual communities to work together to prepare for disasters before they happen and to respond together to the needs of survivors in time of crisis." The ability of the Nation to be truly ready depends on everyone knowing and understanding the part they play in our collective resilience. People who are prepared will be able to act quickly and decisively in the face of disaster, preventing death and injuries, minimizing loss of property, and enabling successful recovery.

### FEMA Strategic Planning

FEMA used a methodical strategic planning process to develop this Strategic Plan. These activities included opportunities to hear directly from staff and stakeholders through multiple engagement platforms.

The in-person feedback for this strategy came in the form of Discovery Change Sessions, a series of half-day conversations led by the FEMA Administrator to gain input and recommendations from FEMA employees in every component and every Region across the agency. These sessions focused on three topics: Reducing Complexity and Simplifying Recovery, Improving Internal Processes, and Buying Down Risk With Preparedness and Mitigation.

**One lesson we learned from the catastrophic 2017 hurricane season is that no one department or agency can undertake this effort alone.**

**“2017 has taught us that nothing is more important than having trained people within the whole community ready to execute our collective mission.”**

**- Administrator Long**

We asked participants to provide insights into the following questions:

1. What are our current challenges?
2. Where do we need to be in five years?
3. How do we get there as an agency?

To engage our external partners, we also held three webinars with 216 stakeholders including SLTT officials, as well as representatives of multiple non-governmental organizations and private sector partners.

FEMA also used IdeaScale, an online idea management platform, to collect recommendations and ideas from FEMA staff and community members across the three topics. IdeaScale enabled both FEMA employees as well as external stakeholders to offer ideas and to comment on the ideas of others. IdeaScale received 187 posts, 387 comments, and 1,604 votes that, collectively, generated 249 unique recommendations.

Through all of these engagements, we logged 2,378 interactions (ideas, comments, questions, and votes) and gathered 450 distinct ideas. These ideas were categorized, grouped, and presented to the Administrator and his senior leadership team. They were then sorted and distilled into the three Strategic Goals and twelve Strategic Objectives contained in this Strategic Plan.

#### Strategic Foresight

In addition to improving Agency operations and capabilities in the short term, FEMA looks toward the future of emergency management. Strategic Foresight is an ongoing FEMA initiative to understand the future operating environment of emergency management. Key strategic drivers and trends identified through this initiative helped to influence the long-term vision articulated in FEMA's Strategic Plan. Several of these key influencing themes include:

*Rising Disaster Costs* – Disaster costs are expected to continue to increase due to rising natural hazard risk, decaying critical infrastructure, and economic pressures that limit investments in risk resilience. As good stewards of taxpayer dollars, FEMA must ensure that our programs are fiscally sound. Additionally, we will consider new pathways to long-term disaster risk reduction, including increased investments in pre-disaster mitigation.

*New Technology* – The ability to leverage technological innovations opens up revolutionary possibilities for emergency management. As the private sector leaps ahead and further raises public expectations, FEMA will carefully analyze innovations that could increase efficiency and improve the user experience for our partners and disaster survivors. Leveraging new technologies promises new opportunities to simplify FEMA's processes and make our programs more accessible and friendly to the populations that we serve.

*Diversity and Inclusion* – The U.S. population is growing older and more diverse in terms of culture, language, and perspective. This places pressure on authorities to incorporate specialized needs, expectations, and methods of communications into their plans to maintain equitable access to services. The changing demographics of the Nation also affect the makeup of FEMA's workforce. As an agency, diversity and inclusion is a key component in our

ability to serve all people. We must continue to employ and retain diverse staff and coordinate with the whole community of emergency managers to ensure that the needs of the entire population we serve are considered.

*Emerging Threats* – The spectrum of viable threats is expanding, with cybersecurity joining nation-state threats and terrorism as a widespread public concern. The National Security Strategy requires that the Nation improve its ability to assess the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risks to Americans. As an agency, FEMA will lead the Nation to build a culture of preparedness that includes improving risk management, strengthening capabilities, dynamic learning, and information sharing.

**An understanding of the impacts of these strategic drivers and trends, and how they apply to the Agency going forward, ensures that FEMA and the whole community are prepared to face a wide variety of challenges.**

**An understanding of the impacts of these strategic drivers and trends, and how they apply to the Agency going forward, ensures that FEMA and the whole community are prepared to face a variety of challenges.**

### III. STRATEGIC GOALS

To support the Agency's mission of helping people before, during, and after disasters, the FEMA 2018-2022 Strategic Plan outlines three Strategic Goals. These three Strategic Goals will guide the Agency's planning and implementation efforts for the next five years, working to build a more prepared and resilient Nation. These three Goals are supported by twelve Strategic Objectives.



**FEMA Mission: Helping people before, during, and after disasters.**



**FEMA Vision:**  
**A prepared and resilient Nation.**







FEMA

# STRATEGIC GOAL 1: BUILD A CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS

Disaster resiliency is the backbone of emergency management and the foundation for the FEMA mission. The most successful way to achieve disaster resiliency is to create a culture of preparedness across America. A culture of preparedness is a national effort to be ready for the worst disasters – at the Federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, community, family, and individual levels.



Children answer tsunami trivia questions to increase their hazard knowledge at the Salmon Jam community festival. The event included a Race the Wave event to teach children community resilience in partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Alaska Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management, Cordova Emergency Management, Cordova City Planning and the Cordova Fire Department. Source: John O'Sullivan

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- 1.1 Incentivize Investments that Reduce Risk, Including Pre-disaster Mitigation, and Reduce Disaster Costs at All Levels**
- 1.2 Close the Insurance Gap**
- 1.3 Help People Prepare for Disasters**
- 1.4 Better Learn from Past Disasters, Improve Continuously, and Innovate**





*Kirstjen Nielsen, Secretary of Homeland Security, addresses staff in charge of response and recovery efforts at the new Joint Field Office (JFO) in Puerto Rico. Source: Eliezer Hernández*



### Objective 1.1 Incentivize Investments that Reduce Risk, Including Pre-Disaster Mitigation, and Reduce Disaster Costs at All Levels

For our Nation to protect life and property and pull back the increasing cost of disasters, we must bring resilient mitigation investments forward. Buying down the risk prior to a disaster pays off – either by lowering the cost of the disaster or eliminating the need for a presidentially-declared disaster altogether because of the lessened impact. **FEMA plays a critical role in enabling and incentivizing investments that reduce risk and increase pre-disaster mitigation.**

As the number of people that move to coastal areas increases, and natural and manmade hazards become increasingly complex and difficult to predict, the need for forward leaning action is greater than ever before. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reports that from 1970 – 2010, shoreline counties increased in population by 40 percent, putting 39 percent of the American population in coastal areas. NOAA projects that an additional eight percent of Americans will live in coastal areas by 2020. Simultaneously, the average number of major disaster declarations has also steadily increased, rising from an average of 25 per year in the 1980s to nearly 90 per year since 2010.

Although the Nation must do more to assess and quantify these increasing risks, **we do know that pre-disaster mitigation works.** In 2018, an independent study by the National Institute of Building Sciences, co-funded by FEMA, found that **for every \$1 that the Federal Government invests in mitigation saves taxpayers an average of \$6 in future spending.** This return on investment justifies new opportunities for FEMA and our partners to reduce future disaster costs and accelerate recovery by investing now, before a disaster occurs. FEMA's Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration has adopted the findings of this study, and seeks to increase pre-disaster mitigation investments. Even as we strive to bring a greater share of Federal dollars to bear on pre-disaster risks, we will also educate and incentivize our partners to increase their investments in pre-disaster mitigation.

However, additional financial resources is only a start. To make informed investment decisions, everyone must have access to current and accurate risk information. FEMA will improve our ability to assess and quantify risk

**“Our department will work to improve the administration of pre-disaster grant programs, help our state and local partners continue to increase their capacity, and appropriately incentivize investments in preparedness for these partners.”**

**- Secretary Nielsen**



*Hurricane Irma compromised about 12 miles of city owned seawalls in Punta Gorda, Florida. Two workers address the city's seawalls following the 2017 Hurricane Season. Source: Robert Kaufmann*

**Every \$1 that the Federal Government invests in mitigation saves taxpayers an average of \$6 in future spending.**

from multiple hazards, expand our commitment to risk mapping, identify new partnerships that will help us understand risks and the value of mitigation investments, and develop a new strategy that clearly presents risk information to all members of the public.

The entire Nation must work as a team to increase pre-disaster mitigation in communities. FEMA will continue to work directly with SLTT and non-governmental partners to advocate for the adoption and enforcement of modern building and property codes. **Disaster resilience starts with building codes**, because they enhance public safety and property protection. Furthermore, FEMA will encourage robust code enforcement, providing education and training when needed to help convey the value of standardized, up-to-date building codes.

For investments to be attractive, the cost and options of investments must fit the unique needs of individuals and communities. FEMA will work with Congress to develop flexible and holistic approaches for more Federal funds to be spent on risk reduction and pre-disaster mitigation. FEMA will also work with private and public stakeholders across the country to construct and develop strategies within state and local jurisdictions that encourage pre-disaster mitigation and investment, such as resilience bonds.

Finally, FEMA, through the Mitigation Framework Leadership Group, is developing a National Mitigation Investment Strategy that encourages coordinated pre- and post-disaster mitigation investment toward the outcome of reducing future disaster risk. FEMA will continue to leverage these partnerships and our own disaster assistance programs to drive mitigation investments.

#### Objective 1.1 Performance Measure

*Increase the Nation's investment in mitigation.*



## Objective 1.2 Close the Insurance Gap

Building a culture of preparedness starts with individuals, communities, and businesses managing risks, in many cases through proper insurance coverage. FEMA's role is to help people understand their risk and the available options to best manage those risks. Insurance is an effective tool to transfer risks away from disaster survivors and enable rapid recovery. However, a 2015 study by the Swiss Re Institute shows that annual expected uninsured losses from natural disasters total more than \$30 billion.

**Experience has shown repeatedly that individuals, communities, and businesses that manage risk through insurance recover faster and more fully after a disaster.** If an individual does not have the value of their home and/or belongings in their savings, insurance will help them fill that gap when a disaster strikes. While the Disaster Relief Fund supports survivors in the immediate aftermath of a presidentially-declared disaster, this Federal support only serves as a temporary safety net for immediate needs and does not provide for complete financial recovery. Financial preparedness, including having an insurance policy on personal and public properties, is critical to helping rebuild a home, replace belongings, and restore order to a family and community. Further, resolving concerns about the affordability of Federal flood insurance requires a whole community solution, including Congressional action, to be able to close the insurance gap. Insurance not only benefits those directly affected by a disaster, it also reduces the need for Federal disaster assistance and lowers costs for American taxpayers.

FEMA has a key role in promoting all-hazard insurance. This work includes helping individuals and businesses understand the amount of coverage needed to be adequately insured and make themselves financially prepared, which ultimately contributes to the Nation's preparedness. Similarly, that same financial preparedness discipline requires communities to understand and appreciate the risks to public buildings and facilities and to secure insurance to cover the cost of replacement.

Beyond promoting whole community preparedness through appropriate insurance, FEMA provides flood hazard insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The NFIP is the primary source of flood insurance in the United States for property owners and tenants. The United States needs to get back to basics and understand that almost any property could flood, and almost every property should carry flood insurance.

**FEMA is focused on expanding the number of properties covered by flood insurance.** FEMA wants Americans to protect their property from flood risk and will work closely with the insurance industry, realtors, mortgage lenders, community leaders, and Congress to drive insurance purchases. FEMA supports the advancement of flood coverage regardless of the provider – whether that is through a private insurance or an NFIP policy.

To encourage participation in the program, FEMA must transform the NFIP into a simpler, customer-focused insurance program that policyholders value and trust. This will empower individuals, communities, and businesses to more effectively prepare for and recover from floods. Accurate risk communication

**The need for forward leaning and proactive action is more prevalent now than ever before.**

**40%** *increase in U.S. shoreline populations from 1970 - 2010.*

**39%** *of U.S. population live in coastal areas.*

**8%** *additional U.S. shoreline population increase from 2016 - 2020.*

Source: NOAA



2018-2022

**Strategic Plan**

Helping People. Together.





*FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance (DSA) team members canvass neighborhoods to ensure that residents are aware of FEMA assistance for damage from Hurricane Irma. Source: Liz Roll*

**“Responding to and recovering from any disaster is a whole community effort that relies on the strength of Federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, as well as non-governmental entities and individuals, in addition to FEMA.”**

**- Administrator Long**

is also vital to building public understanding of and support for a culture of preparedness. FEMA will provide products that clearly and accurately communicate flood risk to property owners and tenants.

**To be successful in closing the Nation’s insurance gap, FEMA must be a catalyst** for increasing the public’s knowledge of risk and encouraging adequate insurance coverage so that individuals, communities, and businesses can reduce their losses from all hazards.

#### Objective 1.2 Performance Measure

*Expand the number of properties covered by flood insurance.*



#### Objective 1.3 Help People Prepare for Disasters

While FEMA has made significant progress working with faith and community partners to improve preparedness and mitigation, outcomes from the 2017 disaster season demonstrate that the Nation is still far from realizing individual and collective resilience. Developing solutions, campaigns, and educational opportunities to help more than 320 million unique individuals from more than 89,000 diverse local communities that make up the Nation prepare for disasters starts with including those individuals in the discussion.

**FEMA must learn from and work with a broad and inclusive base of stakeholders** to understand the circumstances and challenges different groups of people face, particularly those who may have the hardest time in the aftermath of a disaster, such as the aging population and those with access and functional needs. By engaging these stakeholders, FEMA can develop and promote a suite of well-targeted solutions for individuals and communities to adopt.



Many people will experience a disaster or emergency at some point in life and find that they are in fact the true first responder. More severe disasters may render homes uninhabitable, destroy important documents and possessions, potentially lead to people leaving their communities permanently, or even lead to the loss of life. As the Federal agency charged with disaster preparedness, FEMA commands both significant resources and influence that can help improve how people prepare for disasters. However, FEMA directly helps with only a small number of incidents – those that receive a presidential declaration. It's time to rethink our National approach to preparedness and ensure that every segment of our diverse communities, down to each individual, is integrated into a broader culture of preparedness.

Numerous factors affect individual resilience during a disaster, including the strength of social ties and community networks, awareness of the risks, available resources and knowledge of what to do when a situation arises. Access to financial resources has proven to be a strong predictor of how well someone can cope in the aftermath of a disaster. However, around **40 percent of Americans do not have enough cash savings to cover a sudden unexpected expense.** Under such circumstances, relocating to a hotel for a few days, purchasing cleaning supplies, or replacing food and medications may be out of reach in the absence of external assistance, forcing individuals and families to take on debt loads that prove disastrous in their own right.

Connecting with a wide array of experts and stakeholders including academia, religious leaders, and representatives of all types of whole community partners is key to this effort. **FEMA will focus on identifying ways to weave preparedness into people's everyday lives, connecting with individuals at places they frequent, and incentivizing positive behavior change using tools like grants, training, and exercises.** Furthermore, the Agency will continue to encourage programs that train and empower responders. Accompanying policies and regulations further this goal, and FEMA will work with its Federal partners and Congress as appropriate.

Engaging with partners in the financial sector, the Department of Education, and local community-based organizations is critical to promoting financial wellness and giving people the information and motivation they need to make sound financial decisions and save for an uncertain future. However, social and economic factors undoubtedly will affect the ability of certain populations to fully prepare for disasters. For that reason, we must offer advice for scalable solutions that range from low- to no-cost options up to optimal levels of family preparedness. In doing so, FEMA aims to collaborate with public and private sector stakeholders to encourage increased personal financial preparedness across the Nation. The Agency will work with partners to identify financial insecurity within American communities – starting in highly disaster-prone areas – and deliver targeted messaging and training either directly or through trusted local leaders.

Moving forward, FEMA will coordinate closely with National partners and local leaders to help people understand their risks, learn the impacts of specific threats and hazards, adequately prepare for likely events, and use the tools available to help. FEMA will focus National initiatives including the Ready Campaign, PrepareAthon, Floodsmart, FEMA mobile app, and trainings to directly engage leaders of the whole community. This includes promoting community-building initiatives to improve the strength of local networks and

**“It’s time to unify effort across Federal agencies, through all levels of government, in cooperation with our non-governmental partners and down to individuals and communities.”**

**- Administrator Long**

2017 was an unprecedented year in the wake of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria, and the California Wildfires, with more than 25 million people affected by these major disasters - almost 8 percent of the United States population.

reinforce practical skills. These skills, like knowing CPR or how to shut off the gas lines in the home, can help individuals lead response efforts in their own communities, while ensuring more people are prepared to handle the real impacts of disasters in the future.

Even when Americans have an emergency plan, critical skills, strong community ties, and financial resources, this may not be enough to ensure preparedness. People must practice these skills so that when a stress-inducing event arises they can react in a timely manner. Therefore, **FEMA's preparedness messaging must encourage action beyond awareness, thereby laying the foundation of a culture of preparedness upon which individuals, families, and communities can build.** We will coordinate preparedness initiatives with other Federal agencies, states, tribes and territories, and whole community partners to efficiently apply Federal government leadership to reach the goal of individual and community resilience.

#### Objective 1.3 Performance Measures

*Increase the percentage of people with savings set aside for an emergency.*

*Deliver training to community-based and non-profit organizations to help them continue service delivery following disasters.*

*Increase the percentage of people who have taken preparedness actions.*



#### Objective 1.4 Better Learn from Past Disasters, Improve Continuously, and Innovate

Building a culture of preparedness requires continuous learning, improvement, and innovative ideas. As a whole community, we share responsibility to leverage the collective knowledge and diverse experiences of members of the Agency, Federal partners, first responders, and fellow emergency management professionals to form collaborative, creative, and inclusive solutions to disaster challenges, and to improve outcomes for survivors.

Emergency managers must acknowledge both successes and failures, as both provide opportunities to improve for the next disaster. This includes promoting transparency in sharing capability gaps and lessons from disasters and exercises, which will allow the community to prioritize investments and anticipate known challenges during disasters. The emergency management environment — from planning to exercises and assessment — must encourage risk-taking even if failure is possible, in order to stretch our capabilities and cultivate opportunities to improve. Emergency managers must build continuous improvement and innovation into day-to-day functions.

As part of this effort, the Agency will support Federal and SLTT emergency managers in building the capacity to self-evaluate, continuously improve, monitor the completion of improvement actions, and share insights, both within FEMA and throughout the emergency management community. To do this, we must improve the aggregation and sharing of successes and challenges. We can gain insights from observations in after-action reports, social science or analytical studies, and through feedback from stakeholders.

FEMA can improve our organizational commitment to growth by making all of these products more accessible, including improving how we share findings, analyze trends, and translate the key issues into easily relatable formats for a wider audience. Through these efforts, insights from past disasters will be readily available to emergency managers across the Nation.

To expand how we identify challenges and potential solutions, FEMA will encourage employees to promote innovation and submit ideas for improvements. FEMA will also expand leadership engagement with employees and create opportunities for teams to work across components. This will empower employees to conduct iterative process improvements as part of their standard business operations.

For changes that require investments, we will develop methods to prioritize improvements based on their projected impact on the Nation's preparedness. To that end, some of the primary ways FEMA supports the Nation is through the delivery of grant funding, technical assistance, training programs, and exercises. FEMA will evaluate the effectiveness of investments that reduce risk, increase preparedness, build resilience, and speed recovery.

Externally, the Agency will collaborate with our public and private sector partners to share insights on critical issues facing emergency management, promote best practices in change management, and discuss ways in which FEMA itself can improve. Meeting the emerging challenges of 21st century disasters and the changing nature of the risks we face requires innovation and engagement with the whole community, including academia, emergency management professional organizations, and the private sector, to harness the collective creativity to solve our toughest challenges.

#### Objective 1.4 Performance Measures

*Increase the number of FEMA employees who report feeling encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things.*

*Increase SLTT capabilities as reported in the annual Stakeholder Preparedness Review.*

**More than 70  
volunteer agencies,  
32 Federal agencies,  
and 48 states  
supported or  
responded to major  
disasters in 2017,  
helping with  
4.8 million calls,  
2.3 million home  
inspections, and  
5 million survivor  
registrations.**



A survivor with disabilities is helped by Karin Agritelly, FEMA Disability Integration Advisor, at a Disaster Recovery Center (DRC)  
Source: Steve Zumwalt





FEMA

## STRATEGIC GOAL 2: Ready the Nation for Catastrophic Disasters

Catastrophic disasters are difficult and life-changing events that disrupt our lives and hurt our communities, economically and socially. Readiness is critical for FEMA and its SLTT partners to ensure that the response and recovery missions are successful and more prepared than ever before.



*FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance (DSA) Team member Jorge Melendez-Alfaro puts food in the shopping bag of a Utuado resident at a Puerto Rico Health and Human Services clinic in Utuado. Source: Andrea Booher*

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- 2.1 Organize the “BEST” (Build, Empower, Sustain, and Train) Scalable and Capable Incident Workforce
- 2.2 Enhance Intergovernmental Coordination through FEMA Integration Teams
- 2.3 Posture FEMA and the Whole Community to Provide Life-Saving and Life-Sustaining Commodities, Equipment, and Personnel from all Available Sources
- 2.4 Improve Continuity and Resilient Communications Capabilities





## Objective 2.1 Organize the “BEST” (Build, Empower, Sustain, and Train) Scalable and Capable Incident Workforce

Just as the Nation’s greatest asset to confront disasters is the prepared population that we seek to promote in Strategic Goal 1, the people serving in the Nation’s incident workforce are the Government’s greatest assets. These personnel supplement the work of individuals, neighbors, and communities – our true first responders. **To be effective together, we must be able to quickly mobilize, scale, and integrate this workforce to meet the needs of impacted communities.** FEMA will strengthen the incident workforce through a “BEST” (Build, Empower, Sustain, and Train) model by focusing on:

- Building the capabilities and capacities to fulfill our responsibility to effectively respond to a catastrophic event;
- Empowering organizations and individuals to act decisively through leadership intent;
- Sustaining proficiency as emergency management professionals; and
- Training, educating, and exercising in an open-minded, creative manner when not actively engaged in disaster operations.

This “BEST” national incident workforce consists of a network of incident positions that allow every emergency manager and responder to contribute to incident operations regardless of their home agency, jurisdiction, or community. During the historic disasters of 2017, over 15,000 state and local personnel supported disaster operations through state-to-state mutual aid. Renewed focus on a standardized and qualified national incident workforce can build on this success, maximize the existing workforce, and better prepare the Nation for future catastrophic disasters.

Through collaborative implementation of the National Qualification System (NQS), FEMA will increase the Nation’s ability to meet evolving needs, fill critical gaps, and ensure that the whole community shares the responsibility for response and recovery. This institutionalization requires FEMA to further promote interoperability by establishing a common language for defining emergency management titles and enabling jurisdictions and organizations to plan for, request, and have confidence in the capabilities of personnel deployed from any location or agency. The FEMA Qualification System (FQS) must also align and be fully compatible with the NQS. This focus on deeper integration involves thinking beyond existing state-to-state mutual aid to building the ability of non-Federal resources to take on a greater amount of state and locally managed incidents nationwide and directly plug into FEMA operations when required.

To ensure interoperability when disaster strikes, all levels of government, private sector entities, and nongovernmental organizations, must have access to guidance, tools, and other programmatic support to help them develop processes for qualifying, certifying, and credentialing deployable emergency management personnel within the NQS. Additionally, FEMA will continue to conduct exercises at all levels to test whether capabilities will perform as

**“FEMA should develop a comprehensive, yet flexible and scalable structure for optimizing training, education, and development.”**

*- Comment from  
IdeaScale Campaign*



**“FEMA’s success begins with the readiness of its own incident workforce.”**

**- Administrator Long**

*FEMA team members speak to a grocery store owner about placing Creole language pamphlets in his business to help inform members of the Haitian American community of FEMA’s registration and application process. Source: Howard Greenblatt*

planned, whether plans are sufficient to meet incident response and recovery requirements, and to maintain a skilled, knowledgeable, efficient, and survivor-focused incident workforce.

**FEMA’s success begins with the readiness of its own incident workforce.**

FEMA employees must be prepared to deploy in support of disaster operations and be knowledgeable in multiple disciplines and programs. This involves determining the necessary size and nature of the incident workforce based on sound operating concepts and planning assumptions. Enhancing the FQS will help ensure our workforce is prepared to perform their disaster responsibilities. This includes guaranteeing that the FQS maximizes the ability of FEMA staff to use their skills and talents to deliver the best outcomes possible. It also requires the implementation of new hiring and training approaches that focus on developing diverse leaders with a broad scope of knowledge about FEMA’s programs to better support disaster survivors.

FEMA employees will receive core competency training and the opportunity to work and gain experience in various roles, allowing progression to supervisory and management positions across disaster cadres and offices. To achieve this goal, employees must receive training and practical experience through frequent disaster deployments and exercises. These steps encourage leadership development at every stage of an employee’s career. They also help develop FEMA employees into the next generation of field leaders and offer new career advancement opportunities for FEMA’s most capable employees.

FEMA also supplements our internal capabilities by calling on our Federal partners through the Surge Capacity Force when in need. The Surge Capacity Force affords FEMA the unique opportunity to infuse personnel from across DHS and other Federal agencies to augment our incident workforce cadres. During the challenging disasters of 2017, FEMA deployed 4,063 Surge Capacity Force volunteers – a record number of these deployments. These volunteers were invaluable to delivering FEMA’s mission and demonstrated the Federal Government’s cooperative and cohesive approach to supporting those we serve.

Providing new training for Surge Capacity Force volunteers in the future will further integrate the Federal Government’s resources into the nationwide incident workforce and offer additional capacity to support future disasters. When incidents do occur, everyone must work together to seamlessly integrate across Federal, SLTT, non-profit, and private sector lines. FEMA must build on our inherent capabilities and strengthen our partners to support the nationwide incident workforce to form a more complete, interoperable incident workforce capability.

#### Objective 2.1 Performance Measures

*Increase the number of fully qualified personnel in the National Qualification System.*

*Improve the readiness of FEMA’s incident workforce cadres.*

*Seamlessly integrate non-FEMA personnel into FEMA incident workforce positions to create a Unified National Incident Workforce.*



#### Objective 2.2 Enhance Intergovernmental Coordination through FEMA Integration Teams

The success of FEMA’s mission depends on the quality of the relationships we foster and our ability to understand and support the needs of emergency management partners and the communities we serve. By working alongside our partners through FEMA Integration Teams, we can assist them in navigating our programs and policies to deliver quicker, more tailored assistance directly where it is needed. **Increasing direct engagement strengthens our understanding of capabilities and gaps and bolsters the connections, cooperation, and communication necessary to improve the Nation’s overall readiness.** Increased engagement and presence will also allow us to understand the needs and readiness of our partners while improving the coordination of the assistance we provide.

The Agency demonstrates its commitment to whole community collaboration through regional operations led by FEMA’s ten regions. To build even closer relationships and strengthen readiness across the Nation, we must go even further. Through FEMA Integration Teams, we will provide SLTT organizations with enhanced assistance by integrating Federal staff with the emergency management offices of participating partners. The purpose of FEMA Integration Teams is to ensure that FEMA is planning, training, exercising, and executing together every day. This level of integration will provide us with an opportunity to learn from our partners and more effectively meet their needs. It will also help our partners overcome gaps as we identify tailored solutions outside our traditional structures and organizations.

The 2017 disaster season demonstrated that FEMA must help SLTT partners further develop their capabilities and resilience prior to an incident to ensure a more effective response and recovery. Addressing capabilities such as logistics, financial cost recovery, housing, and interoperable communications are just a few areas that stand to benefit from strategically co-locating FEMA staff with our SLTT partners.

**“The purpose of FEMA Integration Teams is to ensure that FEMA is planning, training, exercising, and executing together, every day.”**

**- Administrator Long**



**“The whole community must be, and is, engaged, involved, and coordinated.”**

**- Administrator Long**

FEMA is also committing to improving our engagement and creating new opportunities for closer coordination with tribal nations. Specifically, FEMA will use the FEMA Integration Teams to build upon our successful regional and tribal liaison programs and seek to identify new ways to expand partnerships and enhance tribal communications and support before, during, and after disasters.

Better integrating FEMA operations with emergency management partners will yield best practices and lessons-learned. It will also help build shared capabilities and capacity, resulting in more effective disaster response and recovery operations and a more prepared and resilient Nation.

#### Objective 2.2 Performance Measures

*Increase the number of partners participating in the FEMA Integration Teams program.*

*Decrease the amount and percent of time the Federal incident workforce supports federally-declared disasters.*



#### Objective 2.3 Posture FEMA and the Whole Community to Provide Life-saving and Life-sustaining Commodities, Equipment, and Personnel from All Available Sources

No one agency or organization is able to store enough equipment, supplies, and commodities, or marshal enough internal teams to quickly and fully meet all the needs of a catastrophic incident. These devastating incidents necessitate the collective assets and contributions of many supporting organizations aligned through a coordinated structure.

FEMA's role is to strategically stock the essential items needed to jumpstart a response, but effectively delivering resources in the face of a major disaster requires the continued development of robust partnerships and reliable



Team Rubicon works to help survivors in a neighborhood affected by Hurricane Harvey. Source: Steve Zumwalt





capabilities among all stakeholders. Consequently, FEMA must consider the appropriate balance of what it keeps on hand in warehouses, what it can quickly acquire through contracts, and what can be provided by volunteer organizations, other Federal agencies, SLTTs, and the private sector. Likewise, other layers of Government must also position themselves to meet the immediate supply requirements of a catastrophic disaster.

FEMA can support SLTTs in analyzing risks, anticipating needs, and coordinating plans among stakeholder groups but, ultimately, it is up to those organizations to ensure they have adequate access to supplies through an appropriate balance of maintained stock and pre-disaster contracts.

Obtaining what is needed in a disaster is only the first step. To be useful, the resource must also be physically delivered when and where it is needed. While FEMA has significantly increased its logistics capabilities since 2015, the 2017 hurricane season and wildfires demonstrated that additional people, processes, doctrine, and contracted services are needed to effectively move resources from point of origin to disaster survivors during large-scale incidents. **This includes a particular focus on the “last mile,” where a complex network of National, local, voluntary, and commercial organizations integrate their capabilities to put food, water, or other items into the hands of survivors.**

No plan can perfectly predict the resource needs stemming from a catastrophic incident. However, the analyses, relationships, organizational discipline, and logistics options that result from the planning process improve our collective ability to adapt to emerging logistics and supply chain challenges and deliver resources from across the Nation to impacted communities.

The most effective way to deliver the needed supplies to a disaster-impacted area, is by re-establishing pre-disaster supply chains. Building resilience within these systems and providing for their rapid restoration is key to responding to any catastrophic incident. FEMA will work with the private sector and Federal partners to build a shared understanding of supply chain vulnerabilities and the ways FEMA can work with its partners to rapidly restore these critical flows.

#### Objective 2.3 Performance Measures

*Achieve and maintain the logistics readiness rate for moving, staging, and delivering commodities and equipment for catastrophic disasters.*

*Integrate the FEMA Private Sector Supply Chain Management Plan into all Regional and National Plans.*

*Establish and maintain effective distribution management plans in all states and territories.*

**There is a focus on the “last mile,” where the complex partnership of national, local, voluntary, and commercial organizations integrate their capabilities to put food, water, or other items and capabilities into the hands of a survivor.**



FEMA staff departing a military helicopter following an aerial assessment of Manhattan. Source: K.C. Wilsey



## Objective 2.4 Improve Continuity and Resilient Communications Capabilities

The ability to communicate enables the ability to coordinate, and ultimately, the ability to meaningfully respond to disasters.

We live in a technologically connected world. Every day, individuals, organizations, and government institutions provide critical services and conduct essential functions that are wholly or highly dependent on the availability of and access to communications systems. There are inherent risks to relying heavily on these communications systems. We must understand their interdependencies and the potential cascading impacts that a failure could cause. FEMA must work with our partners to assess the mission impacts of losing the ability to reliably communicate and prioritize meeting all-hazards communications needs. Continuity planning efforts across levels of government must also address vulnerabilities to ensure uninterrupted communications capabilities in all response operations.

Resilient and redundant all-hazards communications capabilities are an indispensable element of emergency management and must be built into catastrophic preparedness efforts. **If we cannot effectively and reliably communicate with our partners, we cannot coordinate with them and we cannot direct Federal support to where it is needed most.** Communications enable operational success by supporting connectivity among key government leadership, internal elements, other organizations, and the public under all conditions. The inability to communicate hinders operational coordination, creating information gaps and increasing the likelihood of overutilization or misallocation of limited resources.

Additionally, we face an evolving threat environment that spans from low-tech dangers to more complex hybrid incidents such as nation-state threats and sophisticated cyber-attacks. This adds urgency to developing more resilient communication capabilities. Overreliance on networked systems and vulnerable critical infrastructure could broaden the impact of an incident, potentially allowing even a small weakness to cause cascading effects with far-reaching consequences.

To ensure effective communication and coordination capabilities, FEMA develops, maintains, and employs the capability to provide integrated tactical

voice, data, and video communications systems and services before, during, and after an incident. These deployable communications assets utilize state-of-the-art, resilient, and redundant communications equipment and architecture to organize a successful response in the most austere environments.

Planning coordination is also critical to ensure that FEMA is well-integrated with key government leaders and emergency managers during response and recovery efforts nationwide.

Communications resilience requires establishing and integrating robust continuity doctrine, plans, programs, and operations within and across government and non-government organizations at all levels. Beginning with threat assessments, plans must address stakeholder needs and gaps to ensure that information is shared and decisions are made quickly when lives and property are at stake.

FEMA is responsible for coordinating implementation, execution, and assessment of continuity – including continuity of operations, continuity of government, and enduring constitutional government. To meet this responsibility, FEMA must ensure our mission essential functions and those of other Federal and non-Federal organizations are executable in times of crisis. FEMA will continue to incorporate continuity principles and considerations into programs, planning, tests, training, and exercises, emphasizing continuity as a critical characteristic of preparedness and operations. These principles must be continuously reinforced to be effective. FEMA and its partners must also leverage industry innovation and best practices to provide the Nation with an accessible, modern, reliable, and resilient communications infrastructure during disasters and National emergencies.

**Federal and SLTT engagement is a critical factor in developing and maintaining effective continuity planning and response operations.** The continued integration of continuity subject matter expertise and coordination into response and recovery operations enables informed decision-making, improves responder safety, and increases mission resilience. FEMA will refine and resource Agency continuity, devolution, response, and recovery plans to ensure mission resiliency and promote continuity of operations and government when faced with a catastrophic disaster. Finally, FEMA and other Federal and SLTT partners will leverage industry innovation and best practices to provide our Nation with an accessible, modern, reliable, and resilient communications infrastructure during disasters and National emergencies.

#### Objective 2.4 Performance Measures

*Increase the percent of states and territories with comprehensive continuity plans and programs for state agencies and emergency operations centers that align with the Continuity Guidance Circular (CGC).*

*Increase the percent of critical communication nodes of operational coordination identified in the New Madrid Seismic Zone catastrophic plans.*

*Update all state and territory communications plans to include a section addressing continuity communication and resilience.*

**Federal and SLTT engagement is a critical factor in developing and maintaining effective continuity planning and response operations.**





# FEMA

## STRATEGIC GOAL 3: Reduce the Complexity of FEMA

FEMA must be a modern agency that can adapt to the public and the government's priorities, while creating and using innovative solutions for the emergency management mission. A simplified FEMA streamlines survivor experiences, simplifies processes and policies for disaster staff, and improves stewardship of Federal taxpayer dollars.



*Survivor shares appreciation with FEMA Individual Assistance staff after receiving the keys to her new temporary home.  
Source: Eduardo Martínez*

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

**3.1 Streamline the Disaster Survivor and Grantee Experience**

**3.2 Mature the National Disaster Recovery Framework**

**3.3 Develop Innovative Systems and Business Processes that Enable FEMA's Employees to Rapidly and Effectively Deliver the Agency's Mission**

**3.4 Strengthen Grants Management, Increase Transparency, and Improve Data Analytics**



A FEMA staff member speaks at the Regional Interagency Coordination Recovery Meeting at the Joint Field Office (JFO) in Austin.

Source: Christopher Mardorf



### Objective 3.1 Streamline the Disaster Survivor and Grantee Experience

Providing assistance to disaster survivors and impacted communities following a disaster is at the core of FEMA's mission. Whether it is supporting the sheltering operations of our SLTT partners, providing assistance for temporary housing, or supporting community recovery through grants for infrastructure restoration and increasing community resilience, FEMA helps survivors and communities when they need it most, allowing them to start on the road to recovery.

For those impacted, the aftermath of a disaster is a challenging time and it can be difficult to meet essential immediate needs while beginning the longer process of recovery. Survivors access disaster assistance through a range of programs administered by government and non-government entities. This can make identifying the available opportunities and selecting the best options for a survivor's or community's specific circumstances confusing and time-consuming.

Navigating complex Federal programs is an unnecessary added burden in times of disaster. **FEMA must streamline and integrate existing disaster assistance programs and processes, creating innovative and efficient solutions to provide the most effective survivor support.** This starts with a review of the available forms of assistance and how survivors access the various programs. Furthermore, understanding barriers that limit or prevent access to programs, especially for vulnerable populations, remains essential to our mission. FEMA also needs to reduce the number of duplicative interactions that survivors and communities experience when accessing services. While all disaster assistance must have controls necessary to protect taxpayer investments, documentation and eligibility requirements must also account for the challenging circumstances that disaster survivors face.

One of the critical ways that FEMA assists disaster survivors is by coordinating the damage assessment process and informing how partners use those assessments to determine eligibility across the full spectrum of disaster programs. Current housing inspection processes are slow and rely on outdated,

**FEMA must streamline and integrate existing disaster assistance programs and processes, creating innovative solutions to provide the most effective survivor support.**

## Impacted SLTT governments must have greater ability to drive their own recovery.

resource-intensive methods. In many cases, survivors must also undergo multiple inspections. FEMA must re-design the way the Federal government assesses disaster impacts to reduce the number of required inspections and deliver the needed assistance faster.

For survivors whose homes are damaged to the point of being uninhabitable, post-disaster housing is an important element of recovery. SLTT governments must be empowered to develop housing solutions that work for their citizens and complement the overall housing market in the area. To do that, FEMA must work with SLTT governments to develop flexible housing options targeted to the community need.

**Impacted SLTT governments must also have greater ability to drive their own recovery.** Communities can adapt and design approaches specific for their recovery needs when they have greater control over the recovery process. FEMA must do more to incentivize and enhance state and local incident management, and provide partners with tools to identify and track the recovery process. This requires clear and understandable grant eligibility criteria, along with greater certainty and flexibility in the use of funds. Recovery grant management systems must also be user-friendly, making it easy to track grant status and upload documentation.

### Objective 3.1 Performance Measures

*Decrease the number of Federal in-person inspections.*

*Raise applicant satisfaction with simplicity of the Individuals and Households Program and the Public Assistance Process.*

*Increase the timeliness of financial assistance awards of the Individuals and Households Program and Public Assistance Program.*

*Improve the accuracy of financial assistance of the Individuals and Households Program and Public Assistance Program.*



### Objective 3.2 Mature the National Disaster Recovery Framework

The National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF) is one of the five National Planning Frameworks. It provides the coordinating structure for collaborating among stakeholders to help communities rebuild stronger, reduce future risk, and decrease disaster costs. The NDRF also defines leadership roles and responsibilities, including that of the Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator. The Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator organizes the Federal Government's recovery assistance from multiple departments and agencies into an integrated, community-focused support system adapted to the unique circumstances of each community and disaster.

There is growing investment in building and sustaining recovery capabilities across all levels of government. However, resources remain constrained,



particularly for pre-disaster recovery planning, hazard mitigation, and preparedness activities. Additionally, the NDRF remains a relatively new concept. Some Federal, SLTT partners, and non-governmental organizations and private sector partners have limited exposure to and understanding of how the NDRF can be used to greatest effect.

To take full advantage of the NDRF, SLTTs should incorporate its principles into their preparedness efforts and pre-disaster planning activities to ensure recovery partners are positioned to support impacted communities following an incident of any scale. Not all states have adopted pre-disaster recovery plans that align with the NDRF, demonstrating a need for greater awareness of the value of pre-disaster recovery planning. Improved education and outreach regarding the value of pre-disaster planning for recovery management, cost recovery, recovery coordination, hazard mitigation, and unique Federal and non-Federal partner capabilities will increase SLTT appreciation of the NDRF's benefits.

**Outreach presents an opportunity to learn from stakeholders with NDRF experience, better understand past challenges, and make improvements to how the NDRF is implemented moving forward.** Both Federal and SLTT partners can improve partnerships with the private sector and non-governmental organizations to better integrate their local networks, knowledge, and resources into recovery planning and post-disaster support through the NDRF.

Federal capability to support short and especially long-term recovery varies across departments and agencies, and Federal capability gaps can cause fragmented assistance following incidents. Federal agencies with NDRF leadership and support roles must adequately plan and prepare for recovery responsibilities before a disaster. SLTT, non-governmental organizations, and private partners can benefit from interacting with regional recovery partners before disasters arrive. This requires a renewed commitment from agencies and cooperation across the Federal Government to manage expectations and integrate efforts. Individual programs operating in isolation can fracture the overall recovery effort rather than creating unified solutions that align the best recovery and resilience resources available to offer seamless solutions to communities to build back stronger.

**Outreach presents an opportunity to learn from stakeholders with NDRF experience, better understand past challenges, and make improvements to how the NDRF is implemented moving forward.**



*The effects of a tornado on a residential property in Madisonville, Louisiana. Property damage presents a significant challenge for survivors of catastrophic disasters. Source: Sharon Karr*



A FEMA-State Disaster Recovery Center is open for business in Texas.  
Source: Colt Hagmaier

Further, roles and responsibilities identified in the NDRF need to be clarified in practice. This includes maturing our understanding of the distinct roles of the Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator, the Federal Coordinating Officer, and SLTT leadership, including Long-Term Recovery Managers. It is critical for leadership responsibilities and authorities to be clearly defined during active response and recovery operations and when multiple Federal agencies are involved. Clarity helps ensure integrated operations and coordination of Federal partner resources to support community recovery. It also enhances understanding of disaster complexities, community impacts, and opportunities for collaborative problem solving.

### Objective 3.2 Performance Measures

*Improve the recovery capability of states and territories with pre-designated State Disaster Recovery Coordinators and plans based upon the National Disaster Recovery Framework principles.*

*Strengthen Federal department and agency recovery capability.*



### Objective 3.3 Develop Innovative Systems and Business Processes that Enable FEMA's Employees to Rapidly and Effectively Deliver the Agency's Mission

Emergency management is a shared responsibility across the whole community and the Nation depends on FEMA's capabilities and readiness on its worst days. **Whether it is a hurricane or a no-notice event from an emerging threat, FEMA must be ready when America calls.** To deliver our no-fail mission in an ever-changing environment, FEMA must continuously improve our business processes and systems. FEMA must meet the needs of today and prepare for the challenges of tomorrow.

Many FEMA programs and systems have become more complex over time as FEMA has matured and new policies and programs have emerged. Technological change has also contributed to this complexity. New processes and systems are layered over old ones, making it more difficult and time-consuming for survivors and employees to navigate our programs.

**Whether it is a hurricane or a no-notice event from an emerging threat, FEMA must be ready when America calls.**

FEMA employees and partners have identified complexity in operations as a barrier to success. While this challenge is not unique to FEMA, it requires our attention and effort. The Agency must evaluate the way we operate and simplify our business processes and systems, taking a strategic approach to identify short and long-term opportunities to improve the capabilities of our people, efficiency of our processes, security of our systems, and utility of our technology.

**FEMA's employees are the most important drivers of our performance and our most effective agents of innovation and change.** FEMA is the public face of a Federal response during a disaster, and employees in the field know what process improvements are critical to meeting survivor needs better than anyone.

The Agency must empower employees and increase their capability to identify and implement process improvements that enhance our mission delivery. This includes building organic process improvement capabilities among our staff, recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce, providing communication channels for employees to propose innovative ideas to leaders, and establishing a culture that reinforces that employees at all levels are expected to lead, collaborate, and innovate.

Once good ideas emerge, we must also enhance the standardization of FEMA's processes across programs to increase operational performance. Innovations and process improvements should be transparent and accessible. Strong governance will also help capture the level of effort and resources required to standardize and maintain new processes, so the Agency is a good steward of taxpayer dollars.

Finally, FEMA continues to face unnecessary complexity with technology. The Agency has made strides in consolidating information technology (IT) systems and remains focused on streamlining our grants, insurance, and financial IT systems. However, unless we also adopt robust data management standards and technology that enables enterprise-wide analytics, we will not be able to provide the level of service that survivors need during and after disasters or the level of transparency our stakeholders require. We will continue to coordinate with the DHS Office of the Chief Information Officer and other DHS components to ensure that we are aligned on our efforts to facilitate consistent data management and information sharing within the Department. We must also double-down on our efforts to decommission outdated or underutilized legacy IT systems to increase our cybersecurity and reserve resources for needed technology modernization efforts.

### Objective 3.3 Performance Measures

*Decrease the number of repeat audit findings related to efficient and effective program delivery.*

*Increase scores on the Global Satisfaction, Employee Engagement, and Diversity Indices of the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey.*

*Achieve and maintain Federal Information Security Modernization Act metrics to enhance cybersecurity across the Agency.*

**“At the end of the day we have a lot of IT systems, but we want to try and see those streamlined to make our lives easier.”**

**- Comment from  
Discovery Change Sessions**



## FEMA grants awarded since FY 2017:

**\$3.0B+** in preparedness and other non-disaster grants to support SLTT governments to prevent, protect against, mitigate, or respond to threats or incidents of terrorism and other events

**\$4.2B+** in Individual Assistance, including the individuals and households program, disaster case management, disaster legal services, disaster unemployment assistance and crisis counseling program

**\$5.5B+** in Public Assistance, including funding to clear debris and rebuild roads, schools, libraries, and other public facilities

**\$650M+** in Hazard Mitigation grants to implement long-term hazard mitigation measures following a presidential Major Disaster Declaration

*\*FEMA Grants awarded between October 1, 2016 and February 28, 2018*



### Objective 3.4 Strengthen Grants Management, Increase Transparency, and Improve Data Analytics

In support of FEMA's mission, the Agency delivers numerous types of financial assistance programs through annually recurring and incident-specific grant agreements with SLTT partners. FEMA administers more than 40 financial assistance programs, issuing thousands of grant awards each year. These grants are critical to supporting our partners, first responders, survivors, and communities. Between fiscal years 2008 and 2017, FEMA provided nearly \$100 billion in financial assistance. FEMA and our partners share a critical responsibility to serve as good stewards of this substantial taxpayer investment.

As programs have grown over time, the process of applying for, receiving, and administering these grants has become increasingly complex. FEMA must simplify the application process for grant recipients, enhance the ability to monitor funds, and ensure stewardship of public dollars. This requires increased consistency and integration across FEMA, improved support to grantees, reliable data about grant performance, modern information systems, and robust data analytics capabilities to strengthen internal oversight and increase public transparency and accountability.

Establishing consistent and standardized business practices throughout the grant life-cycle demonstrates the Agency's commitment to reducing the complexity and increasing the effectiveness of grants management. FEMA must continue our ongoing efforts to implement consistent policy, internal controls, accountability, and financial management of recipients — including sub-recipients — to improve oversight and promote integration across the Agency's multiple grant programs. In parallel, FEMA must also continue our multi-year effort to establish a single, holistic grants management information technology platform through the Grants Management Modernization initiative and the accompanying Financial System Modernization initiative to modernize our outdated legacy financial system.

FEMA requires consistent, reliable, and high-quality data analytics to inform decision-making and risk management before, during, and after disasters. Consistent data management and improved infrastructure can reduce delays and decrease costs in mission delivery. FEMA's continued investment in the Enterprise Data & Analytics Modernization Initiative (EDAMI) positions the Agency to provide consistent data management and an integrated, modern, and cost-effective enterprise data analysis and reporting environment.

**Improving FEMA's analytics capabilities will enable the use of data-driven approaches to identify and address Agency-wide inefficiencies and risks** in our grants program delivery and monitor trends in audit findings, informing the technical assistance and training we provide to recipients and sub-recipients. This will allow Federal dollars to have the most impact possible by reducing adverse audit findings and eliminating deobligation and recoupment of funding. Enhanced data management and analytics capabilities will also enable greater transparency about where, when, and why grant dollars are being spent, allowing FEMA to cultivate greater accountability, consistency, and trust — not only within the Agency, but also throughout the emergency

management community and with the general public.

FEMA's commitment to reduce complexity, uniformly administer grants, and ensure the proper controls for its grant programs will improve the Agency's ability to support survivors and communities. By increasing transparency and prioritizing analytics, FEMA is taking the steps necessary to keep pace with a rapidly changing world, streamline its processes to stay ahead of emergencies, and deliver swift, effective assistance in times of greatest need.

#### Objective 3.4 Performance Measures

*Reduce the percentage of questioned costs by the Office of Inspector General.*

*Remediate repeat grants-related financial statement audit findings and recommendations.*

*Reduce the number of grants overdue for closeout.*

*Make datasets on the amount and purpose of all funds provided to SLTT and other Federal agencies publicly available and machine readable.*

**Improving FEMA's analytics capabilities will enable the use of data-driven approaches to identify and address Agency-wide inefficiencies and risk.**



FEMA Corps Eagle 8 team members speak with a survivor in a rural part of Robstown, Texas after Hurricane Harvey.  
Source: Christopher Mardorf

# MEASURING AND ACHIEVING RESULTS

The 2018-2022 FEMA Strategic Plan contains Strategic Goals and Objectives designed to drive the Agency's actions over the next five years. To ensure that appropriate and meaningful action is taken to achieve these priorities, FEMA has identified performance measures for the Agency to spur progress across the entire enterprise and provide insight into how successful we are in achieving results.

**Appendix A** includes specifics as to the performance measures, baselines, and targets that will be pursued.

To ensure that these actions are successful, each Strategic Goal and Objective will be led and championed by accountable executives. These Senior Executives will work directly with their cross-organizational teams to implement the strategies necessary to advance the Strategic Plan. Additionally, FEMA will use established internal governance structures to drive progress in implementing the Strategic Plan.

As the emergency management environment shifts and changes, FEMA must remain flexible and adaptable with how it defines success. This includes soliciting and accepting stakeholder feedback on a regular basis. Consequently, each Strategic Objective describes what outcomes will be measured to assess progress. The Agency will consider potential challenges and risks to the Agency's strategy and success against the performance measures throughout the life of the 2018-2022 FEMA Strategic Plan. Ongoing refinement of FEMA's strategic direction over the next five years will ensure that FEMA is well positioned and adaptable to the future of emergency management and the risks we face as a Nation.



*FEMA staff check final paperwork and title documents prior to the turnover of a FEMA Manufactured Housing Unit (MHU) for an Oglala Sioux Tribe member on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Source: Christopher Mardorf*



# CONCLUSION

This Strategic Plan is not only FEMA's path forward as an Agency, but also describes a future state to which the entire emergency management community may collectively aspire. When achieved, it will change the way FEMA does business and improve the support it provides before, during, and after disasters. It will affect outcomes and it will change lives. With this Strategic Plan, we have set big goals and defined lofty challenges, but they are all achievable when the emergency management community works together.

That is what this Strategic Plan is about – *Helping people. Together.* Significant efforts in strategy, planning, and resource allocation have already begun to advance the Strategic Goals of this plan. Countless FEMA employees have already begun work on the Strategic Objectives, and thousands more are about to take action to implement this five-year strategy.

FEMA represents the very best of the United States Government's public service – providing front-line support to the American people and assisting survivors in their times of greatest need. This Strategic Plan presents an outstanding opportunity for our Agency to improve by simplifying our processes, strengthening our workforce, and building new and stronger partnerships – working together to *help people before, during, and after disasters to create a more prepared and resilient Nation.*



Administrator Long speaks at an Agency-wide Town Hall regarding the Strategic Plan and the future of FEMA.  
Source: Colt Hagmaier



FEMA