

# NEMA Committee Reports

**NEMA 2024 MID-YEAR FORUM**  
MARCH 17-21, 2024 WASHINGTON, DC

**NEMA Legal Counsel Committee  
March 17th, 2024  
Meeting Summary**

**Roundtable Discussion with Federal Emergency Management Agency Chief Counsel**

Adrian Sevier, Chief Counsel for FEMA, provided updates on legal decisions and recent policymaking that may alter how FEMA administers its programs. Sevier noted that while cases concerning deference typically focus on agencies like the EPA, FEMA's grant-making and disaster relief activities do occasionally result in litigation. As FEMA's scope has expanded, especially beyond the Stafford Act, there's increased scrutiny from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on rulemaking and policymaking processes. Recently, FEMA published a new interim final rule for its Individual Assistance (IA) program, which represents a significant regulatory change expanding Stafford Act authority. This rule, effective March 22, 2024, broadens assistance and flexibility for disaster survivors, reflecting FEMA's adaptation to changing needs while navigating legal constraints.

Sevier also highlighted FEMA's ongoing efforts in flood risk management, including the Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) executive order. The FFRMS aims to elevate infrastructure in floodplains, affecting various federal agencies' regulations, with implications for programs like FEMA's Public Assistance (PA). Additionally, FEMA is revamping its homeowner flood insurance forms, soliciting public comments to enhance coverage and align with evolving risks. These initiatives underscore FEMA's commitment to proactive risk mitigation and responsiveness to legislative mandates, ensuring resilience against natural disasters.

Moreover, Sevier addressed recent legislative developments and congressional inquiries into FEMA's expanding role beyond traditional disaster relief. Congressional concerns about mission creep, particularly regarding the Shelter and Services Program (SSP) program, highlight the tension between statutory mandates and operational realities. The ongoing legislative efforts, such as the Disaster Survivors Fairness Act and Disaster Management Costs Modernization Act, reflect the evolving landscape of emergency management and FEMA's adaptive capacity. Despite challenges, FEMA remains confident in its ability to fulfill its mission and provide essential support to diverse stakeholders.

**Utilizing the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Civil Rights Tool**

Rebekah Tosado from the DHS Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties outlined the agency's efforts to ensure compliance with federal civil rights authorities, emphasizing the importance of recipients' adherence to regulations. The DHS Civil Rights Tool facilitates compliance monitoring and reporting, aiming to streamline processes for recipients while enhancing accountability. Several resources have been made available online already. The forthcoming online portal for updates and resources demonstrates its commitment to facilitating compliance and fostering transparency. Addressing concerns about data sharing and consequences for noncompliance, Tosado underscored FEMA's collaborative approach to promote equitable access and mitigate risks across its programs. She also clarified that at this time, subrecipients are not necessarily expected to engage with the tool or with the same level of reporting, but recipients are expected to make overall compliance their responsibility.

**Working Through Grant Compliance**

Samantha Ladich and Anne Vitale highlighted challenges in grant compliance, particularly regarding contracts and reporting discrepancies. Despite FEMA's guidelines and training initiatives, local entities sometimes struggle to meet requirements, necessitating proactive measures to address issues, and desire more consistent communication from FEMA regional offices to understand how best to proceed. Unfortunately, FEMA regional offices do not always provide the same answers between different responding staff and do not always respond in timely ways. Vitale underscored the complexity of reporting protocols and the importance of clarifying communication channels to ensure seamless implementation.

**NEMA EMAC Committee  
March 18, 2024  
Meeting Summary**

EMAC Committee Chair Director Kevin Sweeney (MI) opened the meeting at 1:17 pm. Roll call was completed. There was a quorum with one proxy from Ohio.

EMAC Committee Chair Kevin Sweeney (MI) began the committee meeting with a history of EMAC thanking NEMA Executive Director Trina Sheets for her leadership and advocacy, FEMA for their on-going financial support to administer the Compact, and to the State Directors and members for supporting EMAC.

**The Role of Mutual Aid/EMAC in Cyber Response**

EMAC Vice Chair Director Bryan Fisher (AK) introduced the cyber and EMAC/mutual aid topic by noting conversations at the National Governor's Association Governor's Homeland Security Advisors Council meeting focused, in part, on the use of EMAC during cyber incidents. Very little time has been spent figuring out how EMAC can be leveraged for cyber response.

**John Ford: FEMA**

Mr. Ford briefed the committee on the following FEMA initiatives related to cyber:

- [Planning Considerations for Cyber Incidents](#): This guidance document supports emergency managers in understanding, preparing for, and executing their roles and responsibilities related to cyber incidents. The FEMA document was released November 2023
- Update on NIMS Resource Typing for cyber security. NIMS currently has 8 resource types related to cyber security. The FEMA National Integration Center (NIC) will be updating these soon.
- FEMA offers 40 tuition-free FEMA-certified training courses with another 19 in development. For more information visit [www.firstrespondertraining.gov](http://www.firstrespondertraining.gov)
- FEMA has a cyber attack hazard information sheet that provides guidance on how to prepare for a cyber incident. The information sheet is available to the public:  
<http://www.community.fema.gov/ProtectiveActions/s/article/Cyberattack>

**Jay Hallam: National Guard Bureau**

Mr. Hallam briefed on the capabilities and the mission-essential tasks of the Air and Army National Guard during cyber incidents. There are 66 National Guard Cyber Units from 42 states with approximately 2,800 personnel that are available for state, local, tribal, and territorial mission partner engagements in the National Guard Bureau State Partnership Program (SPP).

The National Guard also has approximately 540 personnel in the state cyber response Air National Guard network available to manage cyber incident response through State Active Duty, EMAC, and Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA).

Kim Ketterhagen, NEMA National Guard Liaison stressed the importance of establishing a relationship with the state National Guard and developing Mission Ready Packages for cyber incidents.

Director Angee Morgan (KS) reminded the EMAC Committee a Governor's declaration is needed to receive any resources through EMAC which may not happen during a cyber incident.

**Matt Franklin: New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services**

Director Franklin briefed on the background and development of New York's Cyber Incident Response Team (CIRT) which is available for deployment through EMAC.

Director Fisher stated more Mission Ready Packages for cyber security are needed in the Mutual Aid Support System and asked EMAC's membership to make cyber a priority. Director Fisher also committed

to Mr. Ford support from the EMAC membership to work on updates to the NIMS resource typing for cyber response resources.

### **Executive Task Force (ETF) Business Session**

#### **Update from the EMAC Executive Task Force**

EMAC Executive Task Force Chair, Denise Popish (CO), briefed that over 4,700 personnel have been deployed through EMAC since March 2022. This number includes events that are still open from previous years and new incidents including the Maui fires, flooding, severe weather, structural building collapse, tornadoes, and hurricanes.

Over the past year the ETF has completed the development of additional job aids and resources for the EMAC Membership to include:

- Updates to the EMAC Eligible Expenses Guide
- Development of an EMAC FAQ for Auditors, Finance and Budget Officers
- Updates to the EMAC Executive Task Force Chair and National Coordinating State Lead Standard Operations Guidelines to provide better guidance and to align with the EMAC Operations Manual
- Completion of the EMAC R-2 Intrastate Reimbursement Package Job Aid with Checklists, a job aid for developing the EMAC R-2 reimbursement package
- Development of the EMAC Coordinator Standard Operations Guidelines, a new document to guide the work of the EMAC Coordinator
- Coordination with NEMA to create an EMAC Coordinator resource page on the EMAC website

During the ETF meeting the strategic plan was updated and will be submitted to the EMAC Committee for review upon completion.

An update on the DocuSign integration into the EMAC Operations System was provided.

Ms. Popish took forward the unanimous nomination from the EMAC Executive Task Force to appoint Butch Wise (AZ) to serve as Chair Elect to the Executive Task Force.

Motion to accept the nomination of Butch Wise (AZ) to serve as Chair Elect to the EMAC ETF.

Moved: MT DISPOSITION: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Second: VA

Motion made by: Director Delila Bruno (MT)

#### **Adjournment**

Director Sweeney asked if there was a motion to adjourn.

Moved: VA DISPOSITION: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Second: AZ

The meeting was adjourned at 2:14 pm.

**NEMA Homeland Security Committee**  
**March 19, 2024**  
**Meeting Summary**

**Homeland Defense Policy Guidance**

Stephanie Koeshall, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense Integration and Defense Support of Civil Authorities discussed the Department of Defense's (DoD) Homeland Defense Policy Guidance (HDPG), which were the first substantive updates in a decade. The guidance aims to address threats to the homeland across all domains and emphasizes deterring hostile actors by raising costs, defending critical infrastructure, and enhancing resilience against various threats, including those posed by climate change and nuclear capabilities. Koeshall highlighted the evolving threat landscape, particularly acute threats from China and Russia, along with persistent terrorist threats from both remote nation-state and domestic actors who may or may not be affiliated with these nation-states. The discussion emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach involving various government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals to protect and recover from threats, with the DoD leading military protection efforts.

**Election Security: Threat Identification and Mitigation**

Lindsey Forson, Deputy Executive Director at the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS), addressed the evolving challenges in election security, organizing them into four main categories: cybersecurity, physical security, the information environment, and overall resilience. She emphasized the importance of election officials combating misinformation and disinformation while enhancing preparedness against physical threats to election personnel. Forson also highlighted the need for increased coordination and funding, particularly at the state level, to address the diverse risks faced during elections. She also provided updates and made it clear that many NASS members had contacted her about Department of Homeland Security grantmaking policies, including the minimum spend requirements and funding allocations for election security.

**Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Homeland Security and Preparedness Grants**

Pam Williams from the FEMA Grant Directorate provided insights into the agency's efforts to streamline grant processes and enhance transparency. She discussed initiatives to simplify grant programs, improve accessibility, and engage with stakeholders to address their needs effectively. Williams emphasized FEMA's commitment to incorporating feedback and modernizing grant systems to facilitate smoother operations. Additionally, she touched upon the allocation of funds for cyber resiliency and the coordination between FEMA and CISA to enhance cybersecurity measures, encouraging state, local, Tribal, and territorial (SLTT) entities to apply for and provide feedback on these grant programs to ensure funds will continue to be allocated.

**NEMA Legislative Committee  
March 19, 2024  
Meeting Summary**

**Congressional Priorities with Rep. Garret Graves (R-LA)**

Rep. Graves' remarks revolved around the imperative of proactive preparation and mitigation efforts in disaster response, drawing from experiences such as Hurricane Katrina. Representative Graves emphasized the need for better coordination among agencies and NEMA-supported efforts such as the universal disaster application. He also addressed concerns about the outdated model for determining appropriations requests and the importance of sustained mitigation funding as well as clearly demonstrating the return on investment. The bipartisan nature of disaster response was underscored, with a call for more transparent budgeting processes in Congress and within the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA.

**NEMA Legislative Update**

Speaking broadly to NEMA's advocacy efforts since the 2023 Annual Forum, the Chair noted anticipation for a productive year ahead, particularly regarding the bipartisan support garnered for the management costs bill in both the Senate and House, with efforts focused on overcoming scoring issues with the CBO to facilitate passage. Updates on wildfire priorities, as outlined in HR 7070, were discussed, including amendments made during the House Transportation and Infrastructure markup, with ongoing efforts to address concerns raised by NLIHC. The progress of universal application legislation, passed in the Senate and pending action in the House, was noted, alongside debates over proposed reforms. Budgetary concerns for FY24, including the need to maintain funding for EMPG and potential increases for EMAC, were highlighted, alongside the looming deficit in the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) exacerbated by compounding costs of COVID, necessitating supplemental funding.

**EMPG Position Paper as Approved by the Committee**

The committee's approval of an EMPG position paper to codify funding increases was acknowledged, despite disparities between the requested amount and what is included in the President's FY25 budget request, signaling ongoing advocacy efforts. The position paper was moved forward for review by all state directors for a vote at the final business meeting of the forum.

**Congressional Priorities with Rep. Rick Larsen (D-WA)**

Representative Rick Larsen (D-WA) emphasized the significance of local and state emergency management voices in advocating for disaster preparedness and mitigation measures. He also stressed the importance of looking at FEMA policy changes through the lens of safety and protection. He highlighted the need for stronger emphasis on mitigation efforts and urged for bipartisan support for measures like the Disaster Survivors Fairness Act. Larsen also discussed the importance of universal application processes to streamline recovery for disaster survivors, as well as engaging members of Congress through site visits to emergency operation centers (EOCs) to demonstrate the realities of disaster response and mitigation efforts. Overall, the meeting emphasized the bipartisan commitment to enhancing disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

**NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION  
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE  
POSITION PAPER**

**DATE:** March 21, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Securing a \$100 million increase in federal commitment to the  
Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG)

**DISCUSSION:**

The resources and capabilities built through EMPG serve as the foundation for officials setting out plans for the future of emergency management as communities continue responding to and recovering from more frequent and devastating disasters.

With a 50-50 matching requirement, the true investment in this program is more than twice the Federal expenditure (\$355 million in FY23). While the emergency management community remains thankful for recent increases, we must continue working to close the funding gap on this program. On average over the past decade, the President of the United States annually approves 85 (including those for COVID-19) federal major or emergency declarations through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through authorities in the Robert T. Stafford Act (PL 100—707). Concurrently, state and local emergency management programs manage an additional 34,545 incidents. EMPG allows these events to be managed without Federal expenditures.

The increasing frequency, severity, and complexity of disasters requires a greater level of engagement by emergency management agencies than at any previous point in time. Many provide support to a growing number of challenges not related to natural hazards such as cyber-attacks, school safety, homelessness, the opioid crisis, and humanitarian support for migrants. These types of events, and others, are placing tremendous strain on the current emergency management system.

For example, nearly 30 state emergency management agencies are currently involved in the border/migrant issue right now. In addition to the border states working the physical border, other, non-border states are dealing with migrant/asylum issues such as providing situational awareness, interagency coordination, resource deployment, mutual aid, shelters, mass feeding operations, public messaging, assisting locals, data collection and analysis, and relocation planning. As you can imagine, this creates an incredible drain on agencies already stretched thin.

Furthermore, we are more reliant on our nation and states' emergency preparedness given the pacing nation-state threat to our critical infrastructure. Congressional testimony by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), and other in the intelligence community outline the current and growing threat by China and other adversaries that negatively affects our critical infrastructure causing widespread impacts to our public. Our nation is no longer a sanctuary and the preparedness activities supported by the EMPG directly prepares our localities, states, and nation against these threats.

EMPG is the culmination of all levels of emergency management through every facet of government coordination. No emergency management responsibility goes untouched by this federal-state-local

partnership. Outside of the apparent disaster response aspect, EMPG supports communications systems, emergency operation centers, mutual aid agreements, and public outreach campaigns. Only when properly resourced, can emergency managers build the foundational structure to respond to, recover from, and rebuild stronger after an event.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The President should request, and Congress enact, a \$100 million increase in EMGP funding through FEMA's Federal Assistance appropriation.

Moved: MI  
Second: AZ

DISPOSITION: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'M' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that curves upwards at the end.

Authenticated: \_\_\_\_\_  
NEMA Secretary



**NEMA Diversity and Equity Committee**  
**March 20, 2024**  
**Meeting Summary**

After a welcome by the Committee Chair and Director of Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, Dawn Brantley, and the Committee Vice Chair and Cofounder of I-DIEM, Curtis Brown, the committee moved directly into the meeting agenda.

**Nevada Accessible and Functional Needs (AFN) Focus:** Sharon Luce, Nevada's Deputy Administrator of the Nevada Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security shared what the agency is doing for the communities they serve, with the limited resources they obtain. First, the agency design reflects more of those communities with the personnel on their team – out of 54 total employees; 30 are women and many of those women are in leadership positions. A position for AFN was added recently and has already created major impacts on how the division serves the community. Smaller staff also means more engagement with leadership for everyone to understand the mission as they work together to support each other. Through the lessons of recent events, the division realized how to better focus on their citizens. Rural communities have a higher risk of death and disabilities. At times the community is shy of an hour's drive from resources for emergencies. During vaccine campaigns during COVID, the division realized mobile units would be their game changers, as well as the adjustment of hours to help work schedules, i.e. casino workers do not maintain an average 9 am – 5 pm day job. Learning the nuances of their communities is reflected in successful measures: "At the end of the day, people need access to resources."

The AFN focus started with partnerships, focusing on behavioral health and public health. It also began by listening to the disabled community and having a commonsense approach. The disabled community is hesitant with registries; thus, the division uses the tools that are already in place at CDC reporting and FEMA. With those reports combined with the AFN coordinator conducting one-on-one discussions with the County representatives, the division maps zones that express percentages rather than numbers to include the needs of the area – it may simply be a large percentage of people who have a lack of transportation. This research helps the AFN coordinator to provide recommendations for the needs of the community. Finding duplicative tools truly provides more for the investment. For example, when you invest in a ramp for wheelchairs, you are also helping those who need strollers, who use roller bags, and/or medically can't handle stairs. Using closed caption helps with hearing impairments, but also helps with seeing words on screens (visual learners) or when people need to take notes. Partnerships created a council of stakeholders that provide technical assistance in training, planning efforts and plans, and exercises. AFN is incorporated in special event planning, support in exercises, and communication messaging. Nevada has embarked on a reputable program of value for their communities. Website: [https://dem.nv.gov/preparedness/Access\\_Functional\\_Needs/](https://dem.nv.gov/preparedness/Access_Functional_Needs/)

**Protect D.C.:** Clint Osborn, Director of the District of Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management alongside Whytley Jones, Protect D.C. Coordinator provided an in-depth account of the program. The Protect D.C. program takes a public health approach to help train people to recognize behavioral cues of violence and detour them from that path – without having to go directly to the police department. The stakeholders involved with emergency management in this program as experts are representatives of behavioral health, human services, law enforcement, legal expertise, and correctional services. The goal is to empower and enable communities to identify and report concerning behavior or communications by individuals who may pose a risk of violence or serious harm to the community. And that information must be communicated to the appropriate officials. Key actions taking place to achieve this goal are behavioral threat assessment training; communication campaigns with targeted ads for communities at risk; community awareness bulletins for stakeholders that go into detail about topics like crime trend analysis, emerging threats, training opportunities, sharing exemplary practices in threat prevention interaction, and grant opportunities. The program also provides Community Awareness Briefings. Recently, briefings have been successfully hosted with LGBTQ+ groups, charter schools, and faith-based organizations. The goal of these briefings is not only to provide services but also to provide the ability to go back with continuous check-ins while making sure stakeholder leadership and families are doing okay. Website: <https://protect.dc.gov/>

**Committee Strategic Planning:** The committee looks to create a three-year strategy that will divide actions into one-year blocks. This strategy will align with the NEMA Strategic Plan and the NEMA leadership outlooks.

**NEMA Resilience Committee**  
**March 20, 2024**  
**Meeting Summary**

**Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program Showcase; Managing Building Code Requirements**

To provide an update as well as share exemplary state practices of the BRIC program, Ryan Janda, Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Chief, Non-Disaster Grants Implementation Branch, began with the national statistics of mitigation research. Modern building codes provide a baseline to improve resilience as it has been researched and proven that for every dollar invested into mitigation, we save 11 dollars in response and recovery measures. The three major FEMA mitigation programs are designed to help with those investments. The hazard mitigation grant program (HMGP) allocated \$137M for individual and tribal programs. And expanded funding assistance so that 10% of the grant can be used immediately after a disaster. The Safeguarding Tomorrow helps to build loan adoption and enhances existing codes to a higher standard. BRIC has a funding challenge because the Disaster Relief Fund is not as plentiful as it used to be and at the current rate is funded through 2026. All programs have evolved to provide more technical assistance and training.

LTC Chris DeMaise, Homeland Security Branch Commander of the New Jersey State Police, shared that New Jersey is focused on building resilience through updated building codes established by state regulatory affairs. BRIC funding provided them the opportunity to partner with the New Jersey Institute of Technology to implement studies on social vulnerabilities. Research shows that one million people live under the poverty line and 2.3 million homes were built in 1970 or earlier. The department looks to turn the research into ways to assist communities in updating their local ordinances. They are keen on utilizing fire services and have recently updated those ordinances to the international residential code. However, challenges arise regarding building height limitations in local ordinances and new standards for base elevation for commercial institutions. Despite this, proactive measures have been taken in looking at CDRZ (Community Disaster Resilience Zone) set-asides, which have been relatively successful in enhancing building codes. In July of 2023, the design of flood elevation was updated with additional height codes and regulations.

Director Jeff Smitherman, Alabama Emergency Management Agency, shared that in his state, the approach to resilience revolves around leveraging local codes, as the state doesn't have a strong central code system. Many localities do not have any or many updated building codes. In place of using buzzwords that can cause political angst, the communication strategy is to use statistics about the increasing frequency and severity of disaster events to advocate for resilience measures. With enough local and state-level support for these measures, FEMA support such as the Building Code Plus-Up was leveraged to strengthen local building codes and increase competitiveness for other forms of assistance. Alabama, through executive order, established a Resilience Council and is implementing projects aimed at enhancing infrastructure resilience, particularly in coastal areas. The council sits directly under the Governor and is co-chaired by Director Smitherman and the Director of the Department of Insurance. The focus is to mitigate power outages and improve overall community resilience. Efforts are being made to fortify homes to reduce insurance costs and expand resilience initiatives beyond coastal regions, especially in tornado-prone areas. Alabama's first BRIC project was submitted this year with a utility providing the match for the community to work with the grant showcasing how partnerships matter. Also, the Strengthen Alabama Homes is a fortified home program that boosts resiliency as insurance rates will reflect the strength of Alabama homes.

**Report-Outs**

**FEMA Resilience Brief**, Victoria Salinas, Senior Official Performing the Duties of Deputy Administrator, FEMA Resilience, provided the following update: The Community Disaster Resilience Zone (CDRZ) initiative is intended to prioritize resources and technical support to areas that are the most in need and at risk from hazards. The goal is to empower those designations to invest in and support a community-driven approach to building resiliency and partnerships. Today, the primary benefit of a designation is access to additional funding and technical assistance for resilience and mitigation projects. Moving forward, the goal is to significantly increase access to resources across all sectors. Federal agencies (i.e.

the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's climate-smart communities initiative, the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Environmental Justice Technical Compliance Assistance Centers and Technical Capacity Grants Management, Housing and Urban Development's initiatives on green and resilient retrofits, the Economic Development Administration's Economic Recovery Corps, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Partners Network, and the Small Business Administration's (SBA's) Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs)), philanthropic organizations, and private nonprofits have made commitments to CDRZ communities in the form of technical assistance and grant funding.

Other FEMA initiatives include: The publishing of National Resilience Guidance with the intent to provide resources to improve the understanding of building community resilience. The National Flood Insurance Program has all improvements completed thus further reform will need a Congressional proposal. FEMA proposed for the FY24 Congressional appropriations consideration to increase tribal access to the Tribal Homeland Security Grant Program. The Federal Flood Risk Management Standard will incorporate nature-based solutions into federally funded projects to ensure projects last as long as possible. Capacity-building efforts for state, local, tribal, and territorial entities will be reviewed with a focus on achieving resilience goals for 2024, enhancing all-hazards resilience in vulnerable communities, and reinforcing FEMA's leadership in national and community resilience. FEMA trained over two million first responders last year to coordinate with interagency partners. DHS Science and Technology projects look to discover how best to leverage artificial intelligence for grant administration and hazard mitigation planning. FEMA also plans to double technical assistance for BRIC this year.

**NEMA State Hazard Mitigation Officers (SHMO) Subcommittee Meeting Report**, Tom Hughes, Director Emergency Management Mitigation, Insurance and Resilient Communities Office for the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency and Chair of the SHMO Subcommittee: The subcommittee meeting during the first part of the week was well attended. The SHMOs are discussing discoveries of other sources of funding their communities may be able to use for opportunities to boost their mitigation investments. SBA Office of Disaster Recovery and Resilience representatives explained how the Disaster Assistance for Rural Communities Act allows better support for rural communities by offering additional funding and serving as a good tool for grant applications and SBA determinations. EPA provides a complimentary framework to help communities identify and build resilience project scoping that assists in ensuring equity. Additionally, discussions touched upon challenges related to implementing CDRZs, accessing loans, and the feasibility of swift responses during emergencies. Feedback on DRRR 1206 building code funding suggested a longer timeframe for implementation, particularly for Category A or B projects. Other topics included technical assistance for dams, collaboration between FEMA regions and the National Hazard Mitigation Association, and the need for improved communication and coordination with local communities - especially regarding changes in NOFOs and varying grant performance periods. The meeting also involved a detailed conversation with FEMA representatives regarding discount rates, which were set at 3.1% universally. Overall, there was a consensus on the necessity for more comprehensive planning, adequate time allocation, and streamlined processes to enhance disaster response and mitigation efforts.

**Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) Brief**, Director Angee Morgan, Kansas Division of Emergency Management, and the EMAP Commission Chair: Director Morgan highlighted the evolution of EMAP from its roots in a 1998 NEMA position paper advocating for national standards and implementation. NEMA continues to be active in EMAP through the appointment of Commissioners and the state representation on other EMAP committees. The core principle of EMAP involves continuous program improvement from the ground up, presenting significant opportunities. One notable challenge was the struggle with continuous compliance documentation and ensuring ongoing compliance after accreditation was achieved. To address this, EMAP found the solution through the EMAP PowerDMS tool and other initiatives for assessors. Programs opting for accreditation can access the PowerDMS through a subscription (minimal cost), facilitating the use of a hub with webinars and training on standards and best practices. Additionally, the Assessment Team Leads will provide continuous support to help streamline on-site assessments and incorporate more online demonstrations. The emphasis lies not only on achieving compliance for accreditation but maintaining compliance daily. EMAP encourages active participation and feedback to enhance the process further. With increased FEMA funding, there's an expansion of baseline assessments. The EMAP standards are out for public comment and the

organization encourages feedback from the emergency management community. EMAP also produces standards for the Urban Search and Rescue programs.

**Discussion: Earthquakes Impact 75% of the United States (USGS)**

Scott Gauvin, Illinois Emergency Management and Homeland Security Manager of Strategic Operations and Preparedness and Chair of the National Earthquake Program Managers (NEPM) led with explaining the research of the seismic risks expanding across the country, particularly along the East Coast. NEPM is crucial in sharing best practices and updates. The recent seismic model released by USGS highlights the increasing threat of damaging earthquakes, necessitating a unified approach to risk reduction and resilience. Collaboration among states has led to initiatives such as the Rapid Visual Screening program and FEMA 501p program, which assess critical infrastructure to inform hazard mitigation plans and seek funding. However, challenges remain in securing funding and resources to address seismic risks comprehensively. Efforts are ongoing to improve operational plans and preparedness through technological advancements and collaborative partnerships despite funding constraints. Ms. Salinas added that FEMA is seeing numerous examples of projects that focus on seismic mitigation measures. She expects every program to address specific problems to find solutions.

**NEMA Response and Recovery Committee**  
**March 20, 2024**  
**Meeting Summary**

**Briefing from Anne Bink, Associate Administrator, FEMA Office of Response and Recovery:** The Disaster Recovery Framework is due for an update and FEMA will look to optimize their partnerships (i.e. NEMA, IAEM, Big Cities) to gain input for the framework guidance to be tailored to all communities. In response to the disaster relief fund gap, FEMA is sharing that the funds need to be replenished and we, as the emergency management community, need to make progress with Congress providing more funds. FEMA prefers to avoid an INF (immediate needs funding) situation as that should be considered the worst-case scenario.

Public Assistance (PA) updates: The Public Assistance Program Policy and Guidance (PAPPG) version 5 will be released soon for public comment. The cost calculator for preliminary damage assessments is updated and there will be a final rule that will go into effect Friday (March 22). With the announcement on net-zero and carbon-neutral projects, the committee was curious about how that would impact public assistance. During repairs and mitigation, it is now possible to use low-carbon materials, even if those materials are at a higher cost than higher-carbon materials. This provides the opportunity for emergency management to work with their energy partners. FEMA is also looking into more projects that will implement greenhouse reduction gasses. The announcement provides another avenue to 'build back better' and creates a new path of assistance in PA. FEMA encourages providing input states may have as those projects begin. It was also noted to share any exemplary practices with FEMA so they may highlight those. AA Bink also announced FEMA is looking to tier deadlines for the COVID-19 projects depending on the project category. More information will be sent out soon. The bottom line for the COVID projects is that FEMA and the states both want to get those done. AA Bink is very appreciative of the support the states have been in gaining progress with those projects.

Individual Assistance (IA) updates: The IA program has made tremendous strides in regulatory changes. Those regulations will be under review until July of this year and FEMA encourages everyone to provide feedback. One of the items of change highlighted is a categorical terminology change to help identify the assistance in a more impactful way - critical need assistance is being replaced with serious need assistance. Also, when this assistance is requested, cash is provided. This was a specific ask from states and those communities who were utilizing the program and FEMA was able to get to a positive outcome. Another highlight of the IA regulatory changes is a new benefit for displacement assistance that focuses on assisting at the front end of recovery for those who are displaced and need housing.

**Extreme Cold Weather Response and the Impact on Communities**

The severe weather patterns this winter caused alarm for many across the Nation. Directors Erv Portis, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency; Lynn Budd, Wyoming Office of Homeland Security; and A.J. Gary, Arkansas Division of Emergency Management shared their accounts of severe cold weather impacts on communities and provided thought-provoking actions taken to help those communities. Nebraska: The weather over the recent years in the lower Missouri River basin has created a compound situation of record floods that have scoured the river bottom. Right after the floods, intense drought occurred in the region, where the river water level stayed at an all-time low. In 2022 the river iced over due to temperatures dropping to 20 degrees below freezing (Fahrenheit). Such cumulative impacts were strongly felt by the utilities staged along the river including the Omaha Public Power District (electricity) and the Metropolitan Utilities District (drinking water). Low water coupled with a severe cold caused 50 miles of icing on the river north of Omaha. Freezing those utilities' plants with it. The community impacts were immense for 13 counties equating to 1 – 2 million in population served who did not have electricity (in below freezing temperatures) and the drinking water became scarce. The water plant was not able to take in water due to the intakes freezing, compromising the drinking water supply. The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency took this experience and is now working with the United States Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) to devise a study on the impacts of releasing more water from upstream dams to help when the water level gets too low. The incident also encourages more continuity of operation planning. The agency is researching funding options to assist in long-term resiliency, whether it be through FEMA BRIC or water security sources. The agency also looks to encourage Congressional

action on the Water Resources Development Act (2024) to address ice jams on the Missouri River and provide a more recent study of the impacts. The last study completed is dated 40 years old.

Wyoming: The record-setting snowfalls in Wyoming led to a snowpack that was record levels. The good news is there is not a drought (but when the snow melts the next issue will be flooding). These snowstorms caused search and rescue calls to assist vehicles getting stuck on highways. Snowplows were also stuck while working to clear the roads. Massive loss to the livestock was due to cattle ranchers not being able to get to their herds. Millions of dollars of economic loss were a direct cause of the winter storms. The Wyoming Office of Homeland Security and its partners were tested with the challenges of a small community responding to and recovering from a blizzard that wiped out the electricity for more than 100 households. Considering the distance between the resources and the community, it took the teams a long trek of 150 miles only going on average 40 mph to help get the electricity back on. EMPOWER data assisted public health to identify those who need electricity for their home health requirements. The office had to inventory the shelters across the state for those who have generators for the HVAC systems in case home generators did not have enough power and/or fuel to fit the longevity of the storm. Travelers in the state and those who recently moved to Wyoming did not fully understand what they needed to do – it's not just about keeping warm, but also staying hydrated because of high altitude sickness. They were surprised when response operations were not coming to 'rescue them' nor plow their drives, instead, they needed to shelter in place. Utilizing EMAC for these storms is not the best option, as most of those whose state(s) would call are also responding to the same storm and those resources are already being utilized.

Arkansas: The Arkansas Division of Emergency Management toasted this new year by hosting weather coordination calls leading up to the state receiving ice on January 14. Simultaneously, the division participated in calls with the National Guard in preparation for state active-duty response to help support the Arkansas State Police. Their aid was fruitful in assisting stranded people and cars on the highway as well as positioning weather truck teams to assist. Once the ice engulfed the community, the team in the EOC lived there over the course of 3 days. The division created a GIS project to make a map of all the shelters/warming centers that was interactive and sent the information out to all the communities throughout the state. Communication was key for people to prepare for power outage length and how to safely use space heaters to protect from house fires. Water failure became the biggest concern, especially when the ice began to thaw. Thirteen counties reported water issues affecting residents. The National Guard assisted in the mission to supply water, but the state learned that it was very difficult to gain a water supply at the last minute. The Helena-West Helena, Phillips County water system failure was the longest incident, lasting about five weeks. The area was very vulnerable before the storm. In total, the ice incident caused the division to oversee 51 requests for assistance. The VOADs were very helpful as was the partnership with Walmart. Both came in to assist with the water, provided collapsible water buckets, and provided portable laundry services to assist the communities. A couple of key takeaways from this event are that the division looks to stockpile water – maybe at a three-week supply; and there needs to be a second team at the ready to keep the EOC activated.

**Florida Recovery Obligation Calculations (F-ROC):** The state-sponsored program addresses current state challenges by encouraging a proactive and streamlined approach to recovery, reducing risk, and implementing measures that enhance applicants' ability to successfully navigate the PA process. In representation of the program, Melissa Shirah, Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) Chief of the Bureau of Recovery, and Melissa Foggy, Deputy Chief of FDEM Bureau of Recovery shared the details alongside their private partner lead, Samantha Sicard, Senior Associate with KMPG showcasing the success of the public-private partnership. F-ROC is the answer to streamlining the PA process through the standardization of forms and guidelines that comply with state and federal procurement regulations. The program is easily adjustable when new requirements of sub-recipients are created and provides FDEM with contact information in case of new personnel. F-ROC implements an assessment that helps the applicant to be successful in assistance outcomes when the community may encounter their worst day. The key to this assessment is the disaster readiness questionnaire for sub-recipients to fill out along with providing a document repository of their records – all the information is smartly utilized and housed with technology. The questionnaire answers are generated in a report that helps the sub-recipient with recommendations and a plan for disaster funding assistance. This establishes an interactive process for capturing and monitoring the document work needed for compliance as well as incorporates a deadline-driven project for success. The goal of F-ROC is to help the sub-recipients by streamlining their process to quickly gain their disaster funding at a low risk to the state as well as the community.

**Maryland Case Study: Collaboration with the Bureau of Justice:** NEMA President and Secretary of Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM), Russ Strickland, showcased an exemplary example of collaboration alongside his state partners, Sara Sullivan, of the Maryland Bureau of Justice; Bob Fletcher, Covid-19 Detection and Mitigation Confinement Facilities (CDMCF) Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Center Team Lead and President of Readiness Consulting Services, LLC; and Delilah Barton of CNA. There is a lot of value for emergency managers to partner with correctional facilities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, nationally close to 900,000 incarcerated individuals and staff were infected; 3,225 deaths of those individuals were reported. For Maryland, 27,000 people were incarcerated across eight facilities during the pandemic. MDEM and the Justice Bureau quickly learned that planning and coordination needed to improve. The state prioritized Corrections in all phases of the pandemic response to help firm the partnerships needed for planning and coordination through all phases of the response. The outcome of this shared commitment was the state implemented a prison reduction program, built 10 dedicated medical treatment wards in the corrections facility, and leveraged the use of technology to maintain social distancing while permitting access to the judicial system, programs, and visitation. The impact of this coordination saved the state an estimated \$3.2M with alternative care sites. Important information emergency managers need to know about correctional facilities during a public health threat are the facility layout and population density; the health protocols within correction systems; the communication channels of the correction facilities; and the vulnerabilities and needs of each facility. In preparation before an incident, the partners need collaborative planning efforts (the balance of a response with correction facility security); resource requirements and allocations (corrections can support response and may need resources during an event); and knowledge of the legal and regulatory frameworks (always good to make sure plans align with laws) to create a successful path for response.



**NEMA Private Sector Committee  
March 20, 2024  
Meeting Summary**

Chair: Shandi Treloar

Vice-Chair: Erica Bornemann

The chair opened the committee meeting with the announcement of a surprise tabletop exercise. The scenario being a cyber-attack on critical infrastructure.

Bob Nadeau, Partnerships Branch Chief at DHS/CISA Bob Nadeau explained that critical infrastructure is at risk for cyber attacks. It is necessary to have a critical discussion on the gaps within our policies to make improvements.

- The PRC threat, otherwise known as 'Volt Typhoon,' is being analyzed to identify risks and possible solutions.
- The session moves onto a scenario-based tabletop exercise.

*Disclaimer: The following is an exercise and is not a realized event.*

- January 31, 2024:
  - Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency Director Easterly and FBI Director Wray delivers a joint message to the Congressional Committee: "China's hackers are positioning on American infrastructure in preparation to wreak havoc and cause real-world harm to American citizens and communities, if or when China decides the time has come to strike."
- February 7, 2024:
  - CISA, NSA, and FBI assess that the People's Republic of China (PRC) state-sponsored cyber actors are seeking to pre-position themselves on IT networks for disruptive or destructive cyberattacks against U.S. critical infrastructure in the event of a major crisis or conflict with the United States.
  - CISA, NSA, and FBI are releasing an advisory to warn critical infrastructure organizations about this assessment, which is based on observations from the U.S. authoring agencies' incident response activities at critical infrastructure organizations compromised by the PRC state-sponsored cyber group known as Volt Typhoon.
- March 13, 2024:
  - An email appears to come from a non-governmental organization requesting to add mission ready packages for aviation/airport support during severe weather emergencies into the emergency management assistance compact system. The email includes a list of resources via an attached .pdf file.
- March 15, 2024:
  - The National Weather Service issues a winter weather advisory covering your community. Conference calls between state and county emergency management agencies with the local weather office help to facilitate the decision to open cold weather and functional needs shelters in many communities.
  - Several communities receive an earthquake warning via Wireless Emergency Alert (mobile alert system) and local media urging residents to seek shelter.
  - Later in the morning, the EMAC system goes offline.
- The tabletop exercise challenges the groups to devise unique solutions to respond to these events.

- How is cybersecurity information disseminated within your organization?
  - It is imperative that government entities tap into faith-based communities. Normally, these communities have a strong level of outreach amongst the general population.
  - EMAC legislation needs to be up-to-date to ensure proper communication between state entities.
- With basic alert systems inoperative, discuss how you would communicate warnings or alerts within your organization and to your community?
  - Dissemination falls back into reliance on ham radios.
  - In the event of power outages, ham radios can be used to disseminate information to communities.
- What would you consider to be an immediate priority?
  - The general consensus amongst all groups was the dissemination of information to the local community.
  - By ensuring locals are well informed, they will be better prepared in the event of a disaster.
- What are the contingencies listed in our Emergency Operations Plan and Cyber Incident Response Plan?
  - The insurance companies in certain locations are not allowed to notify the state, which can cause issues.
    - A resolution is being worked on internally.
  - A strong contingency plan will be promoted.
    - This allows state entities to begin patching the hole within the ransomware notification system.
  - Relationships will be developed with critical infrastructure partners.
- During the debrief, key themes of communication pathways emerged.
  - This includes the use of radio and apps, tapping into faith-based communities, and utilizing community-based organizations for their ability to maintain trust.
  - In regard to EMAC, proposed solutions include reintegrating the strength of antiquated strategies that otherwise have changed with the emergence of technology, combating misinformation, and establishing stronger utility and communication networks within all levels of government.
  - Walmart: religious-based communities
  - National Guard
  - State-to-state agreements: the framework is there with paperwork without technology
  - Utilities reaching out to their customers
  - Each state reacts and responds differently to the same issues
  - What is FEMA's role? What is the cost?
  - Misinformation and briefing cycles
  - Establishing relationships with utilities early on
  - 2018 Water Infrastructure Act
  - Lynn Budd: sharing that threat and experience information is extremely important, and CISA is very bad about that. Focus on reporting private sector.
    - Not knowing what is happening in their own state and working with state-private sector partnerships & and state-federal partnerships
  - John Hanin: utility that had an incident where they had an attack on the largest dam.
    - Getting in trouble for sharing the incident with nearby states (whose services would be impacted)

- Cyber insurance companies don't allow them to notify the state
- Must define it before you communicate it. getting the most important information to message distributors; organization has a network of contacts, such as IT, assessing and managing systems that have been attacked
- Life & safety – hospitals, law enforcement, redundant communications at each hospital, verification that message is being received, assessing where misinformation is happening to not make the problem worse
- Redundant communication, getting out mobile communication, radios (ideally encrypted), mobile carriers – “can you get out messages,” Critical infrastructures (water, etc). How big is the risk of a cyber attack and vulnerabilities?
  - Alternative communication
  - At what level is the aid needed? What is the aid needed? You have contacts (phone, mobile phone, work phones), National Guard, Private Sector Partners, faith-based organizations. Radio, emails, text, phone calls, whatever it takes & being connected to the counterpart regularly.
  - Mobile communications, MERS, handouts, amateur radios (what are your large employers in your community? Universities?) National Guard. Going to corporate partners in the area that may have resources that you can tap into. Risk circle.