

# **Emergency Management Performance Grant:** *An Evaluation of the Nation's Return on Investment Amid Coronavirus*

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**2021 Edition**

Joint Report Presented by:





April 6, 2021

The U.S. Council of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM-USA) and the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) annually offer this joint report detailing the return on investment realized by the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) program. This program is the only source of federal funding provided directly to state and local governments to help build a robust emergency management ecosystem, one that has faced unprecedented tests over the past year.

Recipients of this grant serve on the front lines of the COVID-19 response. The resources and capabilities built through EMPG serve as the bedrock for officials charting the course of the response as it evolves while concurrently tackling other ongoing disasters. While last year's report served as an evaluation of the capabilities built with EMPG over the past decade, this report examines the past fiscal year, including \$100 million in supplemental funding through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

Despite the additional resource constraints posed by COVID-19, recipients continued to demonstrate a strong commitment to building all-hazards emergency management capacity at the state, local, territorial, and tribal levels of government; for every dollar of federal funds invested, at least that much is matched by both grantees and sub-grantees.

The evolution and reliance on the emergency management system across the nation requires additional investments at all levels of government to ensure success. According to survey data, it would require an additional \$136 million for all states and jurisdictions to fully-participate in the program. To sustain the investments made through FY20 and FY21 with regular appropriations and supplementals, NEMA and IAEM call on Congress to codify at least one of the supplemental increases provided through FY21 and fund EMPG at \$455 million in FY22. This will buy-down almost the entirety of the \$136 million shortfall.

EMPG stands as the beacon of Congressional commitment to ensuring communities and states are more ready to prepare for, mitigate against, respond to, and recover from all hazards. We remain thankful for the commitment within Congress to maintain this worthwhile program and will continue to do all we can as associations to reflect on the appropriated funds, provide transparency in how these funds are allocated, and remain good stewards of taxpayers' dollars.

Sincerely,

Sima Merick  
President, NEMA  
Director, Ohio Emergency Management Agency

Judson Freed, CEM  
President, IAEM-USA  
Director, Ramsey County Emergency Management  
& Homeland Security

## OVERVIEW

EMPG is essential for the building and sustainment of critical capabilities for disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation across the country. Much is accomplished through the collaborative investments in EMPG. The program enables state, local, territorial, and tribal governments to prepare for all hazards through planning, training, exercises, and enhancing professional expertise. But emergency management is a profession with diverse responsibilities, so EMPG also supports response capabilities, communications systems, emergency operation centers (EOC), mutual aid agreements, and public outreach campaigns. These capabilities built over time have been critical in the COVID-19 response because jurisdictions could base their efforts on existing plans and exercise outcomes rather than build a new response from the ground up. This report highlights state, local, territorial, and tribal activities and provides a glimpse of the success Congress enables through its commitment to first responders and emergency managers nationwide.

Emergency managers are the coordinators and collaborators who bring together state, local, and regional entities to save lives, orchestrate the government's response to an event, and work for years afterward to ensure a robust recovery. While the number of tasks accomplished by local jurisdictions shown in this report are impressive on their face, special consideration should be given to the fact that approximately 25 percent of the responding local jurisdictions accomplished this work with less than a full-time emergency manager coordinating the effort and approximately one-third of the tasks were carried out in jurisdictions with populations of less than 25,000.

For this report, 49 states and territories and nearly 600 local emergency management agencies responded to the survey regarding FY20 EMPG spending and supplemental CARES Act funding decisions.

## REDUCING DISASTER COSTS TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Every jurisdiction nationwide was severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, whether that be in lives lost, healthcare and first responder burnout, or economic shocks. Even as a pandemic, hurricanes, flooding, wildfires, severe winter weather, earthquakes, and derechos rocked the United States, EMPG provided the necessary support to build and sustain capabilities necessary to protect residents and avoid the escalation of an event where possible. In FY20:

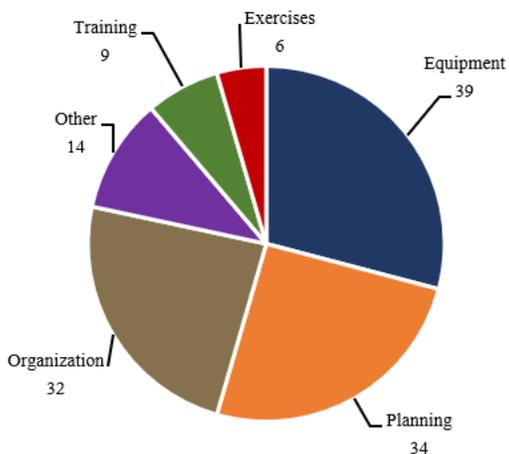
- **228** disasters required a major or emergency declaration (this is inclusive of COVID-19);
- Beyond that, **13,829 events required state assets** but did not reach the level of a major declaration, and;
- **Local assets supported more than 5,923 additional events** using EMPG funded staff or assets without state or federal support.

*State, localities, and territories managed 19,752 events without additional federal expenditure last year.*

## COVID-19 CARES ACT SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

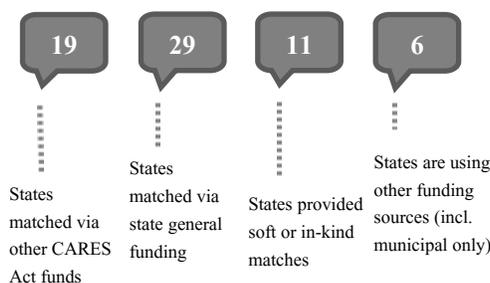
Last year's \$100 million EMPG supplemental funding through the CARES Act has been instrumental in supporting the evolving needs of state and local jurisdictions' COVID-19 response. States and localities used the funding for a variety of needs according to their jurisdiction. NEMA and IAEM categorized the types of spending through the POETE structure (Planning, Organizing, Equipping, Training, and Exercising) which is often used in preparedness analyses. Many states and localities utilized their expenditures across multiple parts of the framework as was appropriate to jurisdictional needs. A brief breakout of spending information is below:

### Supplemental Spending by Type



### EMPG Supplemental Match

A unique facet of EMPG is the level of mutual match between the grantor and recipients. To make this equal match, states used a variety of methods.



Approximately **60 percent of localities received EMPG-S funding**, a majority of which spent all or part of their funding on equipment for first responders and other stakeholders. In survey responses, state and local jurisdictions frequently referenced the capabilities built through years of sustained EMPG funding as critical to pivoting to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jurisdictions were prepared to initiate cross-government planning and coordination; procuring, distributing, and managing PPE and medical supplies; vaccine distribution and site logistics; and conducting public information and messaging.

## EMPOWERING THE PUBLIC THROUGH PREPAREDNESS

Supporting public preparedness is critical to successful responses when disaster strikes.

EMPG funding supported **4,638 statewide preparedness outreach campaigns and 12,340 local campaigns** in the previous fiscal year.



**Preparedness outreach campaigns reached nearly 115 million people last year**

## PLANNING, TRAINING, AND EXERCISES

Reducing the need for federal disaster assistance is the result of a process which builds baseline capabilities throughout state and local governments and communities. This achievement comes through a coordinated process of planning, training, and exercises.

### PLANNING

*Speeds recovery  
Reduces administrative costs  
Prepares for mitigation*

At least **2,583 state and 2,825 local plans** were developed, maintained, or updated using EMPG funds.

Plans address overarching topics such as response, recovery, and mitigation. EMPG funds targeted planning efforts including Strategic National Stockpile usage, critical infrastructure continuity of operations, evacuations, and incident management playbooks.

### TRAINING

*Ensures effective use of systems  
Translates planning into action  
Identifies gaps in planning*

In FY20 EMPG supported more than **1,892 local and 3,242 state classes** addressing the various phases of emergency management. **75,954 personnel received and completed training.**

Classes cover the full range of emergency management issues.

Participants include public officials, emergency response personnel, and even the general public.

### EXERCISES

*Assesses planning and training  
Confirms assumptions  
Provides real-life scenarios*

EMPG supported **at least 1,258 local and 2,762 state-level exercises.**

Types of exercises include workshops, drills, and functional full-scale exercises. Many stakeholder groups participate in these exercises, which further strengthens partnerships within and external to jurisdictions.

**More than 138,821 stakeholders participated in FY20 exercises.**

## WORKING TOGETHER THROUGH MUTUAL AID

During FY20 EMPG supported **2,450 local and 2,510 statewide mutual aid agreements, memorandums of understanding, and memorandums of agreement** with neighboring jurisdictions, non-profit agencies, Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADS), and the private sector. These agreements between jurisdictions minimize the need for immediate federal support, thereby reducing costs to the federal government, and remain critical to mounting an effective response in the wake of a disaster and mobilizing tested emergency management capabilities across jurisdictions.

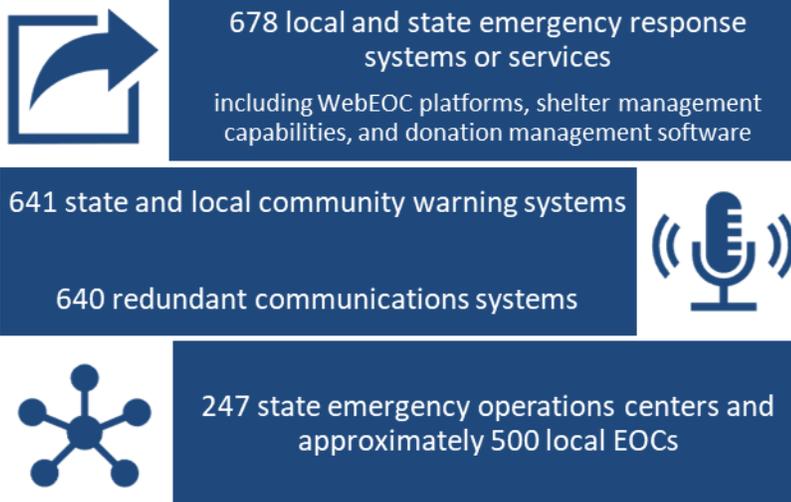
## EMPG-SUPPORTED SUCCESS



Photo courtesy of Henderson Office of Emergency Management

People aged 65+ are at elevated risk of severe COVID-19 illness, so **Henderson, Nevada** emergency management prioritized an age-restricted community in the city and brought a vaccination clinic on-site. During the 20 clinic days, nearly 8,000 people were fully vaccinated. Between 15 to 20 percent of those vaccinated were mobility-challenged, a group which is most equitably served by ensuring vaccination sites are convenient and accessible to their needs. Henderson Emergency Management directed the operation, including managing a partnership with a volunteer group who provided ancillary support. Both EMPG and EMPG-S were integral to this effort.

Public safety communications technologies evolve rapidly. In recent years this has included evolutions such as the allocation of the D-Block radio spectrum to public safety and the emergence of Fifth-generation wireless, amid a broader technology boom. Any system purchased today must be dynamic and flexible to keep up with the technology of tomorrow. To ensure residents are supported by effective frontline disaster management technology, state and local officials utilized EMPG to support:



These systems provide the ability to alert and warn the public of both pending and spontaneous disaster events. Rather than just purchasing new communications systems, states, localities, territories, and tribes also maintain or upgrade existing systems to carefully manage tax dollars without sacrificing life-saving capabilities.

## SHARED FUNDING COMMITMENT

For every dollar Congress appropriates for EMPG, state and local government must match dollar-for-dollar. Data over the years shows that both state and local governments typically provide match well beyond that which is required, providing an unparalleled value to the taxpayer. Rising disaster costs mean that we can no longer base future funding on previous experiences, or there will be long-term impacts to readiness that are a detriment in the face of future events. Through the regular Appropriations cycle for FY22, Congress should codify their efforts to bolster this program through the COVID supplementals and increase the baseline funding level to \$455 million.

## EMPG-SUPPORTED SUCCESS

### CALIFORNIA: Supporting the Vulnerable

Knowing the importance of equitable resource and information access during disasters, California assisted the State Council on Developmental Disabilities and Disability Rights to develop accessible products, including training flyers in English and Spanish designed for adults with developmental disabilities and their families that are using In-Home Supportive Services during the pandemic.

### WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA: Partnerships for Success

During the Mussett Bayou Wildfire, Walton County Emergency Management in Florida flew night sorties with a Forward-Looking Infrared (FLIR) equipped unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) in partnership with Florida State University to map wildfire hotspots that were not visible to the naked eye. This partnership was made possible by EMPG. The maps developed were then distributed to firefighting crews to effectively concentrate firefighting operations during daylight hours.



*Photo courtesy of Walton County Emergency Management*

### OHIO: Exercising to Protect Critical Infrastructure

Rather than risk what could happen if an earthquake occurred near a power plant in Ohio without having conducted exercises in the pandemic-caused virtual environment, the state used EMPG funds to develop a virtual platform for all exercise stakeholders. The platform was so effective FEMA's Radiological Emergency Preparedness Program (REP) sent a letter of appreciation to the state staff who developed the exercise.

EMPG remains a critical driver of progress and success made across the country in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from all hazards. The program's success is shared by all levels of government. When considering the effectiveness of this program:

- At just over \$1 per resident, and when including the match requirement and additional state and local investment, the return on investment exceeds \$700 million. That amount balloons to \$1.1 billion when including supplemental funding in FY21. Every state and community is more prepared because of this program.
- An estimated \$136 million is required to allow all eligible jurisdictions to participate in the full extent of the program.
- To sustain the investments made through FY20 and FY21 with regular appropriations and supplementals, NEMA and IAEM call on Congress to codify at least one of the supplemental increases and fund EMPG at \$455 million in FY22.
- During the last fiscal year, **19,752 events** were managed by local, tribal, state, and territorial governments without additional federal assistance. This figure is exponentially greater than the **228 federally declared disasters**.

Without a robust emergency management ecosystem at the state, local, territorial, and tribal levels, the responses to many disasters would falter or require unplanned federal support. Capabilities afforded through EMPG allow many of these events to be managed without additional federal expenditures. While disasters remain unpredictable and no investment can fully eliminate risk, supporting the development of state, local, territorial, and tribal capabilities through EMPG is proven to minimize disaster effects on vulnerable populations and limit federal expenditures in the response and recovery phase.

In addition to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 response, the United States dealt with 22 disaster events causing losses exceeding one billion dollars in 2020, the most ever experienced in a single year. The recovery process for these events will take years, even as emergency managers continue to respond to new events. This report represents a mere glimpse into how EMPG impacts the disaster preparedness and response landscape, but the benefits of the program exceed the quantifiable due to stakeholder relationship-building and other non-dollar driven activities inherent in conducting related projects.

EMPG stands as a beacon of Congressional support and both NEMA and IAEM-USA remain appreciative of the support. We hope such support continues as emergency managers put these funds to good use and work tirelessly to demonstrate the return on the nation's investment.

### ABOUT NEMA:

Established in 1974, NEMA represents the emergency management directors of the 50 states, territories, and the District of Columbia. These professionals are responsible to their governors for all-hazards emergency preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery from all emergencies, disasters, and threats to the homeland. NEMA is a non-profit, non-partisan organization headquartered in Lexington, Kentucky, and an affiliate of the Council of State Governments.

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### ABOUT IAEM-USA:

IAEM-USA is the nation's largest association of emergency management professionals, with over 4,200 members, including emergency managers at the state and local government levels, tribal nations, the military, colleges and universities, private business and the nonprofit sector. Most of the members are city and county emergency managers who perform the crucial function of coordinating and integrating the efforts at the local level to prepare for, mitigate the effects of, respond to, and recover from all types of disasters, including terrorist attacks. The membership includes emergency managers from large urban areas as well as rural areas. IAEM is a non-profit, non-partisan organization headquartered in Falls Church, Virginia.

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