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## News Release

### IAEM-USA Announces the 2025 Voluntary Organization of the Year

**Oct. 17, 2025 (Falls Church, Va.)** – The Awards & Recognition Committee of the U.S. Council of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM-USA) has selected DC Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster as the IAEM-USA 2024 Voluntary Organization of the Year. The award will be presented at the 73rd IAEM Annual Conference & EMEX in Louisville, Kentucky.

#### **2025 Voluntary Organization of the Year Recipient** **DC Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster**

DC VOAD is a dynamic coalition of over 25 organizations united by a mission to strengthen disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts throughout Washington, D.C.

Over the past year, DC VOAD has led a diverse range of community-driven preparedness initiatives, all free and volunteer-led. These include weekly tabling at farmers markets, a disaster preparedness float in the Palisades July 4th Parade, and a climate-themed street mural in Southwest D.C., created with full community participation. In partnership with the DC Department of Energy & Environment, DC VOAD co-hosted a Climate Ready Open House and welcomed international perspectives with a powerful talk on *“The New Normal in Australia.”*

At the “Community Engagement: Why It Matters” Open House at Arena Stage, 30 nonprofits gathered to engage hundreds of residents. Other standout activities included a blood drive for the Red Cross, a DC Flood History Walking Tour, and the launch of the Embassy Disaster Preparedness Series, starting with a session co-hosted with the Australian Embassy.

Internally, DC VOAD has prioritized member training with a strategic approach focused on the five key phases of disaster work—prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery, and this past year included in-depth workshops on mass care shelter operations and volunteer & donations management, tailored to members, including many who are new to disaster work.

DC VOAD's response efforts have been equally impactful—supporting Emergency Reception Centers during large-scale events, managing donation operations during the Bowen Road fires, and providing emergency supplies and coordinating feeding efforts during the January 29th air crash.

Their success in volunteer engagement is notable: through consistent weekly outreach, they've built a network of nearly 1,000 engaged individuals who receive curated monthly updates filled with resources, training, and local opportunities—always grounded in the motto: Think Globally, Act Locally.

DC VOAD lives the VOAD 4 C's—cooperation, communication, coordination, and collaboration—but adds its own: fun, inclusion, respect, and service. Their bimonthly community lunches, often joined by public safety leaders, build relationships across neighborhoods and agencies. With a richly diverse membership, including faith-based, secular, and disability inclusion organizations, they ensure accessibility and equity in every effort.

DC VOAD's dedication, creativity, and inclusiveness make it an outstanding example of what it means to serve a community before, during, and after a disaster. We are honored to recognize them as this year's Voluntary Organization.

**The Voluntary Organization of the Year Award** recognizes one U.S. voluntary organization that made extraordinary emergency management contributions within the United States.

*IAEM-USA, the nation's most extensive emergency management professional association, is a non-profit organization representing more than 5,800 emergency management and homeland security professionals for local communities, state and federal disaster officials, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and others involved in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from all types of disasters, including acts of terrorism. IAEM provides access to the largest network of emergency management experts who can provide advice and assistance, the Certified Emergency Manager program, annual scholarships, a comprehensive monthly newsletter, and more.*

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