



IAEM Headquarters

201 Park Washington Court
Falls Church, VA
22046-4527 USA
www.iaem.org

*Contact: Dawn M. Shiley, MA, CAE
IAEM Communications & Marketing Director
703-538-3542*

News Release
IAEM-USA Announces the 2025 Rising Star Award

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 Tonya Clarke for the IAEM-USA 2025 Rising Star Award. The award will be presented at the 73rd IAEM Annual Conference & EMEX in Louisville, Kentucky.

IAEM-USA Rising Star Award Recipient
Tonya Clarke, CEM

Tonya Clarke embodies the next generation of leadership in emergency management, demonstrating extraordinary commitment, innovation, and influence in just a few years. Her work spans disaster response, recovery, and community resilience across multiple jurisdictions, earning her a reputation as a collaborative and compassionate leader.

Tonya's leadership during the Texas Panhandle Fire is a defining moment in her career. She successfully coordinated multiple non-profits and Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) partners to establish a Multi-Agency Resource Center, ensuring rapid, organized support for affected communities. Her pivotal role in helping the City of Houston achieve Emergency Management Accreditation Program accreditation, along with her humanitarian efforts during the Houston/Harris County Derecho and Hurricane Beryl, further demonstrate her dedication to public service and operational excellence.

As a Regional Recovery Coordinator with the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM), Tonya has managed over \$1 billion in FEMA projects—bringing both technical expertise and strategic vision to complex recovery efforts. Beyond her core responsibilities, she has developed innovative training programs for new emergency managers, designed creative approaches to COVID-19 testing in El Paso, and established lasting partnerships with community stakeholders.

Tonya's deep passion for service extends to her volunteer work with organizations such as Olivewood Cemetery and VOAD outreach, reinforcing her role as a community advocate and connector. Her rare blend of professionalism, heart, and forward-thinking makes her not only a rising star but also a powerful force shaping the future of emergency management.

The IAEM-USA Rising Star Award recognizes someone new to the emergency management profession who has displayed enthusiasm, innovation, and commitment, made significant contributions to the field, and worked in the field for five years or less.

IAEM-USA, the nation's largest 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.

###