

**IAEM**

# Bulletin

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## August 2025 Marks First-Ever National Emergency Management Awareness Month

IAEM-USA is proud to launch the first-ever National Emergency Management Awareness Month this August. This new annual campaign aims to raise awareness about the field of emergency management and promote the vital work of emergency managers in keeping communities safe.

Emergency managers work behind the scenes every day to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters. From hurricanes and wildfires to pandemics and power outages, emergency managers build systems that save lives and protect property—this awareness month gives communities a chance to learn more about the profession and celebrate the people who lead those efforts.

Throughout the month of August, emergency management professionals across the country are encouraged to connect with elected officials, private sector leaders, nonprofit partners, and community groups. The goal is to help decision-makers better understand what emergency managers do and why their work matters.

To support this effort, IAEM has created a set of easy-to-use tools. These include:

- Social media templates to promote awareness.

- Sample proclamations to encourage official recognition.
- Email messages and talking points for outreach.
- Ideas for meetings, events, and media engagement.

All resources are available on the [IAEM website](#).

IAEM recommends several activities that emergency managers can lead during the month, such as:

- Giving short presentations about emergency management at community or business meetings.
- Hosting visits or tours at emergency operations centers.
- Offering local officials the chance to join in training or exercises.
- Partnering with media to share what emergency managers do.
- Teaching students about disaster preparedness and resilience.

These outreach efforts can help more people understand the value of emergency management and how the field supports every part of a community—from healthcare and education to business and public safety.

IAEM is also inviting emergency managers to share their personal stories online using hashtags like #IAmEM, #EMAwarenessMonth, and #KnowYourEmergencyManager. These stories will show the broad

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# Get to Know Your IAEM Leadership

## IAEM-USA First Vice President

Josh Morton, CEM,  
IAEM-USA First Vice President

In an effort to introduce the IAEM leadership to members and recognize their hard work for the organization, the IAEM Bulletin will be providing profiles on the current IAEM leadership throughout the year. A heartfelt thanks to our volunteers whose hard work makes IAEM successful.

Josh currently resides in Saluda, South Carolina, and has been an IAEM member for 11 years. You can connect with Josh on [LinkedIn](#) or email him at [USA1stVP@iaem.com](mailto:USA1stVP@iaem.com).

■ **Biographical sketch:** Josh Morton has served as the director of the Saluda County (SC) Emergency Management Division since 2012. Prior to that, he served as a regional emergency manager with the South Carolina Emergency Management Division from 2007-2012. Josh's exposure to the emergency management profession began as a volunteer firefighter when he was in high school. His first position in the profession was as an emergency planner and CERT team coordinator for the Chester County (SC) Emergency Management Agency. Josh's wife Bethany is also an emergency manager, and has served as part of the Regional Emergency Management Program at the South Carolina Emergency Management Division since 2008. He holds a BA in music from Newberry College and an MPA from Columbia Southern University.

Josh served as IAEM-USA Region 4 president-elect from 2018-2020, and Region 4 president from 2020-2022. In 2021, he was elected by the regional presidents to represent them as the at-large member of the IAEM-USA Executive Committee. In August 2023, Josh was elected to the IAEM-USA Board of Directors, where he currently serves as 1st vice presi-

dent of IAEM-USA.

■ **What professional accomplishment or experience are you most proud of and/or learned the most from?**

Honestly, I would have to say that my time on the IAEM-USA Board is my proudest accomplishment as an EM professional. Having an opportunity to give back and serve the thousands of members we represent has been an extremely rewarding experience for me both personally and professionally.

■ **What are you hoping to get out of being a part of the IAEM leadership team?**

Being part of the IAEM leadership team has given me so many opportunities to connect with emergency managers from around the globe, and I look forward to continuing to build new relationships.

■ **How did you get your start in emergency management?**

When I was 18 years old, I joined my local volunteer fire department. Four years later, after graduating college, I responded to a fire at an old mill in Great Falls, South Carolina. At that point, the mill was being utilized to recycle PVC. The town had to be evacuated and it took a week to get the fire out and people back in their homes. I spent my time on scene working in the command post over-night shift. It was my first exposure to emergency management and really sparked my interest in the career. A few months later, I was offered a



Josh Morton, CEM,  
IAEM-USA First Vice President

position as a planner and CERT team coordinator for the Chester County EMA (SC).

■ **What is the most valuable thing you receive from being a part of the association?**

The best part about IAEM is the people. This Association has allowed me to meet and connect with so many people that I never would have met in any other way. And one of the coolest things about IAEM is that anyone can be involved if they want to be. I can't think of any other organization where the emergency manager from a county of 18,000 people has an opportunity to serve as the president of the association!

■ **What are your favorite sports teams and what, if any, logo items or memorabilia do you have?**

I'm a Clemson Tigers fan through

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## First Vice President

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and through. I actually have two large prints signed by Dabo Swinney and Deshaun Watson in my office that I won in IAEM scholarship auctions!

■ **What would people be surprised to learn about your background?**

I think the word has gotten around, but people are often surprised when they find out that my bachelor's degree is in music theory and church music. I tell people that I went to be a jazz trumpet player and woke up an emergency manager.

■ **Reflecting on your career, what are some moments of pride that stand out to you?**

When Hurricane Helene hit our county, my wife, Bethany, who is also our regional emergency manager,

deployed to my EOC for several days. Our 10-year-old daughter, Temmer, had to come to the EOC for the first three days. When most kids would be complaining, she jumped right in and started working in the EOC. She did everything from getting people coffee to helping with initial damage assessment and never complained once. Definitely a proud EM dad experience.

■ **If you didn't work in emergency management, what career would you pursue?**

Over the last few years, I've taken a real interest in mental health and I'm actually working on a second master's degree in counseling.

■ **If you could say one thing to all IAEM members, what would it be?**

Get involved! We are always looking for fresh ideas and ways that we can better serve our members, and we need you!

■ **Is there any advice or knowledge you would like to share with emerging professionals in the field?**

Get out there and network. As an emergency manager, the value you bring to the table is the contact list you keep in your phone. No plan survives first contact, but your network will be what makes the difference in your success.

■ **What is your favorite way to relax?**

Relax? Who has time for that? When I do have a few minutes, I like to read or sit around playing guitar.

■ **Any parting thoughts you'd like to share?**

At the end of the day, this association exists for you, our members. Get involved and stay involved. If there's something you think we can do better, reach out. And don't forget to have fun and take care of yourself.



## Welcome Peregrine as IAEM's Newest Affiliate Member

With severe weather and high-risk events on the rise, emergency management teams need integrated, actionable data to drive effective preparation, response, and recovery. But when data lives in siloed sources, leveraging it can be tedious and inefficient. Data should supercharge your emergency management operations, not slow them down. Peregrine's data integration platform unifies and displays live and historical data across systems, enabling emergency management leaders to mitigate, prepare, respond, and recover all in one place. Learn how agencies are leveraging Peregrine to optimize resources, streamline processes, and make stronger, faster decisions.



# Peregrine

**Website:** <https://www.peregrine.io/emergency-management>

**Contact:** Jenelle Masterson

**Email:** [jenelle.masterson@peregrine.io](mailto:jenelle.masterson@peregrine.io)

**Phone:** (540) 455-5421

## Emergency Management Awareness Month continued from page 1

range of work being done in the profession and help build a stronger connection between emergency managers and the public they serve.

Whether working in a rural town, a major city, or in support of schools, hospitals, and businesses, emergency

managers are essential to the safety and resilience of our nation. National Emergency Management Awareness Month is an opportunity to honor their service and inspire a new generation of emergency management leaders.

For more information and to download the outreach toolkit, visit [www.iaem.org/Events/National-Emergency-Management-Awareness-Month](http://www.iaem.org/Events/National-Emergency-Management-Awareness-Month). ♦



## GET CERTIFIED IN 2025!

Ready to take your skills to the next level?

- Boost your career potential
- Gain industry recognition



**Bulletin Editor:** [John Osborne](#), QAS

**Communications Director:**  
[Dawn Shiley](#), MA, CAE

**Chief Executive Officer:**  
[Elizabeth B. Armstrong](#), MAM, CAE

The *IAEM Bulletin* is published monthly by IAEM to keep members abreast of association news, government actions affecting emergency management, research, and information sources.

The publication also is intended to serve as a way for emergency managers to exchange information on programs and ideas. Past issues are available in the members-only [IAEM Bulletin Archives](#).

**Publishing an article in the *IAEM Bulletin* may help you to meet IAEM's certification requirements.** Check out the [author's guidelines](#).

Articles should be submitted to Bulletin Editor John Osborne via email at [john@iaem.com](mailto:john@iaem.com).

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# Letter to the IAEM Membership

**Randy Pommenville, CEM, IAEM-USA Region 7 President**

Dear IAEM Members,

As the IAEM-USA Region 7 president, I have had the distinct privilege and honor to serve on the IAEM-USA Board of Directors. This experience has profoundly enriched my understanding of the emergency management profession and underscored the vital role that passionate and forward-thinking leaders play within our organization. As emergency managers, it is imperative that we not only address the challenges we face today but also envision the path our profession will take over the next five to 10 years. Serving on the board has reinforced the necessity of having leaders who are committed to navigating these complex trajectories and ensuring our profession continues to evolve and adapt.

IAEM has long stood as a powerful advocate for emergency managers and their programs across the United States. Our voices, unified through IAEM, have a significant influence, especially in our engagement with elected leaders in Washington, D.C. We champion policies and initiatives that support resilience, prepared-

ness, and comprehensive emergency management frameworks. The strength of our advocacy is built on our dedication to advancing the interests of emergency managers and the communities we serve.

Every vibrant organization experiences diverse perspectives as it grows and evolves. While some discussions may arise that reflect personal agendas, it is essential to focus on constructive dialogue that truly enriches our community. Together, we can distinguish between helpful insights and distractions, ensuring our mission remains at the forefront. IAEM is dedicated to continuing its role as a credible and respected advocate for our profession, and we appreciate the contributions of all voices in our journey together.

The heart of IAEM is its membership. Our organization thrives because of the active engagement and contributions of members like you. If you are passionate about driving positive change and influencing the future of emergency management, I encourage you to take an active role within IAEM. Whether you choose to

participate in a caucus, join a committee, serve as a regional officer, or aspire to be part of the IAEM-USA Board of Directors, your input and dedication are vital. Together, we can continue to build a robust and dynamic organization.

I would like to acknowledge that all IAEM-USA leadership at both the national and regional levels are volunteers. We dedicate our time and energy to making IAEM the leading association it is today, with the overarching goal of benefiting all members and the broader emergency management community.

Thank you for your continued commitment to IAEM and for working toward a stronger, more resilient future for our profession. Your involvement is not just appreciated, it is necessary as we strive to enhance and expand our collective impact.

With sincere appreciation,

Randy Pommenville, CEM,  
IAEM-USA Region 7 President ◆

## SAVE THE DATE NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AWARENESS MONTH

August 2025



## IAEM REGION 2 CONFERENCE

July 23-25, 2025

PAUL SMITH'S COLLEGE  
12 MILES FROM SARANAC LAKE - 21 MILES FROM LAKE PLACID  
IN NEW YORK'S ADIRONDACK MOUNTAINS

**"Wicked Problems in  
Emergency Management"**

Focus Track in Sports and Special Events Management



PAUL SMITH'S  
COLLEGE  
THE COLLEGE OF THE ADIRONDACKS



REGISTER NOW



## IAEM in Action



Joe Leonard, CEM, IAEM-USA Region 6 president; FEMA Region 6 Administrator Tony Robinson; and Azell Carter, CEM, gather for a photo at the 2025 Louisiana Emergency Conference held May 5-8, in Lake Charles, Louisiana.



IAEM members Katie Harwood and Diana Rothe-Smith, CEM, at the IAEM booth with IAEM-USA First Vice President Josh Morton, CEM, during the Governor's Hurricane Conference held May 11-16 in West Palm Beach, Florida.



IAEM members Spencer Hawkins and Gary Scronce grab a photo with IAEM CEO Beth Armstrong, CAE, during the Governor's Hurricane Conference in West Palm Beach, Florida on May 13-15.



On April 24, in Omaha, Nebraska, at the CHI Health Center, the IAEM-USA Board takes a break from the hard work of planning during the Board Retreat.



## IAEM News to Know

### Association News

■ The IAEM-USA Board met April 23-24 in Omaha, Nebraska, to finalize and adopt the 2025-26 budget, evaluate the management firm performance, address crisis communications, update the Administrative Policies & Procedures, solidify plans for National Emergency Management Awareness Month (August), and Emergency Management on the Hill Day (June 25), review Community Impact Task Force progress, assessed Omaha as a potential conference site for 2029, and more.

■ The Board carefully assessed the potential impact of current economic and federal funding changes on IAEM operations. It also considered 35 different funding requests representing an impressive level of activity and engagement within IAEM-USA groups, and assessed management effort and fees.

### Certification

■ Are you passionate about helping others earn their AEM®/CEM® certification? Consider Serving as an IAEM Certification Commissioner—applications are due by **June 1, 2025**. [Learn more about this incredible opportunity](#). Commissioners:

- Play a crucial role in upholding the standards of the emergency management profession.
- Gain professional development and networking opportunities.
- Receive a waiver for your next recertification fee upon successful completion of the term.

### Conference News

■ IAEM is pleased to announce the 2025 Annual Conference [registration rates](#) will remain the same as last year—registration will be opening in mid-June.

■ The IAEM-USA Conference Committee is busy building a dynamic program for you. See our lineup of currently confirmed [plenary speakers](#)—topics for our plenary sessions include:

- *Safety, Security, and Service: Preparing for the FIFA World Cup 2026™*—GB Jones, chief safety and security

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The graphic features a dark red background with a subtle vertical pleated texture, reminiscent of a stage curtain. At the top center is a gold laurel wreath with a ribbon. Below it, the text "2025 IAEM AWARDS PROGRAM" is written in large, white, serif capital letters, with "2025 IAEM" on the first line, "AWARDS" on the second, and "PROGRAM" on the third. Horizontal gold lines with diamond-shaped center ornaments separate the text from the top and bottom. Below the main title, a white-bordered box contains the heading "AWARD CATEGORIES:" in bold, serif capital letters. Underneath this box is a bulleted list of award categories in white, sans-serif text. At the bottom of the graphic, the text "NOMINATE BY JUNE 30" is written in a white, italicized, serif font. In the bottom right corner is the IAEM logo, which consists of the letters "IAEM" in a bold, sans-serif font, with "International Association of Emergency Managers" in smaller text below it, all enclosed within a circular emblem.

**2025 IAEM AWARDS PROGRAM**

**AWARD CATEGORIES:**

- Programmatic Awards
- Public/Private Sector Awards
- Individual Awards
- Lifetime Achievement Awards
- Student Awards
- Volunteer Awards
- Uniformed Services Awards

**NOMINATE BY JUNE 30**

**IAEM**  
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## IAEM News to Know

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officer, FIFA World Cup 2026™.

- *Katrina to Helene: Twenty Years of Collaboration between Meteorology and Emergency Management*—Alan Gerard, owner/CEO, Balanced Weather, LLC and former director., Analysis and Understanding Branch at NOAA National Storms Laboratory. This session will be moderated by IAEM-USA President, Carrie Speranza, CEM.

- *Regional EMS Collaboration Leading up to What Turned out to be a Crazy Start to 2025 in New Orleans*—CAPT Shayna Goldfine, CEM, Emergency Operations & NOHSEP LNO, NOEMS.

- *How Hurricane Helene Stress Tested Asheville's New EM Program: Resilience through Commitment*—Jeremy Knighten, CEM, division chief, Asheville Fire Department.

- *Championing Collaboration in Intra-Governmental Preparedness: The Salt Lake County Continuity Cup*—David Schuld, director, Intra-Governmental Preparedness, Salt Lake County Government.

## IAEM Awards Program

■ **IAEM 40 under 40:** The IAEM-USA 40 under 40 Awards and recognition program results were announced on May 9 as part of the 2025 IAEM Plugged In Virtual Conference. Find out more about the program and see the awardees [here](#).

## Gallop to Kentucky

■ **Plan to join IAEM as we Gallop to Louisville—the 2025 IAEM Wellness Campaign:**

- The competition will be starting on Oct. 10.
- More details, as well as registration procedures, will be made available soon.

## Regional Events

■ **Several IAEM-USA regions are hosting events in the near future:**

- **IAEM-USA Region 5** will host their regional conference "[Virtual Sunshine Summit](#)" June 17 virtually.
- **IAEM-USA Region 2** will host their regional conference "[Wicked Problems in Emergency Management](#)" **July 23-25**, at Paul Smith's College in Paul Smith, New York.
- **IAEM-USA Region 7** will host their [regional conference](#) on **July 23-24**, at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas.
- **IAEM-USA Region 9** will host their regional conference

ference "[Adaptation and Innovation: Shaping the Future of Emergency Management in Region 9](#)," on Aug. 12-13, at the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii, in Honolulu, Hawaii.

## IAEM Scholarship Program

■ **Scholarship Deadline:** The [IAEM Scholarship Program application](#) period will close **May 30 at 11:59:59 p.m.** EDT. Don't wait until the last minute to begin an application.

■ **Apply by June 1 to Become a Scholarship Commissioner:** The IAEM Scholarship Commission seeks applicants to fill several commission openings. [Applications must be submitted by June 1, 2025](#). Visit the IAEM website for specific requirements for Scholarship Commissioners, positions available, the application, and how you can make a difference by joining the commission. Questions may be directed to IAEM Scholarship Program Director [Dawn M. Shiley, CAE](#).

## IAEM EMEX Update

■ It is six months until the 73rd Annual IAEM Annual Conference & EMEX in Louisville, Kentucky, to be held this November; a sold-out exhibit hall is expected. Reserve your booth space today before booth prices increase on June 1, 2025. Please [visit our website](#) to view the floor plan and download a contract. ♦

**WE'RE LOOKING FOR WRITERS**

Write for the IAEM Bulletin

We invite you to submit an article for the IAEM Bulletin to share your insights and expertise with fellow emergency managers!

**LEARN MORE**  
[www.iaem.org/bulletin](http://www.iaem.org/bulletin)



# 2025 IAEM-USA Region 9 Symposium



**Symposium Dates**  
**12-13 August 2025**



**Early bird registration**  
**Deadline: 13 June 2025**



**Certification Exam Available**  
**14 August 2025 (1- 3:30 pm)**



**Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i**  
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Join us for the IAEM-USA  
Region 9 2025 symposium  
in Honolulu, HI



IAEM-USA Region 9 Symposium  
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Submission Form



<https://forms.office.com/r/RtTkZ76JyB>



## Special Focus Articles:

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## Submit an Article for the IAEM Bulletin

The IAEM Editorial Committee is currently accepting submissions for future editions of the IAEM Bulletin. Refer to the [Author Guidelines](#) for tips and techniques for successfully submitting your article for publication.

The primary focus of the IAEM Bulletin is local. We are looking for articles that provide information and insights useful to other practitioners, in government and private sectors, who are educated and trained professionals.

- **Article Format:** Word or text format (not PDF).
- **Word length:** 750 to 1,500 words.
- **Photos/graphics:** Image format (png, jpg).
- **Email article, photos, and graphics to:** [John Osborne](#).

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## \$222 Million Dollars Up In Smoke...COVID-19 Smoke

By Michael Martinet, MS, CEM, Author of "Fighting With FEMA: A Practical Regulations Handbook," and Principal, The Martinet Group, LLC

The COVID-19 pandemic was the costliest natural disaster to affect the world, and particularly so here in the United States. Although public health experts had warned about the dangers of a pandemic for a couple of decades, few people outside the somewhat rarified world of health care truly understood the chain of unexpected consequences that followed the outbreak in early 2020.

These unexpected consequences ranged from a shortage of ethanol for automotive fuel, to the very unexpected boom in home renovations, and the remote work-from-home phenomenon, which left office buildings across the country as high-rise ghost towns.

In many instances, some of the most seriously affected organizations were the public health departments and hospital systems across the country. Those entities, which arguably should have been very well prepared for the pandemic, were caught flat-footed, and for that lack of preparedness, in some cases, paid dearly for their lack of prudent foresight.

In this article, we will look at how just four healthcare agencies lost \$221,934,750 for their failures to 1) be prudently prepared for the pandemic, 2) have the proper emergency pay policies in place, and 3) provide the necessary documentation to qualify for federal disaster assistance under the FEMA Public Assistance program.

Although each of these cases we will examine affected health care organizations, these very same rules apply every day to cities, counties, special districts, and

private non-profit organizations seeking Public Assistance funding. All the cases which are addressed in this article are public information and taken from the FEMA Second Appeals Database. In all four cases, essentially the same set of failures played out to the detriment of each agency.

The first case comes from the Valley Hospital in Ridgewood/Paramus, New Jersey<sup>1</sup>. The hospital is a Private Non-profit that requested Public Assistance reimbursement for \$4,123,001.60 in resilience pay to employees for work performed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The hospital created and offered resilience pay to employees as additional paid time off (PTO) in appreciation for their work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

FEMA found the hospital did not demonstrate that it paid the resilience pay pursuant to its pre-disaster pay policy and did not associate the work with eligible emergency protective measures for the declared incident.

In this case, although the hospital had a disaster pay policy, it was not in place when the COVID-19 event started; rather, it was adopted later in March. Furthermore, FEMA interpreted the policy as being a discretionary policy, subject to management approval. And lastly, although the hospital tracked the employee's time, they did not connect the time tracked to specific emergency protective measures as required.

### The Stakes Are Double or Nothing

A nearly identical set of issues presents in the next case, which is taken from the Mobile Infirmary Association in Mobile, Alabama<sup>2</sup>. The hospital requested \$7,424,944.86 in reimbursement for Force Account Labor premium pay for its employees who performed normal duties while enduring varying levels of risk from COVID-19 exposure during the pandemic.

In this case, the hospital provided its employees with an increased rate of pay depending on the employee's COVID-19 "risk" level. For instance, employees in very high-risk positions and units like "front-line" workers received 1.5 times their normal rate of hourly pay for hours worked.

FEMA denied the hospital's request, finding that the claimed costs were not eligible as they were not included in a pre-disaster written labor policy. FEMA found the hospital's claimed FAL premium pay was not authorized by a written pre-disaster labor policy, and it did not specify the premium pay provided in this case. It also did not provide non-discretionary criteria for when the applicant activated the pay. Further, FEMA found the hospital did not demonstrate that the claimed costs were related to the performance of eligible emergency protective measures.

Disaster pay policies can be highly technical and must be very carefully drawn up. In this case, the Second Appeal decision stated the policy did not provide specificity on

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## COVID-19 Smoke

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how or when differential or incentive/production pay applied. That is, the hospital's pre-disaster pay policy discussed certain pay types based on the ambiguous language of "system needs, interests, or competitive environments," which allowed for discretion to the hospital on when to activate various pay types.

And here again, although the hospital tracked the employee's time, it did not tie the time worked to the specific emergency protective measures performed by the staff.

### The Stakes Go Up By a Factor of Ten

Now for a truly staggering loss. This case comes from the Emory Healthcare System<sup>3</sup> in the Atlanta, Georgia area. In this case, the health care system, in a series of ten different appeals, lost a total of \$75,508,638 for critical premium pay and hazard pay for its staff during the pandemic period.

The hospital stated it implemented premium/hazard pay for full-time employees from certain departments to guarantee that they could operate efficiently and effectively to deliver critical medical care to patients, thereby addressing the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Once again, the hospital only adopted its disaster pay policy in March of 2020, long after the incident had begun. Similarly to the previous cases, although the hospital tracked the time worked for over 50,000 employees, it did not tie the hours worked to specific emergency protective measures performed as required by policy.

However, this case varies from the previous two cases in that the hospital further claimed that its

revised pay policy may be retroactively applicable based on a December 19, 2022 FEMA memorandum, which addresses legal responsibility for emergency work between PNPs and SLTT governments and authorizes the limited use of retroactive mutual-aid agreements or contracts for eligible emergency work. In this case, the hospital's revised pay policy was not a mutual aid agreement or contract between the hospital and other entities. Thus, FEMA's memorandum pertaining to retroactive agreements was not applicable to the applicant's revised pay policy.

Extreme care must always be taken in the reading of both FEMA policies and other contracts and agreements between local governments and private non-profits. FEMA generally interprets such documents in their most restrictive sense, while local agencies often read the same documents from a permissive perspective, hoping that some action will be allowed. This is usually done to the detriment of the local agency.

This case was also different from the first two cases in that the hospital claimed that a decision made by the Civilian Board of Contract Appeals (CBCA) set a precedent that would allow the hospital to receive funding for the disaster pay. However, CBCA decisions are not precedent-setting, and do not in any way apply to any other case, however similar.

### The Explosive Grand Finale

If one is doing the math, we are still far short of the promised \$222,000,000 in denied funding. Not to worry, our last case completes this deficit equation. The case comes from the Northwell Health system, which covers New York City, Long Island, and Westchester<sup>4</sup>.

The Hospitals of Northwell Health, Inc., requested Public Assistance funding for force account labor crisis payments in the amount of \$134,878,167 in crisis payments it made to 56,000 of its employees who worked during the pandemic.

FEMA denied funding because:

- The hospital system did not provide a pre-disaster pay policy,
- The payment of the crisis payments was discretionary, and
- the hospitals did not provide details of what work the employees performed.

FEMA denied the requested funding, finding that the hospital system did not provide a pre-disaster pay policy and that the payment of the FAL crisis payments (a type of premium pay) was discretionary. Additionally, since the hospital system did not provide details of what work the employees performed, the costs could not be tied to eligible emergency work.

FEMA stated that the hospital system had not substantiated that its applicable pay policy was non-discretionary, citing language from the April 19, 2020, FAQ about non-union employees that stated, "based on manager discretion, selected team members were eligible to receive a lump sum payment of \$2,500."

The Hospital system replied that FEMA's prior finding regarding the non-discretionary nature of the crisis payments, by stating that the policy language "Based on manager discretion" was not created with federal nomenclature in mind, and a more accurate wording that reflects what occurred is "based on manager validation."

In closing, pre-disaster force account labor policies must be drawn with extreme care and with an extraordinary degree of foresight as to the potential application of

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## COVID-19 Smoke

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such a policy.

There are certain mandatory aspects which must be part of such a policy:

- The policy must be in writing.
- The policy must be approved prior to the beginning of the incident period.
- The policy must be approved by the elected governing body, i.e., city council, county commission, etc.; (Such policies which are administratively approved by the senior appointed official, i.e., city manager, county judge, etc., do not qualify).
- The policy must not be contingent on federal funding, meaning that it must apply in local and gubernatorial disaster proclamations as well as Presidential declarations.

- The policy must be consistently applied, i.e., in all disasters.
- The policy may not be in any way discretionary, i.e., at the discretion of any official.
- The policy must be specific as to what triggers disaster pay, and what that disaster pay is.
- The activation of the policy must be internally consistent with the policy's own language, i.e., if employees must be placed on furlough and then recalled to disaster duty, then pay for employees who are held over at the end of a shift would not be eligible for reimbursement.
- There may be additional criteria depending on the nature of the policy for a specific agency and set of circumstances.

Therefore, drawing up an eligible disaster pay policy takes a high degree of expertise and the time necessary to evaluate all the potential issues involved in creating such a policy. ♦

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- 2: <https://www.fema.gov/appeal/force-account-labor-equipment-costs-14>
- 3: <https://www.fema.gov/appeal/force-account-labor-equipment-costs-immediate-threat-16>
- 4: <https://www.fema.gov/appeal/force-account-labor-equipment-costs-immediate-threat-13>



# Reduce Logistics Loads in Disaster Relief

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## Emergency Management Financial Cuts

By Pete Connolly, Deputy Team Leader, Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance, USAID

The cuts in funding to various emergency management-related programs, such as Building Resilient Infrastructure Communities, the National Weather Service, and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, are causing a fair amount of consternation in the emergency management community. These cuts will increase vulnerability, reduce our awareness of potential hazards, and impact our ability to respond effectively. Unfortunately, these are not the only financial cuts that emergency managers need to be thinking about right now.

The Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance at the United States Agency for International Development is the country's international disaster response authority, deploying to war zones, floods, disease outbreaks, and more. They bring in critical supplies, and then fund and monitor non-profit organizations to distribute food, provide medical care, and build shelters. And, because of the cuts to USAID, all the staff at BHA will be fired on July first. Around 95% of the programs will be cut, and the remaining programs will be transferred to the State Department, which will retain a small number of staff to respond to disasters, with few capabilities and far less capacity than currently.

These cuts will result in an indescribable amount of suffering for millions of people. They are already increasing the spread of famine, disease, and in some cases, political instability. All of these will make for a less safe world. And even though BHA's work is always on foreign soil, these funding cuts will impact domestic emergency management in a number of ways.

### VOADs

A number of voluntary organizations active in disasters, such as the Red Cross, Catholic Relief Services, Save the Children respond to disasters in the United States and overseas. While all these organizations have legal and financial barriers erected that separate their foreign work from their domestic work, funding for international response increases each organization's capabilities and capacities. Even before the cuts to FEMA were announced, disaster response organizations were cutting staff. These are the organizations that emergency managers have come to rely on during and immediately after disasters. Without their support, emergency managers will have fewer resources to draw on for critical mass care, medical, and sheltering operations.

### Receiving Foreign Aid

Even though it has extensive disaster response and recovery resources, there have been several times in the past twenty years when the United States has been on the receiving end of foreign disaster aid. Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, as well as COVID-19, expended so many resources in such a short time that other nations offered support, and the United States gratefully accepted. And the agency that was responsible for coordinating with the foreign nations and determining whether the resources were useful was the BHA. The cuts to BHA mean that there will be no specific agency that is responsible during national emergencies to coordinate with foreign disaster response organizations. And this means that federal, state, and local emer-

gency managers will be forced to set those relationships and coordinate that work themselves.

### Stopping the Spread of Disease

BHA often works with the Bureau of Global Health to respond to international disease outbreaks. The Bureau for Global Health also saw an enormous amount of funding cut, which means that diseases such as Ebola, Marburg virus, and antimicrobial-resistant infections will go untreated for millions of people around the world. This is bad enough for the people affected, but it also creates a very real risk that the uncontrolled spread overseas will cause an outbreak at home. Even diseases that are treatable in the United States, like tuberculosis, can, if unmanaged, mutate into drug-resistant strains. Many local and state emergency management agencies are not prepared to manage the response to diseases such as these, even if their medical systems can

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# Emergency Management Funding for Higher Education: Strategies, Success Stories, and Sustainable Growth

By Kevin Robins, Spokane Colleges, Emergency Management Specialist, Office of Campus Security

Operating an emergency management department on a shoestring budget is more common than you'd think, especially in community colleges and regional universities. And while I don't claim to be a subject matter expert, I've learned that knowing where to look (and who to ask) makes all the difference. With the right resources and a little creativity, even underfunded programs can build resilient, well-supported emergency management functions. This article covers not only internal and external funding sources but also best practices for making emergency management a permanent part of the institutional budget.

## Internal Funding Strategies

### 1. Crisis Fundraising – Yes, It's

**Legal and Effective:** In Washington State, for example, community colleges are legally permitted to conduct crisis fundraising, provided they follow the Washington Charitable Solicitations Act (RCW 19.09). Donor drives, giving campaigns, and foundation-backed appeals during emergencies can raise thousands of dollars for safety supplies, training, and capital improvements. The key is transparent messaging, registration with the Secretary of State, and clear recordkeeping.

Contact: [Washington Secretary of State – Charities Program](#), 1-800-332-4483

**2. Partnering with Institutional Advancement and Grants Offices:** Many colleges have advancement of-

fices that pursue grants for academics and infrastructure. Emergency management professionals can build bridges with these departments to explore funding opportunities. Creating joint proposals with departments like Facilities, IT, or Health Services can expand the reach and eligibility of your projects.

**3. Green Revolving Funds (GRFs):** Though usually tied to sustainability, GRFs can fund projects that improve both safety and energy efficiency—think solar-powered emergency lighting, or HVAC upgrades that support safe air quality during wildfire events. Harvard and Western Michigan University are known for successful GRFs, which reinvest savings into future projects.

## External Grant Opportunities

**1. FEMA Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG):** EMPG funding is available to local government agencies, including colleges if they partner with their local emergency management jurisdiction. Funds support planning, equipment, training, and exercises.

Contact: [FEMA Grants](#).

Ask your local emergency management agency about a partnership agreement.

**2. Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF):** While originally COVID-related, HEERF funding has been used to support a range of campus safety and emergency management projects, from mental health to continuity planning.

Contact: Office of Postsecondary Education – [HEERF@ed.gov](mailto:HEERF@ed.gov) or visit the [HEERF Website](#).

**3. State and Local Emergency Grants:** Washington's Department of Commerce and Emergency Management Division both offer grants that colleges can access directly or through local jurisdictions. Recent awards have funded hazard mitigation, public information tools, and alert systems.

## Best Practices for Building a Permanent Emergency Management Budget

Here's the tricky part—many emergency managers find themselves stuck in the grant-and-go cycle. So, how do you make emergency management a permanent fixture in your college's budget?

**1. Embed EM into the Institution's Strategic Plan:** If emergency preparedness isn't part of the institution's strategic goals or master plan, funding will always be reactive. Push for EM to be tied to strategic pillars such as student safety, campus sustainability, continuity of operations, and equity (especially in response and recovery).

**2. Connect EM to Accreditation and Compliance Requirements:** Emergency management plays a central role in Clery Act, Title IX, ADA, and NIMS compliance. Frame EM as a compliance-mandated function, not an optional add-on. Budgeting for it becomes more justifiable when tied to regulatory standards.

**3. Develop an Annual Emergency Management Report:** Build a clear, visual report that highlights your program:

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## Funding for Higher Education

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- Number of drills conducted.
- Trainings delivered.
- Emergency activations supported.
- Grant funds secured.
- Cost-avoidance measures implemented.

These reports can justify your program's return on investment and reinforce its importance to senior leadership.

**4. Pursue Cross-Departmental Budgeting:** Align with Facilities for shelter upgrades. Partner with IT for cybersecurity drills. Work with public affairs to share in the cost of mass notification tools. EM's overlap with other departments makes it uniquely positioned to benefit from shared budget lines.

**5. Start Small but Document Everything:** Even if you only get \$5,000 for an exercise program this year, track outcomes, participation, and engagement. Show growth and preparedness gains year over year. Build the case for expansion slowly but persistently.

## Success Stories from Higher Education

**Lamar Institute of Technology (Texas)**—Received a \$100,000 grant from Texas Mutual Insurance to create a Safety Awareness Institute. The program now trains over 2,300 students in workplace safety and emergency response annually.

Source: [Texas Mutual gives \\$100K to LIT safety institute](#)

**West Shore Community College (Michigan)**—Used a \$33,660 state grant to tackle student barriers, including transportation and emergency needs. EM staff were included in the implementation to coordinate support and preparedness education.

Source: [WSCC gains \\$33K grant](#)

[for student needs](#)

**University of Oregon (Oregon)**—Through strategic alignment with university fundraising goals, UO raised over \$2 billion in private support, some of which funded public safety infrastructure and emergency response capabilities.

Source: [Emergency Management & Continuity - Safety and Risk Services](#)

## Conclusion

Emergency management isn't just a cost center—it's a core capability for community resilience and institutional continuity. Even without deep expertise, you can start building a sustainable program by:

- Leveraging both public and private funding.
- Aligning with institutional goals and compliance needs.
- Demonstrating the value of preparedness through data and stories.

Emergency management deserves more than a leftover budget line. It deserves a seat at the table—and with persistence, partnerships, and a few good examples, you can make that happen. ♦

## Financial Cuts

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treat the patients. Emergency managers will need to find more funds to increase their medical and public health capabilities because of these overseas cuts.

## Cost to Restart

The cuts to BHA's lifesaving work are being felt around the world, but we know that they will not be felt forever. It is only a matter of time before a disaster happens somewhere of strategic importance to the United States, or of political importance, and the country feels the need to respond. And then we will see a dynamic that every emergency manager is familiar with—after cutting funding to preparedness, the price tag of the response will be excruciatingly high. The systems that BHA has spent decades building will be dissipating when the existing work moves to the state department, and the group of highly trained staff with expertise in responding to disasters overseas is all looking for new positions. While this system was not necessarily perfect, a sudden

demand for international disaster response will require inventing or restarting multiple systems. This inefficiency will have very real monetary and opportunity costs. ♦

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## It's Just Not in the Budget: A Reallocation of Risk and Funding

By Joe Tull, CEM, VaPEM, CGEMC, Emergency Management Specialist at  
Centers for Disease Control

**I**t's just not in the budget.— How many times have emergency managers been subjected to this statement? Let's be honest, emergency management costs money, and in a time of limited resources, the balancing act between "needs" and "wants" is extremely challenging. The growing demand for emergency management support across all mission areas of the National Preparedness Goal and the reduced or limited sources of funding create a large amount of stress in the system. NOAA has estimated that the total cost of the 403 weather and climate disasters since 1980 has exceeded \$2.945 trillion. (Puutio, 2025) Funding strategies that were often taken for granted or not largely impacted by recent trends no longer work. These impacts were recently felt by North Carolina and Arkansas when requests for FEMA funds were denied by the current administration. (Puutio, 2025) How do EMs ensure that the growing needs of their communities are met in a time of limited resources? This article seeks to highlight a few strategies to ensure EMs are best prepared to meet their "needs" and maybe fulfill some of those "wants."

### Current Model of EM Funding

For this article, local funding corresponds to the county level, where funding primarily comes from taxes, grants, and fees collected from residents and businesses. Property taxes, sales taxes, and income taxes constitute major revenue streams, while state and federal grants offer additional assistance for specific pro-

grams and projects. Most emergency management activities leverage local resources in support of annual requirements. While federal resources are available, many times the use of these funds directly correlates to the size of counties and their capacity to apply via the complex application process. Most counties dedicate zero to five percent of the county's total annual budget to emergency management and manage the funds within the county's general fund. (National Association of Counties, 2019)

Local governments are typically the first responders and the initial source of money; state and federal resources come into play as the scale of destruction and costs increase. The state's role in the system is twofold: First, states pay for disasters that are within their fiscal or logistical capacity to manage. Second, when disasters are too expensive for states to pay for themselves, they leverage their money to receive federal funds, typically, in the form of cost-sharing agreements through which the federal government partially or fully reimburses state and local expenditures. (Pew Charitable Trust, 2020) Federal assistance programs often serve as a lifeline for local government funding, enabling municipalities to leverage additional resources for critical projects. By aligning state and local objectives with federal initiatives, these programs help strengthen the overall governance and public service delivery in communities across the nation.

### By the Numbers

Ahead of a disaster, many counties (62 percent) adopt administrative and financial procedures that allow their emergency management activity (EMA) to expediently request, apply for, receive, manage, and expend funds during a local emergency or disaster. Counties also maintain a variety of insurance coverages. Data indicates that 43 percent of counties maintain private insurance, 41 percent participate in a statewide or regional insurance pool, 20 percent self-insure with reserved funds, and 49 percent maintain "rainy day" funds for emergencies and disasters. Beyond federal funding, counties primarily finance mitigation projects with state funding (35 percent) and local taxes (34 percent). Very few counties finance mitigation projects through public-private partnerships (nine percent) or with foundational funding (two percent). (National Association of Counties, 2019)

Outside of local funding sources and insurance, counties also participate in a variety of federal grant programs. The top five programs utilized by counties in support of emergency management activities include: FEMA Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) [82%], FEMA Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) [59%], FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) [52%], HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) [39%] and FEMA Hazard Mitigation Planning Program [35%]. (National Association of Counties, 2019)

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## It's Just Not in the Budget

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### Local Strategies

To be best prepared for funding requests, EMAs should get back to reaffirming what it is they will be asked to accomplish. Threat Hazard Identification and Risk Analysis (THIRA) and After Action Reviews should be reviewed for currency, and a complete review of the current service life of existing capabilities should also be accomplished. Once this has been completed, EMAs should create prioritized recommendations for funding decision-makers.

To get ahead of disasters, local emergency management activities have a variety of strategies at their disposal including:

- Readjusting funding for emergency plans away from federal sources with a renewed focus on state and local funding streams.
- Reinvesting in private partnerships with local and state logistics resources and working with NGOs to fill capability gaps.
- Working with communities to strengthen preparedness through training and other engagement opportunities, and strengthen CERT capacity and capabilities.
- Renewing mutual aid agreements and working with neighboring jurisdictions to ensure capabilities are met in support of community lifelines.

### State Strategies

Moving forward, states will need to scale up capacity rapidly, placing pressure on public budgets. Insurance markets may tighten. In places like Florida, where home insurance premiums are already skyrocketing due to hurricane risk, the absence of federal relief could make proper-

ties uninsurable. California has seen similar dynamics around wildfire risk, and there are few, if any, private-sector solutions that the market could sustain. In economic terms, this is a reallocation of risk across the system. But disaster response is not just an economic transaction. It is part of the social contract. (Puutio, 2025)

To get ahead of disasters, states have a variety of strategies at their disposal, including:

- Building on federal funding streams to enhance and expand mitigation and resilience projects.
- Offering tax credits, rebates, or other incentives to help accelerate the transition to more resilient infrastructure and to shore up protections against future disasters.
- Strengthening emergency management frameworks to account for a whole-of-government approach.
- Promoting collaboration among federal, state, territorial, tribal, and local government agencies. (Legislatures, 2023)

### Mitigation Spending

Shifting spending to mitigation can help at all levels of government. By comprehensively tracking how much money is spent on disaster assistance and assessing current budgeting practices, each level can make more strategic decisions, such as devoting more resources to mitigation strategies. When examining the return on mitigation investments in the contiguous forty-eight states, Pew found that, although the amount varies, every state saves at least three times as much in post-disaster recovery costs as it invests in mitigation. At the high end of the range, Kansas saved \$6.81 on average per dollar invested in mitigation between 1993 and 2016. (Pew Charitable Trust, 2020)

## Conclusion

Natural disasters, such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and wildfires, are inevitable, and stakeholders at all levels will continue to face the challenges of covering the many costs that come with them. All stakeholders can help manage the fiscal impacts of future events by implementing spending tracking, identifying opportunities to improve budgeting practices and prioritizing mitigation investments that can save money down the road. As budgets continue to be squeezed and disasters increase in frequency and severity, acting now is more important than ever. ♦

### Resources

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# EM Calendar

May 27-30	Texas Emergency Management Conference Fort Worth Convention Center Fort Worth, Texas
June 17	IAEM-USA Region 5 Virtual Conference
July 23-24	2025 Specialized Analytic Seminar Series: Privacy, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties U.S. DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Engagement Kansas City, Missouri
July 23-24	IAEM-USA Region 7 Conference
July 23-25	IAEM-USA Region 2 Conference
Aug.	Emergency Management Awareness Month
Aug. 12-13	IAEM-USA Region 9 Conference
Sept. 10-11	2025 Specialized Analytic Seminar Series: Critical Infrastructure U.S. DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Engagement Pembroke, New Hampshire

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