

NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT **2008**



FEMA
National Advisory Council

“Ensuring effective and ongoing coordination of our Nation’s preparedness for, protection against, response to, recovery from, and mitigation for all hazards.”

National Advisory Council Chair's Message



I was honored when FEMA Administrator R. David Paulison asked me to chair the newly created National Advisory Council, which was established to advise FEMA as it revamped our Nation's disaster preparedness and response. FEMA was facing a number of challenges in meeting the American public's expectations for effective and efficient delivery of Federal disaster assistance. The Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act outlined ambitious goals and strategies for improvement, including creation of the NAC.

The members appointed to this Council each possess tremendous experience, wisdom, and insight into disaster preparedness and response, and represent FEMA's many and diverse constituencies and stakeholder groups. With 35 Council members, we are uniquely able to thoroughly and efficiently provide FEMA with expertise and objective feedback on evolving policies affecting our Nation's overall preparedness and operational readiness.

The NAC has completed its first full year of service and has had many significant accomplishments. The Council has interacted with FEMA leadership and addressed many pressing issues facing our Nation including a review of FEMA's Strategic Plan. We have provided strategic input on the National Response Framework, the National Disaster Housing Strategy, and the National Incident Management System—seminal documents that define our Nation's emergency preparedness. Additionally, we have provided comments and recommendations on potential changes to legislative language, regulation, and policy relating to the Stafford Act. Council members are currently examining challenges faced by those with special needs in a disaster, along with researching best practices for establishing partnerships between the private and public sectors to promote a culture of preparedness. Throughout each of these significant activities, the Council has maintained its commitment to ensure that all individuals receive the support they need before, during, and after an emergency or disaster.

Upon entering its second year, the Council is poised to advance in its mission as it takes on the next level of FEMA issues. Strengthened by the broad expertise of our membership, the Council will continue to provide FEMA with invaluable input, advice and insight.

I know I speak for all the members of the Council when I say that we are proud to support FEMA's transformation to become the preeminent disaster response organization. Together, we can ensure that our Nation's full capabilities and resources are brought to bear when disaster strikes. Indeed, we have entered the era of a New FEMA, and it has been a tremendous honor to contribute to this transformation.

G. Kemble Bennett, Ph.D.
Vice Chancellor for Engineering
The Texas A&M University System

FEMA Administrator's Message



In 2006, in the aftermath of one of the most devastating disasters ever to strike our country, Congress enacted the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act. This legislation directed certain reforms, including the establishment of National Advisory Council (NAC) to engage the expertise of a broad range of stakeholders from across the nation. The purpose of the National Advisory Council is to “ensure effective and ongoing coordination of Federal preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation for natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.”

The National Advisory Council was formed at a critical time in the history of FEMA. Through the efforts of the men and women who volunteer to serve on this group, the Council has helped to shape key policy documents, such as the National Response Framework and the National Incident Management System, and is supporting efforts to chart the course for the New FEMA.

The NAC quickly endorsed the goals and missions set forth by the New FEMA and honed in on critical issues. Its subcommittees tackled timely and sensitive issues and provided advice and guidance based on the experience and expertise of their members. This first annual report of the National Advisory Council describes outcomes that have exceeded my expectations in terms of both actions accomplished and value to the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Department of Homeland Security.

I want to thank NAC Chairman Dr. G. Kemble “Kem” Bennett for his leadership and all the members of the National Advisory Council for their work in establishing the council and quickly turning it into a key element in the success of FEMA's mission. I believe that the processes that have been institutionalized for the National Advisory Council during this first year will be of great value to guide FEMA through the upcoming period of national transition and for many years to come.

R. David Paulison
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency

COUNCIL MISSION

To ensure effective and ongoing coordination of national preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation for natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters by:

- Incorporating input from tribal, State, and local governments, and the private sector;
- Providing an avenue for feedback, suggestions, and constructive criticisms from the diverse government, private-sector, and nonprofit partners involved in any disaster activities; and
- Providing a venue for input during the development and revision of the National Preparedness Goal, national preparedness system, National Incident Management System (NIMS), National Response Framework (NRF), and other related plans and strategies.

Operating under the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972, the NAC strives to provide objective advice and accessibility through open meetings, public involvement, and reporting.

HISTORY

Following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Congress passed the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006, which outlined a plan to implement lessons learned and revamp operations of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). One of the key lessons was the importance of an external advisory council as a vehicle for accountability and constructive criticism.

To help FEMA fulfill its vision of becoming “the Nation’s preeminent emergency management and preparedness agency,” the reforms included the creation of the National Advisory Council (NAC) to advise the FEMA Administrator on all aspects of emergency management to ensure effective and ongoing coordination of Federal preparedness for, protection against, response to, recovery from, and mitigation for natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.



The NAC meets quarterly and incorporates input from its 35 geographically and professionally diverse Council members representing State, tribal, and local governments and the private sector in its recommendations and advice to FEMA. The Council’s work includes providing recommendations on the development and revision of the National Preparedness Goal, the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the National Response Framework (NRF), and other related plans and strategies.

From October 2007 to August 2008, the Council's accomplishments included:

- Providing valuable feedback on FEMA's Strategic Plan, including recommendations on how to implement it and measure its success.
- Supplying key input on the development and implementation of the National Response Framework, the National Incident Management System, and the National Disaster Housing Strategy.
- Opening lines of communication to help engage the private sector in emergency management and in realizing the vision of the New FEMA.
- Recommending the creation of a Regional Disability Coordinator position within each of the 10 FEMA regions.
- Participating in a FEMA initiative to review and provide input on potential regulatory and policy issues under the Stafford Act before the formal legislative process begins.

OVERALL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The first major step for the National Advisory Council was appointing its membership, drawn from a geographic and substantive cross-section of individuals in the fields of emergency management, emergency response, health science, standards setting, infrastructure protection, communications, disabilities, and local and tribal government. These members represent influential, high-level senior leaders of their organizations, stakeholder groups, the private sector, and the public, and their diversity of experience and backgrounds provides FEMA with the best possible input from the customer community of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Once in place, the Council worked quickly to develop its organizational structure and established a process for conducting business, which included forming subcommittees that would help achieve the Council's mission. The Council currently includes two standing subcommittees—the NRF and NIMS subcommittees, and four ad-hoc subcommittees that address Post-Disaster Housing, Public/Private Partnerships, Special Needs, and the Stafford Act.

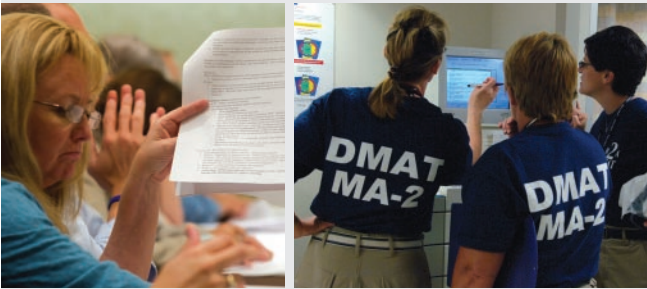
The Council has also engaged in important collaboration with other advisory councils. Though there is no formal connection between the NAC and the Regional Advisory Councils (RACs), the value of information-sharing between them is clear. To establish effective communication between the National Advisory Council and the RACs, reports on the RACs have become a standard agenda item at NAC meetings, keeping Council members abreast of important issues across all the FEMA Regions.

With a sense of purpose and momentum, the Council approaches the transition into the next year, ready to continue its work supporting the Nation's preeminent emergency management agency and establishing a national culture of preparedness.

National Response Framework (NRF) Subcommittee

SUBCOMMITTEE PURPOSE:

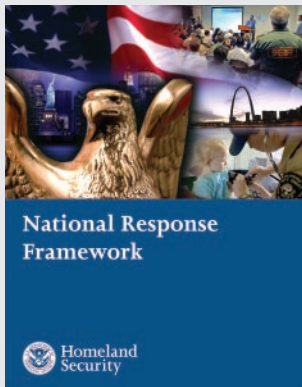
The National Response Framework (NRF) Subcommittee's purpose is to provide input on modifications to the NRF, offer strategies for dissemination of the Framework and other related plans, and assist with developing meaningful and relevant training programs on the integration and implementation of the NRF.



BACKGROUND:

The NRF is a guide to how the Nation conducts all-hazards response. It is built upon scalable, flexible, and adaptable coordinating structures to align key roles and responsibilities across the Nation. The Framework describes specific authorities and best practices for managing incidents that range from the serious but purely local, to large-scale terrorist attacks or catastrophic natural disasters.

National Response Framework (NRF) Subcommittee



ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

After the final version of the NRF was released, the subcommittee and other Council members familiarized themselves with the Framework by completing the online training (EMI IS-800b). As items are added to the NRF Resource Center, subcommittee members review them and provide comments. The NRF Subcommittee recognizes the strength of the NRF is the Resource Center and will provide support and advice for the development of the tools and resources provided there.



The subcommittee has advised FEMA on:

- Familiarizing response partners about NRF guiding principles and structures.
- Creating a standardized message, developing a speakers' bureau, and supporting regional training deliveries.
- Establishing a comprehensive training plan for integrating new information from the NRF into existing training and exercise programs.

Subcommittee members continue to support the successful implementation of the NRF by all response partners.

National Incident Management System (NIMS) Subcommittee

SUBCOMMITTEE PURPOSE:

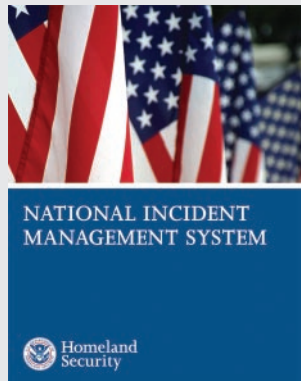
The purpose of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Subcommittee is to offer guidance and recommendations to the Administrator for revisions and implementation of the NIMS.



BACKGROUND:

NIMS provides a consistent, nationwide template that enables response partners at all levels to work together to prepare for, prevent, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity. NIMS uses a systematic approach to integrate the best existing processes and methods into a unified national framework for incident management.

National Incident Management System (NIMS) Subcommittee



ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Following the release of the NRF, FEMA coordinated a final review and revision of the NIMS document, seeking ideas, advice, and deliberations from the NAC. NIMS Subcommittee members helped strengthen this system by advocating for a stronger connection between the Incident Command System principles that represent best practices in emergency management and the Emergency Support Functions that operate during coordinated Federal responses to disasters. The subcommittee



offered suggestions on ways to more clearly define the relationships between the NRF and NIMS for response partners at all levels. Subcommittee members also offered a detailed analysis of the document, providing suggested wording to reduce potential post-disaster liability issues. The subcommittee is now shifting focus toward ensuring effective implementation, evaluating training materials and delivery, and maximizing understanding and usage of the NIMS across all levels of government and emergency responders.

Post-Disaster Housing Subcommittee

SUBCOMMITTEE PURPOSE:

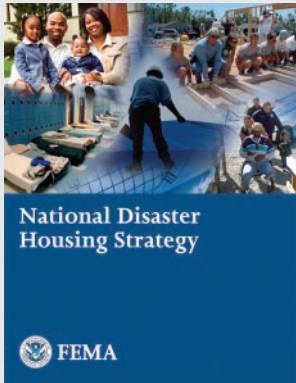
The purpose of the Post-Disaster Housing Subcommittee is to provide FEMA with recommendations regarding:

- Prioritized standards/criteria for use in determining appropriate post-disaster housing strategies;
- Alternative transitional housing options that FEMA should consider beyond the current practices for use in applicant housing; and
- FEMA's role in assisting State, tribal, and local governments with operational planning and implementation regarding post-disaster housing policies, options, and practices.



BACKGROUND:

The National Disaster Housing Strategy describes how we as a Nation currently provide housing to those affected by disasters. The Strategy is based on the premise that all levels of government and the nonprofit and private sectors must be engaged in helping meet the urgent housing needs of disaster victims for safe refuge while enabling individuals, households, and communities to rebuild, and to restore their way of life.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

The Post-Disaster Housing Subcommittee worked with FEMA, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Health and Human Services to provide key input on the development of the National Disaster Housing Strategy. Using FEMA's previous transitional housing program along with the lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina, the subcommittee provided FEMA with a new framework for transitional housing, a toolbox for transitional housing solutions, and recommendations for FEMA's next steps in the development and implementation of the National Disaster Housing Strategy.

The Strategy called for the creation of a National Disaster Housing Task Force, which will create a concept of operations and help implement solutions. The subcommittee made a number of recommendations to FEMA about ways to maximize the efficacy of this task force, including the establishment of an advisory committee to the task force, with participation from subcommittee members to interface with the NAC.

The subcommittee created a task force on "Wrap-Around Services" to provide FEMA with guidance on a holistic approach to the needed community and government services after recognizing that effective post-disaster housing encompasses more than just facilities, subcommittee members continue to provide recommendations for the direction, operational options, and implementation of the National Disaster Housing Strategy.



SUBCOMMITTEE PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Public/Private Partnerships Subcommittee is to determine how FEMA can facilitate the public/private sector partnerships at the local, tribal, State, and Federal levels to establish a culture of preparedness across the Nation for all hazards.



BACKGROUND:

Government agencies are responsible for protecting the lives and property of their citizens and promoting their well-being; however, the private sector is a key partner in local, tribal, State, and Federal incident management activities. As such, in nearly every aspect of an incident, the government works with private-sector groups as partners in emergency management.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

The private sector is a vital component of the Nation's response, recovery, and solution process. The Public/Private Partnerships Subcommittee worked to identify potential barriers to inclusion of private-sector partners during emergency response. Subcommittee members have researched best practices in the establishment of partnerships, evaluated current trends, worked to define protocols for sharing information, and identified the need for public education in achieving the goal of institutionalizing a culture of preparedness.



With the help of the National Emergency Management Association, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and other trade associations, the subcommittee is working to apply best practices and cultivate partnerships that will enhance the Nation's readiness through planning, training, and exercising.

The subcommittee continues to gather valuable information from public and private entities across the country.

SUBCOMMITTEE PURPOSE:

To expand the office of the National Disabilities Coordinator to fully integrate the definition of Special Needs as written in the National Response Framework, to further enhance the office by the inclusion of faith-based and special needs volunteer programs, and to assure full integration and coordination with the Interagency Coordinating Council.



BACKGROUND:

The needs of all community members must be understood and accommodated when preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies and disasters.

The National Response Framework defines special-needs populations as those whose members may have additional needs before, during, and after an incident in functional areas, including but not limited to: maintaining independence, communications, transportation, supervision, and medical care. Individuals in need of additional response assistance may include those who have disabilities; who live in institutionalized settings; who are elderly; who are children; who are from diverse cultures; who have limited English proficiency or are non-English speaking; or who are transportation disadvantaged.

Special Needs Subcommittee



ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

The Special Needs Subcommittee has made great strides toward ensuring that all individuals receive the support they need before, during, and after an emergency or disaster.

The subcommittee recommended an outreach strategy for educating particular populations in an accessible way about the New FEMA, and sought to increase visibility on FEMA programs affecting special needs populations.

Subcommittee members conducted an in depth review of the Comprehensive Planning Guidance 301 Interim Emergency Management Planning Guidance for Special Needs and provided valuable feedback on the document.

The subcommittee advised institutionalizing a regional approach by enhancing the role and placement of the National Disabilities Coordinator, and by establishing a Disability Coordinator position in each of the 10 FEMA Regions. In a measure unanimously approved by the Council, the subcommittee recommended the addition of Regional Disability Coordinators, who would link to State Disability Coordinators, serve as the coordination point for existing FEMA/DHS programs, and deploy as representatives during disasters.

The subcommittee explored existing opportunities and initiatives such as Senior Corps and the Office of Faith-Based Initiatives. Subcommittee members are continuing their work on behalf of special needs populations in determining how to ensure transportation is available for all who need it during evacuations.

SUBCOMMITTEE PURPOSE:

The Stafford Act Subcommittee was convened to evaluate, examine, and provide input on the provisions of the Stafford Act and related Federal regulations and policies and recommend any changes that would enhance the ability of FEMA and its partners to effectively prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of emergencies and disasters. The subcommittee will place priority on identifying areas where changes in the implementation regulations and policy can most quickly and directly result in greater flexibility in providing assistance.



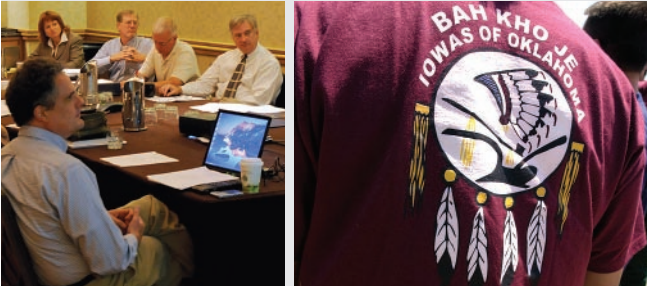
BACKGROUND:

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act constitutes the statutory authority for most Federal disaster response activities. The Stafford Act authorizes the programs and processes by which the Federal Government provides disaster and emergency assistance to State and local governments, tribal governments, eligible private nonprofit organizations, and individuals affected by a declared major disaster or emergency. The Stafford Act covers all hazards, including natural disasters and terrorist events.

Stafford Act Subcommittee

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Subcommittee members provided specific input and recommendations on seven regulatory issues identified by FEMA as requiring updates or review. The subcommittee's input focused on an overall statement as to the viability of the proposed change to regulations and identified specific issues or recommendations for FEMA to consider when revising the regulations. In addition, the subcommittee reviewed stakeholder suggestions for potential changes in legislative language, regulations, and policy of the Stafford Act. The subcommittee's future goals include reviewing and commenting on identified policy recommendations, and providing formal recommendations for improvement to the Stafford Act based on stakeholder input.



Subcommittee members are helping to shape the future of our Nation's emergency management systems by providing advice and expertise before new regulations and policies are developed.

Partnerships are essential to our national preparedness. As FEMA moves forward to achieving its goals, the Council will continue to serve as an advisor to ensure strong partnerships with State, tribal, and local officials, as well as the private sector.

The NAC has an extensive mandate from Congress and an ambitious agenda for next year. NAC members will assess opportunities to streamline FEMA's grants process. The Stafford Act Subcommittee will continue its important work on easing the administration requirements for Public and Individual Assistance programs. The Special Needs Subcommittee will focus on special needs and disabilities transportation issues during evacuation. Both the NIMS and NRF Subcommittees will be studying how FEMA might improve implementing the NIMS and NRF on all levels. In addition, a new working group will examine the National Urban Search and Rescue program, looking specifically into ways to strengthen stakeholder relationships and to integrate more seamlessly into FEMA's processes. The work of the six subcommittees will continue and will evolve to meet new challenges.

An important characteristic of the NAC is that it is structured to allow feedback on national policies and guidelines, yet flexible enough to react to specific needs as they arise. While the Council was created in the aftermath of Katrina, our Nation learns lessons from every incident. The NAC is impressed with the direction and progress of the New FEMA and looks forward to supporting its future leadership. Whatever the future brings the members of the National Advisory Council stand ready to support our Nation's preeminent disaster response organization.

National Advisory Council Members

G. Kemble “Kem” Bennett, Ph.D., Chair, National Advisory Council, Vice Chancellor for Engineering
The Texas A&M University System

Robert Gougelet, M.D., Vice Chair, National Advisory Council, Assistant Professor of Medicine
Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center

Richard “Dick” Andrews, Ph.D., Senior Advisor for Homeland Security
National Center for Crisis and Continuity Coordination (NC4)

David Barron, Government Relations Advisor
Adams and Reese

Ann Beauchesne, Vice President, National Security & Emergency Preparedness Department
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Joseph Becker, Senior Vice President – Disaster Services
American Red Cross

Honorable Michael Brown, Mayor
Grand Forks, North Dakota

Joseph Bruno, Commissioner
New York’s Office of Emergency Management

Stephen Cassidy, President
Uniformed Firefighters Association of Greater New York

Christina Lynne Catlett, M.D., Associate Director
The Johns Hopkins Office of Critical Event Preparedness and Response (CEPAR)

Irene Collins, Executive Director
Alabama Department of Senior Services

Robert Connors, Director of Preparedness
Raytheon Company

Russell Decker, Vice President
International Association of Emergency Managers

John Didion, Sheriff
Pacific County (Washington)

Nancy Dragani, Executive Director
Ohio Emergency Management Agency

Cathey Eide, Special Programs Coordinator
Oakland Fire Department, EMS Division (California)

Angelia Mary Elgin, Paramedic
University City Fire Department (Missouri)

Lee Feldman, City Manager
City of Palm Bay, Florida

Joanne Hayes-White, Chief
San Francisco Fire Department (California)

John Wesley Hines, Representative (D) –
2nd Congressional District
Mississippi House of Representatives

Charles Kmet, Emergency Management Administrator
Tohono O’Dham Department of Public Safety (Arizona)

Kurt Krumperman, Corporate Vice President – Federal Affairs
Rural Metro Association

John Lancaster, Executive Director
National Council on Independent Living

Major General John William Libby, Adjutant General
Maine National Guard

Suzanne Mencer, Policy Director
Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck LLC

Kenneth Miller, M.D., Medical Director
Orange County Fire Authority (California)

Kenneth Murphy, Director
Oregon Emergency Management (OEM)

Albert Nájera, Chief
Sacramento Police Department (California)

Gerald Parker, D.V.M., Ph.D., Principal Deputy to the Assistant Secretary,
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response
Department of Health and Human Services

James Paturas, Deputy Director
Yale New Haven Center for Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Response

Philip Reiting, Director – Trustworthy Computing
Microsoft

Mark Shriver, Vice President/Managing Director – U.S. Programs
Save the Children

John Stensgar, Elected Member
Colville Confederated Tribes Business Council (Washington)

Susanne M. Torriente, Chief Assistant County Manager
Miami-Dade County (Florida)

Peter Verga, Principal Assistant Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense



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