Office of Inspector General

FEMA's Progress in Implementing Employee Credentials

Why This Matters

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) must have a trained, effective disaster workforce to carry out its mission. In 2006, Congress passed the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act, as amended, which created a basis for the credentialing of emergency response providers. Credentialing is defined by the Agency as a system for qualification and certification of the FEMA workforce through experience, training, and demonstrated performance.

DHS Response

FEMA concurred with the three recommendations. According to FEMA, 1) three FEMA Qualification System documents will be finalized that will provide the doctrine and overarching guidance to enable FEMA to formulate the plan in the recommendation; 2) leadership has identified and committed to use the Bureau of Land Management's Incident Qualifications and Certification System with implementation scheduled for October 1, 2012; and 3) a plan and budget for course development and revision has been developed but budget approval has not been received.

For Further Information:

Contact our Office of Public Affairs at (202)254-4100, or email us at DHS-OIG.OfficePublicAffairs@dhs.gov

What We Determined

FEMA has not completed implementation of its credentialing program, known as the FEMA Qualification System. FEMA has not identified an information technology system to track the training, development, and deployment of disaster employees. It does not have a detailed information technology plan, documented costs, projected schedule, and capability and/or performance requirements to support the information technology implementation. Once implemented, the FEMA Qualification System credentialing program should strengthen FEMA's ability to deliver high-quality and efficient services during disaster response.

What We Recommend

FEMA's Director, Incident Workforce Management Office:

1) Establish and implement an approved FEMA Qualification System project plan, with defined metrics and time frames that ensure adequate project planning and program transparency.

2) Implement a comprehensive information technology system to track credentialing, training, and deployment information. In doing so, consider using commercial off-the-shelf systems.

3) Develop a detailed plan and budget for the training and course development needed to implement the FEMA Qualification System.