

William Craig Fugate



W. Craig Fugate served as President Barack Obama's FEMA Administrator from May 2009 to January 2017. Previously, he served as Florida Governor Jeb Bush's Emergency Management Director from 2001-2009. Fugate led FEMA through multiple record-breaking disaster years and oversaw the Federal Government's response to major events such as the Joplin and Moore Tornadoes, Hurricane Sandy, Hurricane Matthew, and the 2016 Louisiana flooding. Fugate set a clear and compelling vision, mission, and priorities for FEMA and relentlessly drove the Agency to achieve better outcomes for survivors. FEMA's effectiveness in dealing with more than 500 Presidentially-declared major disasters and emergencies under Fugate's leadership restored the faith of the American people in the Federal Government's ability to respond to disasters. Prior to his tenure at FEMA, Fugate was widely praised for his management, under Governor Jeb Bush, of the devastating effects of the 2004 and 2005 Florida hurricane seasons (Charley, Frances, Ivan, Jeanne, Dennis, Katrina, and Wilma).

Fugate's strategy of setting ambitious goals, establishing clear expectations, and pushing people out of their comfort zones drove FEMA to achieve more in a shorter period of time than many believed possible. Fugate established a leadership culture within FEMA in which taking risks and leaning forward to meet the needs of survivors became a baseline expectation. Fugate established a sweeping policy requiring all FEMA employees to have a disaster role in addition to their day-job. Fugate instituted a comprehensive academic and experiential qualification system for the Agency's disaster workforce and created thirteen National and Regional Incident Management Assistance Teams to deploy early in support of state, local, tribal, and territorial partners.

During his tenure, Fugate focused not only on restoring FEMA's response capabilities but on promoting emergency management as a community and shared responsibility. Fugate instituted a permanent effort to build the nation's capacity to stabilize a catastrophic event within 72 hours. He drove completion of Presidential policy on national preparedness and implemented the National Preparedness System to build unity of effort to address the nation's most significant risks. On Fugate's watch, FEMA awarded more than \$19 billion in preparedness grants, supported more than 700 drills and exercises in 47 states, and had more than 40 million participants take part in grassroots community preparedness drills.

FEMA under Fugate's leadership fostered a balanced, community-oriented approach to emergency management that builds sustainable and resilient communities before and after disaster strikes. FEMA invested more than \$7 billion in hazard mitigation assistance during Fugate's tenure even as the Agency took steps to require disaster grantees to rebuild to hazard-resistant codes and standards in FEMA-funded post-disaster grant projects. During Fugate's tenure, rates of adoption for disaster resilient building codes nationwide increased from 40% in 2009 to 63% in 2016. Fugate also provided Federal Government-wide leadership on reducing disaster risk through efforts to develop for President Obama's approval executive orders that reduce the Nation's flood, earthquake, and wildfire risk through managed Federal investment in hazard-prone areas.

Fugate was a tireless advocate for technology and innovation in emergency management. FEMA's use of technology to support operations and enable decision-making flourished under Fugate's leadership and FEMA led the Federal Government in freeing its data and allowing the general public to make use of it. Fugate oversaw a dramatic increase in online registration for Federal disaster

assistance through a streamlined, single front-door portal. He also directed the creation of a FEMA App that enables FEMA response efforts through public reporting functionality, supports individuals and families with preparedness tips and hazard alerts, and helps survivors access FEMA assistance when disaster strikes.

FEMA under Fugate's leadership resolved significant, long-standing management challenges. He renewed FEMA's career senior executive service cadre, prioritizing leadership capability and management acumen over specific expertise and ensuring the cadre's ability to take on a broad array of management challenges. Fugate cut red tape and increased clarity by streamlining or eliminating outdated and confusing policies, slashing the Agency's inventory of policies from more than 2,000 to fewer than 200. Fugate also resolved a dramatic backlog of open Government Accountability Office and Inspector General recommendations, decreasing in the number of findings levied on the Agency each year.

Prior to his service in the Obama Administration, Fugate served as Florida's Emergency Management Director. As the State Coordinating Officer for 11 Presidentially-declared disasters, he managed more than \$4 billion in Federal disaster assistance. In 2004, Fugate managed the largest Federal disaster response in Florida history as four major hurricanes - Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne - impacted the state in quick succession. In 2005, Florida was again impacted by major disasters when three more hurricanes - Dennis, Katrina, and Wilma - made landfall in the state. The impact from Katrina was felt more strongly in the Gulf coast states to the west but Florida launched the largest mutual aid response in its history in support of those states. Under Fugate's stewardship, Florida's emergency management program became the first statewide program in the Nation to receive full accreditation from the Emergency Management Accreditation Program.

In 2016, he was the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) Lacy E. Suiter Award honoree for lifetime achievements and contributions in the field of emergency management.

Fugate and his wife Sheree now reside in Gainesville, Florida.

In 2017, Fugate formed Craig Fugate Consulting LL to pursue his goals of building a more resilient nation and train the next generation of emergency managers