



**Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

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March 6, 2020

**SUMMARY OF SUBJECT MATTER**

**TO:** Members, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and  
Emergency Management  
**FROM:** Staff, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency  
Management  
**RE:** Subcommittee Hearing on “FEMA’s Priorities for 2020 and Beyond: Coordinating  
Mission and Vision”

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**PURPOSE**

The Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management will meet on Wednesday, March 11, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. in 2167 Rayburn House Office Building, to receive testimony on “FEMA’s Priorities for 2020 and Beyond: Coordinating Mission and Vision” from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator Peter T. Gaynor.

With the January confirmation of Admin. Gaynor, FEMA once again has a non-interim leader. With his confirmation, the February release of the President’s FY21 budget request, the release of a revised Publication One in November 2019, an updated and streamlined Strategic Plan in March 2018, and continuing demand for Federal disaster assistance resulting from significant disaster activity across the Nation in recent years, the Subcommittee looks forward to receiving the Administrator’s testimony.

As recent hearings have illustrated, the Federal government’s disaster recovery programs and personnel continue to be under pressure to work to help communities recover from several of the costliest natural disasters in the Nation’s history.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See *An Assessment of Federal Recovery Efforts from Recent Disasters*. Hearing before the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, October 22, 2019. See also *Disaster Preparedness: DRR Implementation and FEMA Readiness*. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, May 22, 2019.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **FEMA's Priorities and Focus – 2018-2022**

In March 2018, FEMA simplified its mission statement and released its Strategic Plan for 2018-2022.<sup>2</sup> The new mission statement is “FEMA’s mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters.”<sup>3</sup> The 2018-2022 edition of the strategic plan streamlined the five priorities and 16 objectives from the previous edition (2014-2018) to three goals and 12 objectives:<sup>4</sup>

Goal 1) Build a Culture of Preparedness

Objective 1.1) Incentivize Investments that Reduce Risk, Including Pre-disaster Mitigation, and Reduce Disaster Costs at All Levels

Objective 1.2) Close the Insurance Gap

Objective 1.3) Help People Prepare for Disasters

Objective 1.4) Better Learn from Past Disasters, Improve Continuously, and Innovate

Goal 2) Ready the Nation for Catastrophic Disasters

Objective 2.1) Organize the “BEST” (Build, Empower, Sustain, and Train) Scalable and Capable Incident Workforce

Objective 2.2) Enhance Intergovernmental Coordination through FEMA Integration Teams

Objective 2.3) Posture FEMA and the Whole Community to Provide Life-Saving and Life-Sustaining Commodities, Equipment, and Personnel from all Available Sources

Objective 2.4) Improve Continuity and Resilient Communications Capabilities

Goal 3) Reduce the Complexity of FEMA

Objective 3.1) Streamline the Disaster Survivor and Grantee Experience

Objective 3.2) Mature the National Disaster Recovery Framework

Objective 3.3) Develop Innovative Systems and Business Processes that Enable FEMA’s Employees to Rapidly and Effectively Deliver the Agency’s Mission

Objective 3.4) Strengthen Grants Management, Increase Transparency, and Improve Data Analytics

This strategic plan was developed in the wake of some of the costliest and most devastating natural disasters FEMA has worked to respond to since being established in 1979.<sup>5</sup> The current plan reflects lessons learned and accomplishments from the prior plan. However, some external stakeholders expressed dissatisfaction with the level of engagement and input from whole community partners in the development of the current plan.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> FEMA 2018-2022 Strategic Plan. Available at [https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1533052524696-b5137201a4614ade5e0129ef01cbf661/strat\\_plan.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1533052524696-b5137201a4614ade5e0129ef01cbf661/strat_plan.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Id at 6.

<sup>4</sup> Id at 11.

<sup>5</sup> Id at 8.

<sup>6</sup> <https://adapt.org/press-release-demands-fema-to-cancel-strategic-planning-meeting/>. See also <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/03/15/594140026/fema-drops-climate-change-from-its-strategic-plan>.

In addition to the updated Strategic Plan, FEMA more recently released a revamped Publication One (Pub 1), a document that FEMA describes as its capstone document to “understand our role in the emergency management community and provides direction for how we conduct ourselves and make decisions each day. The intent of our Pub 1 is to promote innovation, flexibility, and performance in achieving our mission. It promotes unity of purpose, guides professional judgment, and enables each of us to fulfill our responsibilities.”<sup>7</sup>

Pub 1 defines FEMA’s core values as compassion, integrity, fairness, and respect. The stated guiding principles are: accessibility, accountability, empowerment, engagement, flexibility, getting results, preparation, stewardship, and teamwork.<sup>8</sup>

### **Highlights of President’s FY21 FEMA Budget Request**

While briefing the Committee staff on the President’s FY21 budget request, FEMA stressed the following for the coming fiscal year:<sup>9</sup>

- Continuing to advance the priorities outlined in its FY 2018–2022 Strategic Plan and implementation of the requirements of the Disaster Recovery Reform Act and Pub 1;
- Focusing on filling critical gaps in the Incident Management (IM) Workforce to improve force strength, employee qualifications, and overall readiness to respond to disasters throughout the country;
- Prioritizing resources to ensure expeditious and fair review of allegations of misconduct or harassment by employees through our Office of Professional Responsibility; and
- Investing in FEMA’s real property requirements to ensure the Agency can adequately train its workforce, quickly distribute life-saving commodities, and provide effective recovery services to survivors.

Additionally, the FEMA previewed several legislative proposals currently pending with the Office of Management and Budget. These draft proposals include:

- **Public Assistance Federal Cost Share Adjustment Proposal** – would phase out federal support for repairing buildings and equipment; encourages more effective risk management, increased mitigation investment, and decreased federal disaster costs.
- **Assistance to Individuals and Households Federal Cost Share Adjustment Proposal** – would make the states responsible for no more than 25% of all eligible costs; encourages greater state ownership of housing assistance, promotes shared responsibility, and reduces federal disaster costs.
- **25% Non-Federal Cost Match Proposal** – would establish a local match for remaining preparedness grants that currently lack a local share: State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP), Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), and Transit Security Grant Program (TSGP). This proposal would establish a consistent cost share requirement across all of the preparedness grants.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.fema.gov/pub1>

<sup>8</sup> <https://emilms.fema.gov/IS822/groups/38.html>

<sup>9</sup> Ben Moncarz, Acting Chief Financial Officer at FEMA, briefed Committee staff on the President’s Fiscal Year 2021 budget request on February 20, 2020.

- **National Security and Resilience Grant Program Legislative Proposal** – a proposed consolidation of existing preparedness grants to a single \$406.9M pot of money to remain available until September 30, 2022, to provide financial assistance on a competitive basis to non-Federal entities to address specific, existing, and emerging threats as identified and prioritized by the Secretary through the Administrator
- **National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Affordability Proposal** – would establish a targeted means-tested affordability program for policyholders residing in the Special Flood Hazard Area who cannot afford rate increases mandated under current law.<sup>10</sup>

It is unknown if or when these legislative proposals will be released publicly, but some reflect issues the Agency has raised in prior years without action on the proposals.

Below are funding tables comparing FY20 enacted appropriations with FY21 Administration proposals for key FEMA programs and Federal assistance:

**DISASTER RELIEF AND MITIGATION<sup>11</sup>**  
(in millions)

Program	FY 2020 Enacted	FY 2021 Authorized	FY 2021 President's Budget	Diff. of FY 2021 Pres. Budget and FY 2020 Enacted	
				\$	%
Disaster Relief Fund (DRF)	\$17,863.2	Such sums as necessary	\$5,653.3	-\$12,209.9	-68.4%
Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM)	\$0 <sup>A</sup>	Authorized in Stafford Act Sec. 203(i) <sup>B</sup>	\$0.5 <sup>C</sup>	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$17,863.2</b>		<b>\$6,133.1</b>	<b>-\$12,209.9</b>	<b>-68.4%</b>

<sup>A,B</sup> No money was appropriated by Congress to Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) for FY20, but the Agency utilized the 6 percent set-aside established in Sec. 1234 of the *Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018* (DRRA, Division D of P.L. 115-254) to fund PDM grants for the FY19 grants cycle and will do so again for the FY20 cycle, for which a Notice of Funding Opportunity is expected in the late summer/early fall of FY20.

<sup>B</sup> To more permanently address the need for authorization and dedicated funding for Pre-Disaster Mitigation, the *Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018* (DRRA, Division D of P.L. 115-254) amended the *Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act* to establish a National Public Infrastructure Predisaster Mitigation Assistance program, funded by a six percent set-aside from the Disaster Relief Fund, based on the estimated aggregate amount of the grants made pursuant to Stafford sections 403, 406, 407, 408, 410, 416, and 428 for major disasters.

<sup>C</sup> This request is to support three FTEs to implement the National Public Infrastructure Predisaster Mitigation Assistance program.

<sup>10</sup> Presentation of the Fiscal Year 2021 President's Budget for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Delivered to House staff on February 20, 2020. Slide deck available upon request.

<sup>11</sup> Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency – Budget Overview, Fiscal Year 2021 Congressional Submission. Available at [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/federal\\_emergency\\_management\\_agency.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/federal_emergency_management_agency.pdf)

**FEDERAL ASSISTANCE: GRANTS<sup>12</sup>**

(in millions)

Program	FY 2020 Enacted	FY 2021 Authorized	FY 2021 President's Budget	Diff. of FY 2021 Pres. Budget and FY 2020 enacted	
				\$	%
Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG)	\$355.0	\$750 <sup>D</sup>	\$344.3	-\$10.7	-3.1%
Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP)	\$125	\$187.5 <sup>E</sup>	\$0	\$125	-100%
Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG)	\$355.0	\$950 <sup>F</sup>	\$279.3	-\$75.7	-21.4%
Flood Hazard Mapping and Risk Analysis Program (Risk Map)	\$263	\$263 <sup>G</sup>	\$100	-\$163	-61.9%
High Risk Dam Safety (HHPD)	\$10	\$40 <sup>H</sup>	\$0	-\$10	-100%
National Security and Resilience Grant Program (NSRGP)	N/A	Pending Legislative Proposal	406.9	\$406.9	N/A
Port Security Grant Program (PSGP)	\$100	\$400 <sup>I</sup>	36.3	-\$63.6	-63.6%
Presidential Residence Protection Assistance (PRPA)	\$41	Authorization via Appropriations	\$0	-\$41	-100%
Public Transportation Security Assistance and Railroad Security Assistance (TGSP)	\$100	\$1,100 <sup>J</sup>	36.3	-\$63.6	-63.6%
Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program (RCPGP)	\$10	Authorization via Appropriations	\$0	-\$10	-100%
Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grants	\$355.0	\$750 <sup>D</sup>	\$344.3	-\$10.7	-3.1%
State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP)	\$560	Such sums as are necessary <sup>K</sup>	\$331.9	-\$228.1	-40.7%
Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI)	\$665	Such sums as are necessary <sup>L</sup>	\$426.5	-\$238.5	-35.9%
Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention Grant Program (TVTP)	\$10	Authorization via Appropriations	\$20	\$10	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,949</b>	<b>\$4,440.5</b>	<b>\$2,325.8</b>	<b>-\$623.2</b>	<b>-21.1%</b>

<sup>D</sup> The *United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act of 2017* (P.L. 115-98) reauthorized AFG and SAFER through FY 2023.

<sup>E</sup> The *Housing and Community Development Act of 1992* (P.L. 102-550) reauthorized EFSP.

<sup>F</sup> The *Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007* (P.L. 110-53) reauthorized EMPG.

<sup>G</sup> The *Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020* (P.L. 116-94) extended the National Flood Insurance Program and reauthorized Risk Map through FY 2020.

<sup>H</sup> The *Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act* (P.L. 114-322) authorized the HHPD.

<sup>I</sup> The *Security and Accountability for Every Port Act of 2006* (P.L. 109-357) authorized the PSGP.

<sup>J</sup> The *Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007* (P.L. 110-53) reauthorized TGSP.

<sup>12</sup> Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency – Budget Overview, Fiscal Year 2021 Congressional Submission. Available at [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/federal\\_emergency\\_management\\_agency.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/federal_emergency_management_agency.pdf).

<sup>K</sup>The *Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007* (P.L. 110-53) reauthorized SHSGP.

<sup>L</sup>The *Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007* (P.L. 110-53) reauthorized UASI.

## FEMA's Challenges

There are several significant challenges facing FEMA that — combined or alone — could be devastating blows to an organization that had seemingly recovered from the failings of Katrina. Some questioned the effectiveness of the Agency following the devastation in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands in the fall of 2017 following the impacts of Irma and Maria,<sup>13</sup> and the subsequent resignation of former Administrator Brock Long.

FEMA has tried to reframe and focus its work since 2017: revising its mission statement (“Helping people before, during, and after disasters.”<sup>14</sup>); releasing a streamlined strategic plan; and repeatedly stressing that disasters are “federally supported, state managed, and locally executed.”<sup>15</sup> That said, several hurdles exist to effectively converting these priorities into realities:

- **Senior leadership vacancies (HQ and Regions):** Two of FEMA’s three Presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed (PAS) leadership positions remain vacant: Deputy Administrator and Deputy Administrator for Resilience. Additionally, there are several vacancies and/or acting career and political Senior Executive Service (SES) positions across key offices at headquarters and FEMA’s ten regional offices.
- **Disaster workforce shortfalls:** The Agency has seen significant churn in the various cadres of disaster workforce employees. While there have been systemic issues in recruiting to fill these positions across administrations, there still do not appear to be any measurable gains to recruit and retain enough personal to meet the Agency’s projected needs.<sup>16</sup> A forthcoming GAO examination requested by this Committee is expected in the coming weeks.<sup>17</sup>
- **Inconsistent policies:** FEMA is working to reform and standardize how Project Worksheets are developed for the Public Assistance (PA) program, to better align recoveries from region to region, but challenges remain. The Agency is now utilizing the PA National Delivery Model and the corresponding Grants Manager and Grants Portal systems for all ongoing recoveries, but there has been a learning curve as state, local, tribal, and territorial grantees and subgrantees use the new systems.<sup>18</sup> FEMA has also centralized pieces of this process at three Consolidated Resource Centers in California, Texas, and Puerto Rico in an effort to lessen inconsistencies from one disaster to another.<sup>19</sup> While these efforts are laudable and welcomed, there remains concern from

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<sup>13</sup> 2017 Hurricane Season FEMA After-Action Report. Available at <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/167249>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.fema.gov/about-agency>

<sup>15</sup> “FEMA: We are not the first responders”. Available at <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2018/05/31/fema-supports-puerto-rico-government-editorials-debates/35556537/>.

<sup>16</sup> GAO-19-617T – “EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: FEMA Has Made Progress, but Challenges and Future Risks Highlight Imperative for Further Improvements”. Available at <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-19-617T>

<sup>17</sup> May 9, 2018 request letter to GAO Comptroller General from then Ch. Shuster and then RM DeFazio. Available upon request.

<sup>18</sup> FEMA Public Assistance Delivery Model Fact Sheet. Available at [https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1534520496845-4b41646e3d8839c768deb3a7f4ded513/PADeliveryModelFactSheetFINAL\\_Updated\\_052418.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1534520496845-4b41646e3d8839c768deb3a7f4ded513/PADeliveryModelFactSheetFINAL_Updated_052418.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> Id.

- disaster-impacted communities experiencing conflicting guidance from FEMA, and frustration with misalignment with other federal disaster recovery programs.
- **Harassment in the workplace:** Following high-profile allegations of sexual misconduct of a former Chief Component Human Capital Officer, former Administrator Brock Long announced in July 2018 the establishment of a new Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR).<sup>20</sup> OPR was established in 2019 and is in the process of hiring staff to fully execute its mission.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, OPR is now investigating issues such as information technology policy infractions in addition to more serious harassment cases.
  - **Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands recoveries:** Two and a half years after the 2017 hurricanes Irma and Maria, recovery funds are still slow to reach these U.S. territories in the Caribbean. As for the 2020 earthquakes that have struck Puerto Rico, the Governor's request for a disaster declaration under the Stafford Act for permanent repair work was denied. Further, despite the FEMA Administrator having the authority and ability to do so following the President's initial disaster declaration, FEMA has yet to approve this outstanding piece of the Governor's initial request.<sup>22</sup>
  - **DRRA implementation:** FEMA continues work toward full implementation of the Disaster Recovery Reform Act (DRRA, Division D of P.L. 115-254), with significant attention being paid to the establishment and initial round of funds for the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program, which is the Agency's re-branding of the Predisaster Mitigation (PDM) program following Congress' establishment of a dedicated funding stream for PDM.

### WITNESS LIST

**The Honorable Peter T. Gaynor**  
Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

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<sup>20</sup> July 30, 2018 Statement by FEMA Administrator Brock Long on the Results of a Recent Internal Investigation. Available at <https://www.fema.gov/news-release/2018/07/30/statement-fema-administrator-brock-long-results-recent-internal>.

<sup>21</sup> FEMA's Director of the Office of Professional Responsibility, Lauren Kaufer, briefed the Committee on January 17, 2020.

<sup>22</sup> 44 CFR 206.40(c).