




FEMA

May 02, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR: FEMA ALL

ATTENTION: Regional Administrators  
Component Heads and Deputy Component Heads

FROM: Cameron Hamilton   
Senior Official Performing the Duties of Administrator

SUBJECT: Strategic Intent for CY 2025 Hurricane and Wildfire Seasons

This memo provides leadership intent for FEMA's operational readiness through the 2025 hurricane and wildfire seasons. The direction of the Administration and our overall readiness posture necessitates improved and streamlined approaches to the full suite of our operational mission. To aide in your readiness efforts, below I have outlined five key strategic principles and programmatic reforms. Reinforcing FEMA's readiness posture *now* is critical to delivering our mission in the *future*. Equally critical is innovating, reforming, implementing, and validating improved approaches to our work. Recent workforce transformations and new Department and government-wide processes require us to align on key priorities and identify how we will tangibly meet them.

To be clear, **FEMA's top priority is readiness to meet the needs of the Nation across the 2025 hurricane and wildfire seasons.** Across the enterprise, from Headquarters, the Regions, and the field, I expect you to adapt our service delivery to achieve the Agency's core mission of building state and local capacity, focusing on response and initial recovery, and ensuring continuity. To that end, I am charging the Office of Response and Recovery (ORR) with ensuring our operational readiness, including through the implementation of the following Strategic Intent and Policy and Operational Reforms. To implement my strategic intent, I am also directing ORR, in coordination with the FEMA Regions, to develop baseline operational readiness requirements that will instruct how the Agency will respond during the CY 2025 hurricane and wildfire seasons by June 1, 2025.

This **Strategic Intent** will guide our collective efforts around innovation, adaptation, and readiness. These reflect a revised approach and are intended to guide the many complex decisions that we face when preparing for and responding to disasters.

1. Respect the primacy of states, territories, and Tribal Nations in disaster response. FEMA will not substitute federal assistance in place of the roles and responsibilities of states,

territories, or Tribal Nations. Our role is to support our partners, not replace them. FEMA does not act alone.

2. Leverage the whole of our Agency, including all employee types, to streamline processes and procedures to meet the requirements of our state, local, territorial, and Tribal Nation (SLTT) partners.
3. Except in situations involving lifesaving or life-sustaining functions, FEMA will not default to a direct federal assistance model. While we remain fully committed to supporting our SLTT partners, our primary focus is on empowering them to meet their own needs.
4. Operate and problem solve as an enterprise. Assets (including personnel and resources) will be shared, allocated, and reallocated to meet new and changing requirements.
5. Prioritize technology, innovation, and streamlined approaches — these are key skills of emergency managers and should be at the forefront of our actions.

Implementation of these **Policy and Operational Reforms** will assist us in realizing the improvements across our Agency that so many of you have called for. As identified by recent senior leadership discussions and deliberations through the Readiness Enterprise Steering Group (RESG), all program offices must take steps to implement the following key reforms for the CY 2025 hurricane and wildfire seasons, including:

1. Prioritize survivor assistance at fixed facilities: FEMA will discontinue unaccompanied FEMA door-to-door canvassing to focus survivor outreach and assistance registration capabilities in more targeted venues, improving access to those in need, and increasing collaboration with SLTT partners and non-profit service providers.
2. Clarify survivor messaging: FEMA will emphasize assistance for uninsured losses rather than encouraging registration regardless of insurance status. FEMA will emphasize assistance available from other partners and improve messaging to enhance survivors' ability to navigate the assistance applications to drive their own recovery.
3. Accelerate individual assistance: FEMA will initiate early communications with disaster survivors, as well as SLTT and congressional partners, regarding registration and appeals deadlines to minimize the need for extensions. FEMA will focus efforts on providing support at state or locally operated recovery centers, reducing the need to establish FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers and optimizing support for state and locally led recovery efforts.
4. Rebalance support for displaced households: FEMA will work with SLTT partners to utilize all existing resources from within a community to support those displaced before approving non-financial assistance for displacement, improving survivors access to locally executed recovery solutions that best meet their unique needs.
5. Streamline the federal presence: Smaller Public Assistance (PA)-only recovery efforts should be supported primarily by regional office assets and without the need to establish a Joint Field Office (JFO). PA national assets are available to expedite assistance and to prioritize field workforce availability for larger, more complex disasters.

6. Expedite older disaster recovery operations: It is necessary that we take a proactive approach to ensure readiness to meet the needs of emerging events. National level assets, especially cadre assets, are intended to supplement regional capacity to respond to events beyond a region's routine disaster year. Ongoing work on disasters that are declared over 2 years need to be accelerated so that communities can access recovery funds and make available to prioritize national assets for emerging response and recovery operations.

It is also essential that every supervisor and employee is taking the appropriate steps to bolster the capacity of our incident workforce in alignment with the "Every Employee is an Emergency Manager" directive. All our efforts toward readiness are predicated on our ability to seamlessly integrate our resources and support one another when disaster strikes. Although our numbers have decreased, we can meet the needs of survivors and communities when we leverage the talents across our organization. We will only be successful at delivering our mission when we **work together** to address gaps and find solutions. My expectation is that leaders and staff at all levels of our Agency execute their roles this season with flexibility, speed, creativity, and compassion. I expect you to lean into decision-making without hesitancy and have a bias for action. Most importantly, my expectation is that we recognize that our Agency thrives when we come together as one team to help people on their worst day.

As we navigate the 2025 hurricane and wildfire seasons, FEMA will manage and adapt as needed to ensure we are achieving the greatest level of service delivery based on emerging disasters and expected staffing impacts.