

PLANNING:	Provide for training & planning for disaster response
MITIGATION:	Enable measures to minimize/eliminate the impact of disasters
COMMUNICATION & COORDINATION:	Support communication across sectors & platforms and tie professionals together to effectively mitigate & respond
STREAMLINING:	Streamline funding, management & response mechanisms
CYBER THREATS & TELECOMMUNICATIONS:	Defend public infrastructure against cyber threats

PRIORITY: PLANNING

Public works professionals play a key role in emergency planning, responding to and recovering from natural and man-made disasters. Operating and maintaining critical infrastructure services, such as the transportation, natural gas, electric, water supply, sewage and refuse disposal systems, and public buildings, are vital to a community's livelihood. Effective response to disasters requires funding and best-practice guidance in order to enable training, mapping, assessments of technical capability, and implementation of response and recovery plans.

APWA makes the following planning recommendations:

- **Fully fund the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) and the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI).** Both programs provide funding to support the implementation of homeland security strategies at the state and local levels. Importantly, they help public works agencies develop emergency management plans, obtain and maintain equipment, and ensure that personnel are adequately trained to perform responsibilities and manage catastrophic events.
- **Continue exploration of the Public Assistance (PA) deductible,** currently issued under a Supplemental Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. The theory of a deductible for Public Assistance is worthy of exploration; however, as currently proposed, the rule is vague and may not be weighted properly among the states and/or local governments. APWA encourages the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to work together with local, state, and tribal governments to develop this concept further.
- **APWA advocates strongly for the federal government's continued study of drone usage,** including efforts to solicit and incorporate recommendations from first responders. Public works utilizes drones in various capacities such as for inspecting infrastructure, aerial surveys of land, flooding and height of water, dam inspection, water tower inspection, traffic monitoring, weather impacts on infrastructure, and to have photos for educating the public. It is important that federal regulations do not become onerous and burdensome to localities in their use of drones for public works purposes.
- **Fund professional development training initiatives to assist with the growth and utilization of innovative activities** related to having a diverse, high-quality workforce and continued career opportunities in the emergency management sector.

PRIORITY: MITIGATION

A result of both planning and disaster recovery is the need for mitigation in order to minimize or eliminate the impact of future disaster events. Pre- and post-disaster mitigation are essential in order to protect the public from physical and financial harm.

Since 2014, there have been over 500 Presidential Disaster Declarations. APWA values and supports the evolving federal emphasis on mitigation efforts through federal grant programs and training opportunities.

APWA makes the following mitigation recommendations:

- **Continue and fully fund the Emergency Management Performance Grant Program (EMPG).** This program assists state, local, tribal and territorial governments by providing direction, coordination and guidance to ensure that an emergency preparedness system exists for all hazards.
- **Continue and fully fund the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program (PDM).** Pre-disaster mitigation plans and projects reduce overall risk and reliance on funding from presidential disaster declarations. *According to a 2017 National Institute of Building Sciences report, the nation saves six dollars in future disaster costs for every one dollar invested in mitigation activities.*
- **Continue and fully fund the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP).** As communities recover from presidentially declared disasters, this program provides grants to states and local governments to implement longterm hazard mitigation measures which help communities recover as quickly as possible. The program assists public works personnel in their ability to retrofit infrastructure and facilities to minimize damage caused by high winds, earthquakes, floods, wildfires or other natural hazards; help with post-disaster building code related activities during the reconstruction process; and implement flood control projects.



PRIORITY: COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

Being able to communicate efficiently and effectively between emergency responders, including public works, is critical for preparedness, response and recovery operations. **Public works agencies depend on a reliable interoperable emergency communications system that connects them to other responders**, including law enforcement, fire, emergency medical professionals, and other public works agencies during response and recovery operations.

APWA fully supports the use of interagency and organization task forces to coordinate implementation of Stafford Act rules and programs as well as issues related to critical infrastructure protection. APWA's members are on the front line of responding to disasters and protecting critical infrastructure.

APWA makes the following communication and coordination recommendations:

- **Continue support of the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN) that is being developed by FirstNet.** The network will provide communications interoperability when emergency responders have to provide mutual aid to other communities.
- **The Federal government must share threat information and provide technical support** to state and local governments in order to protect computer networks and other related critical infrastructure.
- **Maintain the use of cross-sector task forces and study groups.** APWA looks forward to continuing to be involved in federal task forces and other groups committed to preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters.

PRIORITY: STREAMLINING

Congress enabled various pilot programs as part of the Post Katrina Management Reform Act, Public Law 109-205. The pilot tests of these provisions has now expired, but APWA supports enacting many of them as permanent additions to the Stafford Act.

APWA supports the following programs:

- **Award grants based on estimates.** Under this procedure, the pilot program that Congress enacted allowed FEMA to make Grants Based on Estimates for large projects up to \$500,000. This procedure allowed states to disburse funds to applicants up front (where state laws allowed for such payments), rather than through the reimbursement of actual

costs. These projects were not subject to the appeal process outlined in 44 CFR §206.206, Appeals. Applicants could use this procedure for Category A, Debris Removal, and Categories C-G, Permanent Work.

- **Enact an increased Federal Share Incentive.** Under this procedure, the pilot program that Congress enacted allowed FEMA to provide an additional five percent federal cost share for debris removal projects under Sections 403(a)(3)(A) and 407 of the Stafford Act to those applicants that had a FEMA-approved debris management plan and which had pre-qualified two or more debris and wreckage removal contractors. APWA also encourages the addition of flexibility into the rule to allow for small agencies and financially-burdened entities that do not have FEMA-approved plans to receive this incentive via adoption of debris-management best practices or other means.
- **Permit Force Account Labor.** Under this procedure, the pilot program that Congress enacted allowed FEMA to reimburse the straight-time wages for the employees of a state or local government while they performed disaster-related debris and wreckage removal activities. This provides applicants an incentive to perform the work in-house, as well as improve oversight of debris removal operations.

PRIORITY: CYBER THREATS & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

APWA supports expanding our cybersecurity and telecommunication partnership with the federal government through the inclusion of public works professionals when developing, implementing, and executing cybersecurity and telecommunication policies.

APWA makes the following cybersecurity and telecommunications recommendations:

- **Develop National Cybersecurity Guidelines/Best Practices.** Developing voluntary national cybersecurity guidelines/best practices would have a significant, constructive impact on public works.
- **APWA advocates for comprehensive cybersecurity training** opportunities for public works professionals, as many of the services their customers require are on a 24-hour a day, 365 day per year basis.
- **APWA opposes unfunded mandates pertaining to federal cybersecurity and telecommunication regulations** that may be placed upon state and local governments. State and local governments should be consulted regarding any proposed telecommunication modifications that may impact public right of way.

The Public Works sector is included with law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services, and emergency management in the Emergency Services Sector of the National Infrastructure Protection Plan. It is critical to the safety of all citizens and to the sustainability of our communities that the public, government agencies, and other professional and technical organizations recognize and support the contributions of public works professionals in all-hazards emergency management.

The American Public Works Association represents over 30,000 public works professionals across North America, dedicated to providing essential and high quality services to millions of people in rural and urban communities, both small and large. APWA members are among the first to arrive and the last to leave during natural disasters and other harmful events. APWA members are always there.

AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION



Your Comprehensive Public Works Resource

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