

Emergency Management in Virginia

Improving the Commonwealth's
Resilience with Sustainable Funding
for Emergency Preparedness and
Response



About VEMA

The **Virginia Emergency Management Association (VEMA)** is comprised of emergency management professionals from:

- Local, state, and federal government agencies
- Institutes of Higher Education
- Native American Tribes
- The Military
- Private, non-profit, and volunteer organizations
- Students and other individuals interested in emergency management



What do Emergency Managers Do?



Conduct hazard and vulnerability assessments



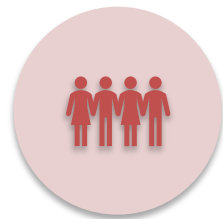
Coordinate emergency responses



Build relationships with stakeholders



Develop and maintain plans, policies, and procedures



Educate the community about disaster preparedness



Organize drills and exercises

Our Threat and Hazard Environment

Natural Hazards:

- Severe thunderstorms, damaging wind, and tornadoes
- Tropical cyclones, with coastal and inland flooding hazards
- Winter weather
- Extreme heat and cold

Technological Hazards:

- Aging water and sewer infrastructure
- Strain on the electric grid from datacenters and emerging technology
- Dams and flood control structures

Human-Caused Hazards:

- Acts of Violence
- Cybersecurity
- National Security considerations with Military Installations and proximity to Washington, D.C.



Phases of Emergency Management

- **Prevention/Protection:** Actions to avoid, prevent, or stop a threatened or actual act of terrorism; “Homeland Security”
- **Mitigation:** Measures taken to limit the impact of disasters and emergencies
- **Preparedness:** Efforts to reduce or eliminate risks to persons and property or lessen the effects or consequences of an incident
- **Response:** Actions to save lives, protect property, and stabilize the incident
- **Recovery:** Actions to restore the community to “normal” through damage assessment, restoration of critical facilities & functions, economic stabilization, and long-term recovery



The Challenges we Face

- Across the Commonwealth, only **25% of localities** report they have a **full-time** emergency manager by **primary discipline** with **sufficient staff** to maintain essential program functions
- The Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) relies on non-disaster Federal grant funding for **65% of core agency functions**
- Federal funding has not kept up with inflation and a **10% reduction** in funding occurred in Federal FY24



The Cost of Mitigation and Recovery

- All disasters start and end at the local level, and many localized disasters fail to reach thresholds for federal post-disaster assistance
- According to the National Institute of Building Science, every \$1 spent on hazard mitigation saves \$6 in disaster recovery costs.
 - Post-disaster hazard mitigation grant opportunities require an up-to-date local hazard mitigation plan and are competitive, requiring detailed narratives
- Nationally, insurance underwriters are cancelling homeowners and renters policies in high-risk areas and the cost of flood insurance continues to rise



What can be Done?

Begin transitioning VDEM's core programmatic functions required by the Code of Virginia to the general fund

- VDEM submitted a \$15.68M agency budget request to transition 81 positions, *Federal Funding Substitution with General Fund*, that was not included in the Governor's proposed budget amendments.
- This proposal would enable the agency to increase pass-thru of federal emergency management funding to localities by ~\$9.0M.

Support the *Virginia Emergency Management Preparedness and Capabilities Fund* and study on long-term funding sources for Emergency Management (HB 1992 / SB 1246)





Thank you!

With your help, we can build a stronger, more resilient Commonwealth, ready for all hazards.

Jessica Robison – President
Danielle Holmstrom – Vice President
Brian Misner | Bill Lawson
Legislative Committee Co-Chairs