



Emergency Management Equity Working Group (EMEWG) Meeting

May 19, 2025

1pm - 3:00pm

In- person: John Scrivani, Karen Brimm, Kate Archie, Megan Hall, Donna Pletch, Lauren Roche, Rachel Slotter, Jumoke Akinrimisi

Virtual: Alexa Boggs, Justin Haga, Christine Faltz Grassman, Ahoo Salem, Rebecca Heins, Steven Nelson

The meeting began at 1:00 PM.

Opening Remarks (Jumoke Akinrimisi)

- Moment of Silence for tornadoes and subsequent storms that left an estimated 27 people dead, including 2 people in Virginia.
- Overview of the Agenda
- Expectations of members: Provide subject matter expertise during the meeting and help us to focus on the critical issues.
- Member Introductions
- The working group will not vote on anything – there is not an in-person quorum.
- Coordinator Scrivani: Wants to keep conversations open and continue outreach of the mission.

Changing Landscape of Emergency Management (State Coordinator Scrivani)

- Slide Information:
 - [Executive Order 14180](#) established the FEMA Review Council to discuss future of FEMA.
 - FEMA National Advisory Committee (NAC) disbanded on 01/27/2025 in line with DHS memo ordering termination of all agency advisory committees.

- Faster Payouts for Critical Needs – attention to need of medical equipment and devices
- Funding cuts for organizations: Jumoke is collecting information with agencies and organizations in the Commonwealth impacted. Plans to distribute via spreadsheet for feedback and review.
- Potential changes in procedure: While disaster service assistance teams will still be deployed, there will be no more door-to-door checks and no more mobile checks. The recommendation is to go in person to fixed Disaster Recovery Centers.
- Bi-partisan draft legislation called Fixing Emergency Management for Americans Act of 2025.
 - Released a “discussion draft” of the *Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act of 2025* to solicit feedback from Members of Congress, emergency management stakeholders, and others. Link to discussion draft: [Discussion Draft of Fixing Emergency Management for Americans Act of 2025](#)
 - Press Release: [Graves, Larsen Release Draft Bill to Dramatically Reform FEMA](#)
- Impacts
 - Faster payouts for critical needs
 - Funding cuts for organizations
 - Potential changes in procedure
 - Increased dependence on local partners, especially in rural areas (i.e., areas where transportation is not as easily accessible)
- Coordinator Scrivani’s Comments:
 - Recommend against speculation of what FEMA will or won’t do. There are many contradictory actions occurring. Example of Acting FEMA Directors trying to impose changes, different legislative being put forward, and large associations (i.e., NEMA, IAEM) also giving their input.
 - Nowhere has the federal government said they will not support catastrophic disasters. Instead, the burden of smaller disasters to be managed at a local and/or state level.
 - As we realize what those impacts are, we can work towards quickly trying to address gaps.
 - The knowns:
 - Something is going to change.
 - Frequency and intensity of weather storms will continue to put demands on our system.

- Coordinator Scrivani has been engaging with federal entities and partners across the Commonwealth.
 - Metaphor to Planning Assumptions → Waiting to see what the final environment will be and work from there. Still received federal support for the winter weather when we needed it.
 - We are encountering change, but we don't know what yet.
 - Speaking at great length on getting support to disaster survivors quicker.
 - Once we know where the three buckets of money will land, then we can make more determinations.
 - Day-to-day change hasn't been seen yet. But when those do come across, Coordinator Scrivani will share it with the Governor's Office.
 - Once we know where the federal government emergency management landscape lands, then we will know how to posture.
 - Questions for Coordinator Scrivani:
 - Karen Brimm (VDDHH): Concerns go beyond how FEMA will change – very challenging in the disability space as well (i.e., ACL); Noted EMEWG has been impacted by the loss of VISTA Member funding; As we reflect back to Helene, what local charities did we engage with, that may have lost funding and may not be able to continue on into this coming hurricane season? → Karen agrees that making the spreadsheet will be critical. Regarding diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility DEIA: Federal elimination efforts have linked DEI & accessibility.
 - Coordinator Scrivani Response: Radiological Emergency Preparedness Program (REPP) sits in FEMA. Where does that go if something were to happen to FEMA? Acknowledging that many items are weaved together across agencies.
 - Kate Archie (VDSS): All the programs (i.e., Medicaid, SNAP) that make our communities resilient are being eroded. The spreadsheet will help us be aware of what's being eroded. If we can start documenting things as they happen, that will help us with pre-response.
 - Coordinator Scrivani Response: We'll brainstorm how to circulate documentation. Maybe begin with materials internal to the working group. → Lauren Roche (SILC/DARS) has volunteered to help organize that.
 - Megan Hall (VDEM):

- Agreed with the need to operationalize our partners → Look at our records (who were involved during Helene – which services and partners); It is a great opportunity to identify a baseline; Also provides a look at who got disaster assistance, SNAP, etc. to see what the impact could be if these resources and services were to go away.
- Critical Needs Payouts: seem to be a small subset; What gap is that going to leave if we make this shift? Want to gain the scope of what exactly 'critical needs' versus AFN/DEI holistic view may mean.
 - Coordinator Scrivani notes this may not be resolved or fully clear until either a) the FEMA Council wraps up in November and/ or; b) the legislation passes. Notes that if the state has a say; then we have the ability to define things.
- Coordinator Scrivani Question: Should we look at COVID-19 versus Hurricane Helene regarding services impacted?
 - Kate Archie (VDSS): Recommend asking local emergency managers for local entities that are seeing and experiencing impacts.
 - Coordinator Scrivani says also state agencies are needed to add input.
- Ahoo Salem commented in the chat: When considering resources, need to track free clinics and food shelters, which are often trusted locations where undocumented populations receive essential services. Based on what we are hearing in our community, these sites are seeing a visible decline in use due to growing fear.
 - Karen Brimm (VDDHH): Recommendation to start at the state level and then have regional state agency partners help provide local connections. Karen recommends starting with Helene, not COVID. One reason relates to the southwest VA impacts versus the whole of Commonwealth impacts.
- Short-Term Goal: Identify resources being impacted by federal cuts.
- Next Step: What additional resources/programs may be impacted by proposed future cuts?
- Lauren Roche: Appalachian Independent Living Center – have had to shift from 3 to 2 people on staff.

- Spreadsheet to include information on what the cut is & what operational impact there is (for example, 33% loss of staff, so now what services can you no longer provide); What do you need to get back to the pre-cut levels?

Action Item Updates from the 02.24 EMEWG Discussion (*Jumoke Akinrimisi*)

- Upcoming Meetings and Potential Presentations (Data Governance, AG)
 - Looking to schedule a time to connect with the AG's Office and then planning to connect on a topic.
 - Data Governance: VDEM Office would be interested in speaking but need more information.
- The Capabilities of the Adjunct Emergency Workforce (AEW)
 - Conversation concerning language: Jumoke connected with Rebecca Heins. What we are looking for would be more specialized than what AEW can do, especially if we want in-person translators. Rebecca recommended reaching out to SAU who has a translation services MOU in place and see if they offer in-person services.

Access and Engagement Branch Updates (*Jumoke Akinrimisi*)

- Brief Update on AFNC Training and Roster
- Access and Engagement Charter and Implementation
 - Charter was created to solidify goals of the A&E Branch.
- AFNAC Ad Hoc: DME Familiarization Visit
 - AFNAC: No meetings anticipated until fall. Chair of AFNAC is no longer with the agency. In the interim, an AFNAC newsletter will be distributed to keep those members informed.
 - Durable Medical Equipment Kit: 4-5 members from AFNAC &/or EMEWG to look at these DME kits and potentially discuss what should be included. It will be in the AFNAC newsletter.
- Question from Donna Pletch: Not aware of Locality Profiles; are these similar to the COVID contractor created profiles?
 - Jumoke: Working with GIS to do local/regional representation of the population statistics and the social infrastructure.
- Question from Kate Archie: Status of AFNC Training?
 - Jumoke:
 - VEST would have AFNCs rostered via the AEW. Then we would train those individuals. With the changes, there will be a stronger emphasis on the emergency management training.

- VEST AFNO position is vacant currently. Hoping to fill a wage position this year to address this blue sky responsibilities related to this gap.

Member Updates/Questions/Comments (*EMEWG Members*)

- Karen Brimm (VDDHH): Northern Virginia Emergency Response System Family Assistance Center Workshop –
 - Guest Speaker from Tree of Life Synagogue
 - 250 attendees from a variety of fields
 - Afternoon panel: All women with various subject matter expertise
 - If anyone should question why VDDHH should be involved in emergency management, this workshop was an excellent example of why
 - Would like some crossover training for interpreters & call takers (i.e., Virginia 2-1-1)
- Ahoo Salem
 - Blue Ridge Literacy: Celebrating 40 years of service this year (<https://buzz4good.com/portfolio/blue-ridge-literacy/>)
- Virtual Conference for State & Local Governments for ADA: June 3-5
- Lauren Roche: Thank you for sharing information for the conference and State Managed Shelter Exercise.
 - Jumoke will continue to push out information to the EMEWG.

Housekeeping for the next meeting (*Jumoke Akinrimisi*)

- Action Items and Next Steps
 - Share FEMA Act of 2025 Discussion Draft Legislation
 - Available in minutes above, via email and on the Commonwealth Calendar
 - Compile list of social infrastructure/ organizations that are impacted by loss of federal funding (so far)
 - List will be displayed via spreadsheet. If there are any immediate gaps, please flag them and let's work quickly to address them.
- **Next Meeting Date:** August 11, 2025, 1-3 PM
- **Minutes:** Meeting minutes shared via email, to Commonwealth calendar, and VDEM Emergency Website.

Closing Remarks (*State Coordinator Scrivani*)

The meeting ended at 2:32 PM.

The slide deck presented during the meeting will be made available on the VDEM website.