

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT EQUITY WORKING GROUP
CHARTER**

INTRODUCTION

The Emergency Management Equity Working Group (EMEWG or Working Group) serves to provide a tailored and structured, centrally administered approach to ensuring that emergency management programs and plans provide support to at-risk individuals and populations disproportionately impacted by disasters. As such, this charter outlines the functions and expected accomplishments of the EMEWG.

The Working Group, governed by Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM), identifies and prioritizes issues related to emergency management programs and plans that may impact services received by marginalized and at-risk individuals and communities, with the goal of enhancing the support provided before, during, and after disasters and complex incidents across the Commonwealth. The Working Group may provide the State Coordinator with recommendations accordingly.

TERMS

Title	Acronyms	Description
Emergency Management Equity Working Group	EMEWG	Working Group that ensures emergency management programs and plans provide support to vulnerable individuals and populations disproportionately impacted by disasters.
Virginia Department of Emergency Management	VDEM	State agency responsible for the coordination of emergency prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery efforts within the Commonwealth
Diversity, Opportunity, Inclusion and Access	DOIA	The principles which support a whole of agency approach to the EMEWG's focus on vulnerable communities who face disproportionate impacts
Institutes of Higher Education	IHEs	Additional stakeholder who may act as a EMEWG subject matter expert

VA Code § 44-146.18(B)(19) provides, *the Department shall in the administration of emergency services and disaster preparedness programs:*

“[19.] Establish and maintain an Emergency Management Equity Working Group (the Working Group) to ensure that emergency management programs and plans provide support to at-risk individuals and populations disproportionately impacted by disasters. The Working Group shall include experts from (i) the Governor's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and other state agencies; (ii) the public at large; and (iii) the private sector who have expertise related to at-risk and vulnerable populations and the threats faced by such populations during a disaster.

The Department of Emergency Management shall ensure that all such plans, assessments, and programs required by this subsection include specific preparedness for, and response to, disasters resulting from electromagnetic pulses and geomagnetic disturbances.”

Using an accessibility and inclusion lens, the Working Group:

1. Identifies regional, locality, community, or tribal needs as it relates to the five phases of emergency management (i.e., prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery)
2. Advises and recommends accessible and inclusive actions to ensure Virginians receive emergency services during and after a disaster and complex events in their respective region and across the Commonwealth.
3. Provides input to the COVEOP and, as necessary, its associated annexes?

¹. <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title44/chapter3.2/section44-146.18/>

The establishment of the Working Group will involve:

For six (6) months from March 2023 to August 31, 2023, the initial stage will set the overall function, structure, and cadence of the EMEWG. This may include but is not limited to:

- Inaugural and Quarterly Meetings of the EMEWG
- Adoption of the Charter and additional working group documents
- Set meeting cadence, expectations, and actionable items
- Establish how we measure progress

SPECIAL OCCURENCE OF SITUATIONAL EVENT MEETINGS OR AD HOC GROUP MEETINGS-

Additional meetings may be called by:

- I. The Working Group may approach the Chair with precipitate cause to request additional regional and/ or situational meetings where the Working Group may convene on a regional and or situational issue; or
- II. The VDEM Representative as EMEWG facilitator may approach the Chair with precipitate cause for the Working Group to convene.

This stage may include discussion, polling or surveying of members to determine the capacity or need for subcommittees and how they will be determined.

The additional methods are to ensure that critical DOIA steps are not overlooked during an event. Working Group members will be called to convene as subject matter experts (SMEs) pertaining to a specific situational and or/ regional event.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

VDEM facilitator guides the EMEWG to have successful and productive meetings surrounding the fundamental and emergent needs of all communities facing disparate impacts during statewide emergencies and disasters. The EMEWG Chair is VDEM's State Coordinator and the Working Group's facilitator from VDEM will assist the Chair. The Working Group will recommend policy to the State Coordinator, who will make a determination and implement accordingly.

The Working Group should meet at least once a quarter to:

- Offer subject matter expertise and recommendations on policies and procedures that directly impact vulnerable populations
- Review and update with facilitator on findings, best practices, and recommendations
- Ensure decisions align with VDEM's concentrated purpose concerning important issues and complex events

Composition of EMEWG

The EMEWG Chair will staff the EMEWG. The State Coordinator may assign a Vice Chair, or a proxy in their absence for one meeting or a set duration of time. The Vice Chair may act on behalf of the State Coordinator. Vice Chairs are designated at the discretion of the EMEWG Chair.

VDEM State Coordinator is responsible for ensuring actions and strategies presented by the EMEWG are taken into consideration for future VDEM policies, plans, programs (such as TEED and Grants), and procedures related to the five phases of emergency management. These policies and procedures will be framed to meet the needs of at-risk populations and follow human rights and accessibility laws.

EMEWG Representatives Composition Virginia Code § 44-146.18 (B19) requires the Working Group to have the following members:

- Governor’s Office of Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion member;
- designated members from VDEM
- other state agencies;
- the public at large, and
- the private sector.

Non-state agency members bring value-added expertise toward fulfillment of the EMEWG charge. They will consist of community members and key non-governmental stakeholders who provide direct service to vulnerable populations throughout the seven VDEM regions. The composition of community members and key stakeholders are at the discretion of the EMEWG Chair. Other members may include, but are not limited to:

- advocacy groups,
- social service workers,
- coast guards,
- police officers,
- firefighters,
- housing shelter directors,
- clergy members, and
- disaster volunteers.
- volunteer and faith- based organizations

Additional stakeholders may include enterprises within the private sector, nonprofits, and institutions of higher education (IHEs). Membership may expand to more members at the discretion of the State Coordinator.

EMEWG members are designated annually and may serve multiple terms. The Working Group will meet once every quarter during the fiscal year from July 1, 2023 – June 30 2024.

Leadership

The facilitator will advise the VDEM State Coordinator as Chair to convene the Working Group to identify and prioritize issues and decision points impacting vulnerable and disproportionately impacted individuals and communities and support their intentional inclusion within agency objectives.

Membership

State Agency Representation

The EMEWG may comprise representatives from state agencies responsible for providing services to the vulnerable and disproportionately impacted communities of the Commonwealth during an emergency or disaster. These state agencies include, but are not limited to:

- Board for People with Disabilities
- Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
- Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired
- Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
- Department of Emergency Management
- Department of Environmental Quality
- Department of Health
- Department of Housing and Community Development
- Department of Medical Assistance Services
- Department of Rail and Public Transportation
- Department of Social Services
- Department of State Police
- Department of Veterans Services
- Office of the Attorney General

Local Representation and Non-State Agency Members

Two (2) representatives from regional coordinators, regional staff, or local emergency managers may comprise part of the Working Group.

Additional Members

Additional members may be added on a permanent or ad-hoc basis to serve as subject matter experts as deemed appropriate and necessary by the EMEWG Chair.

Replacement of members

Members of the Working Group can relinquish their position if they separate from state or local government employment, or their role changes.

Positions, once vacated, should be filled before the next quarterly meeting. The EMEWG Chair may fill vacancies before the next quarterly meeting.

WORKING GROUP PROCEDURES

This body will conduct its activities in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (§ 2.2-3700 et seq.).

Meeting Frequency and Location

The EMEWG will meet quarterly, or at the discretion of the EMEWG Chair as conditions warrant. For example, during hurricane season, EMEWG may elect to meet for an additional meeting. Meetings will be scheduled based on the EMEWG's overall availability. Announcement of the meetings will be made in accordance with FOIA requirements. Location and format of meeting (e.g., in-person, online platform) will also be published in accordance with FOIA requirements.

Attendance

EMEWG members may send a representative to the meeting if they are unable to attend.

Attendance is imperative, as EMEWG members make significant decisions, engage in discussions, and are aware of regional and statewide initiatives as it relates to diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. In accepting membership within the EMEWG, designees acknowledge their responsibility to attend each quarterly meeting.

Quorum

For a vote to take place, a quorum may be required. A quorum is defined as 50% of the EMEWG members, plus one.²

The EMEWG Chair is not included in the quorum as their attendance is required at every meeting unless they designate a proxy. The attendance of the VDEM facilitator will not be included in the quorum.

If a quorum cannot be established to convene the EMEWG, the meeting may be rescheduled or continued for informational purposes.

Consensus-Building

All EMEWG members are active discussants. For this group to be effective, full participation and discussion is expected and encouraged. Members should be prepared to contribute regularly.

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2. For example, if the current iteration of the Working Group stands at twelve (12) members, then seven (7) members must be in attendance to have a quorum.

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