

Lessons Learned from America's Mayors
Questions to Spark Conversations on
Disaster Preparedness, Response, Recovery, and Resiliency
June 27, 2025

Preparing for Extreme Weather and Disasters

For elected officials, government staff, and community leaders, if you're wondering how to incorporate these best practices into your local initiatives, below are a few questions to ask locally to spark discussion:

- When were our plans last updated?
- When did we last meet or coordinate with state and county emergency management officials?
- Do we have contracts in place for emergency response to address possible gaps? Does the contract cover identified needs from prior after-action reviews?

Supporting immediate and long-term recovery after a disaster

For elected officials, government staff, and community leaders, below are a few questions to ask locally to spark discussion:

- What existing funds do we have available? Can any be repurposed? Do we have any additional flexibilities to utilize federal funding after a disaster? For example, after a disaster, HUD's CDBG funding allows for waivers to support additional eligible activities, reduce administrative burden, and remove caps on public services.
- If a disaster were to take place, who is advocating on our behalf for additional funds and support at the local, state, and federal levels?
- Do we have the expertise to be "one and done" with grant requirements, reimbursements, and task orders? If not, who can we call upon to ensure quick launch of programs and compliance?
- What can the jurisdiction do to streamline recovery? For example, are there opportunities to expedite permitting, streamline local land use requirements, or utilize public lands to facilitate housing rehabilitation.
- How do we strategically layer and combine funding to maximize every available dollar, ensure compliance, and prevent duplication of benefits?

Investing in lasting community resilience and sustainable infrastructure

For elected officials, government staff, and community leaders, below are a few questions to ask your local team to spark discussion:

- Is your hazard mitigation plan current, and does it consider your most significant risks as they evolve? Does this plan prioritize key public works projects to address your identified risks?
- Are there efforts to ensure that government-funded projects include resilient construction methods to prevent damage and preserve the project long-term? For example, are properties in flood-prone areas built with federal, state, or local funds elevated to avoid damage from stormwater?

- What actions are you taking to build resiliency in public works and housing projects? How are you communicating these efforts with potential funders and constituents to ensure buy-in?
- Do you have a communications strategy aligned with public works projects to reflect progress and build trust with the public?
- Is the city leaving any potential funding for resilience, mitigation, or energy efficiency? Are you maximizing available funding through FEMA, the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Energy, tax rebates, and other sources?

How can IEM help?

Don't know where to get started? IEM's team offers the full spectrum of emergency management, disaster response, and long-term recovery services and consulting. Contact us today!

- **Preparing for Extreme Weather and Disasters**
 - After-Action Reports (AAR) and Improvement Plans (IP)
 - Continuity of Operations/Continuity of Government (COOP/COG) plans
 - Emergency plans and standard operating procedures (SOPs)
 - Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) accreditation
 - Strategic planning and assessments
 - Training and exercise design and delivery
- **Supporting immediate and long-term recovery after a disaster**
 - Staff augmentation
 - Damage assessments
 - FEMA Individual and Public Assistance
 - Mass care and logistics support
 - FEMA funding implementation, including cost recovery and closeout
 - Short- and long-term disaster housing solutions
 - CDBG-DR policy, planning, and implementation
- **Investing in lasting community resilience and sustainable infrastructure**
 - Benefit-cost analyses (BCAs)
 - Environmental and Historical Preservation (EHP) compliance
 - Floodplain management and resilience planning
 - Mitigation planning
 - Risk analysis, GIS mapping, and Hazus loss estimates

For over 40 years, we have worked with emergency managers and state officials, helping them confidently and successfully prepare for, respond to, recover from and mitigate against disasters and other complex crises.

Scan the QR code to learn more.

