

118th U.S. Congress Policy Priorities:

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



The American Public Works Association (APWA), representing over 30,000 public works professionals in North America, is committed to making certain public works professionals have the training, support, and investment needed to prepare for, respond to, and mitigate the impact of emergency situations. When a disaster occurs, public works is often the first to respond; and the last to leave. As first responders, public works professionals serve a vital role in ensuring national critical infrastructure functions and provides valuable first-hand perspectives that should be factored into how federal programs affecting emergency management, cybersecurity, and telecommunications are developed and implemented. APWA applauds the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), signed into law November 15, 2021. The \$1.2 trillion federal investment over 5-years demonstrates an important commitment and partnership between the federal, state, and local levels of government. APWA supports full funding for federal programs that strengthen the nation’s ability to mitigate, respond to, and recover from disasters. We must work together to protect our first responders and critical infrastructure, and to achieve these objectives, APWA supports the following:

PLANNING

Public works is critical in emergency planning, responding to, and recovering from infrastructure impacts from natural and man-made disasters. Furthermore, in 2003 with the enactment of Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-8, public works was recognized as first responders.



MITIGATION

Since 2018, more than [500 Major Disaster and Emergency Disaster Declarations](#) have been issued by the President. In 2022 alone, there were over 70 disaster declarations. APWA advocates for and supports federal emphasis on mitigation through federal grants, training opportunities, and tools like asset management.

COMMUNICATION & COORDINATION

Efficient and operational communication among public works professionals and other first responders is required for effective preparedness, response, and recovery operations. First responders in public works, along with law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical personnel, are on the front lines responding to disasters and protecting people, and critical infrastructure.

STREAMLINING

APWA supports permanently enacting the now-expired 2006 Post-Katrina Management Reform Act pilot programs and include in the Stafford Act.

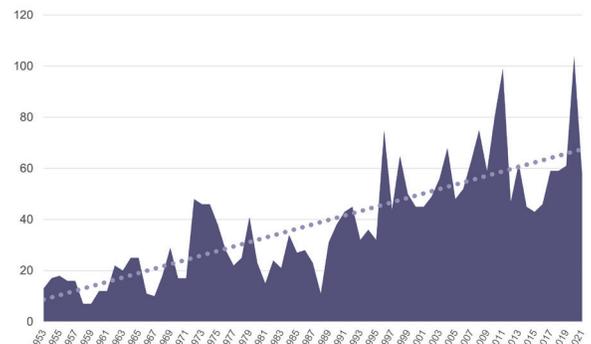
CYBERSECURITY & TELECOMMUNICATION

As first responders, public works professionals and first responder partners must be included when developing, implementing, and executing cybersecurity and telecommunication policies and programs, such as FirstNet.

PRIORITY – PLANNING/RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Ensure federal training programs designed to enhance interagency cooperation in emergency management includes public works response aspects, and actively seek public works participation in design and attendance.
- APWA strongly encourages the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to work with local, state, and tribal governments to ensure a Public Assistance (PA) deductible can be properly drafted and meet unique population needs.

The number of Major Disaster Declarations in the United States has increased over time



*Declarations are made individually for each affected county; only distinctly-coded disasters were counted.
SOURCE: Federal Emergency Management Agency, Disaster Declarations database

- Continue review of the PA deductible issued under the Supplemental Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.
- Continue federal government drone usage study.
- Fund professional development training initiatives to support a diverse, high-quality workforce, and continued career opportunities in emergency management with dedicated funding to workforce programs authorized by IJJA.
- As the leader in public works education and credentialing programs, APWA encourages and values continual education and professional growth opportunities for those who build, operate, maintain, and safeguard our nation's infrastructure.

PRIORITY – MITIGATION/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Support the Safeguarding Tomorrow through Ongoing Risk Mitigation (STORM) Act programs to provide funding to local governments for projects to reduce risks to homeowners, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and communities, decreasing loss of life and property, and costs associated with insurance claims and federal disaster payments. APWA also recognizes the electrical grid as the backbone of today's society. APWA supports the promotion of hardening electrical systems; including transmission and distribution operations; promoting, and advancing physical security and cybersecurity plans and projects. Support full funding of the Building Resilient Infrastructure Communities (BRIC), Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA), and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) which provide grants to states and local governments to implement long-term hazard mitigation projects. Since 2017, the federal government has extended the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) more than 20 times. Congress created NFIP under the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (P.L. 90-448) to provide insurance coverage to property owners for damages and losses due to catastrophic flooding. Extending is not a sustainable solution. APWA advocates for the enactment of a five-year NFIP authorization to give Congress time to develop a viable, longer-term solution. ([Link to June 2022 Congressional Research Service Report on NFIP](#))

PRIORITY – COMMUNICATION & COORDINATION/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Provide more opportunities for public works professionals who have responsibility or direct oversight for systems that operate and protect assets, and networks in the country's critical infrastructure sectors. Ensure public works is included in congressional and federal regulatory actions for funding, and programs for training and implementation. Public works professionals must be included when developing, funding, and executing telecommunication policies, programs, congressional, and federal regulatory actions.

PRIORITY – STREAMLINING/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Federal training programs must be designed to enhance interagency cooperation in emergency management and include public works response aspects. Public works participation should be actively sought. Award grants based on estimates, and for large projects (\$500,000) allow FEMA to distribute grants based on estimates.

Enact an increased Federal Share Incentive to allow 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 and for applicants with pre-qualified two or more debris and wreckage removal contractors. Additional flexibility is needed to allow small agencies and financially burdened entities to receive this incentive via adoption of debris management best practices or other means.

PRIORITY – CYBERSECURITY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS RECOMMENDATIONS:

APWA advocates for comprehensive cybersecurity. Require collaboration between public works, telecommunication, and radio network providers to build resilient systems to provide services in disaster situations. Ensure the inclusion of public works professionals when developing, funding, implementing, and executing cybersecurity and telecommunication policies and programs. Include public works in the establishment and implementation of National Cybersecurity Guidelines/Best Practices to deliver more opportunities for public works professionals who have responsibility or direct oversight for systems that operate and protect assets, and networks of the country's critical infrastructure sectors. APWA fully supports the federal government providing funding for cybersecurity. APWA encourages the federal government to reconsider the decrease in the federal share over the life of the funding to cybersecurity grants. APWA advocates for provisions to ensure access for public works to funding opportunities over the life of a grant program. Establish Voluntary National Cybersecurity Guidelines/Best Practices and include public works in developing and implementing these recommendations.

WORKFORCE:

APWA supports dedicated and full congressional funding for workforce programs authorized by IJJA. A skilled and educated workforce is critical to the successful implementation of the law, and to support America's vast infrastructure network. With our nation facing unprecedented workforce shortages, APWA believes it must be a priority of Congress to fully fund and support workforce development initiatives, including the Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development Program. As the leader in public works education and credentialing programs, APWA encourages and values continual education and professional growth opportunities for those who build, operate, and maintain our nation's infrastructure, allowing them to remain at the top of their career fields and ensuring they are up-to-date with the best and latest developments in public works expertise.



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 in all hazards emergency management. APWA represents over 30,000 public works professionals in 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.

**APWA Government Affairs
118th United States Congress**

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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