

FEMA Mourns Agency's Founder President Jimmy Carter

Release Date: January 8, 2025

WASHINGTON -- FEMA joins the nation in mourning the passing of President Jimmy Carter. The 39th U.S. president will be remembered for his service to our nation as a Naval officer, governor, diplomat who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (2002), and Habitat for Humanity volunteer. At FEMA, he will also be remembered as our agency's founder. President Carter created our agency in 1979, strengthening our country's ability to address disasters.

"President Carter possessed the foresight to recognize the nation required a unified and coordinated emergency response system," said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell. "Much like he lived his life in service to others, he laid the groundwork for generations of emergency managers dedicated to putting people first."

While emergency response and civil defense efforts were part of the national fabric for nearly 200 years, the coordination of functions was spread across the federal government, as well as across local and state authorities. Over time, many recognized the need for better coordination and many calls to improve the federal response in times of crisis.

President Carter's [Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1978](#) laid out the framework for FEMA, merging five agencies and functions from the Departments of Defense, Commerce, Housing and Urban Development, and General Services Agency under one banner. [Executive Order 12127](#), effective April 1, 1979, established our agency, and [Executive Order 12148](#), signed on July 20, 1979, gave FEMA the dual mission of emergency management and civil defense.

During the last 44 years, our agency has strived to refine and perfect this vision while we responded to the many evolving challenges our country has faced from natural and manmade disasters.



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"FEMA's mission of helping people before, during and after disasters is derived from President Carter's deep-rooted commitment to service," said FEMA Deputy Administrator Erik Hooks. "Each survivor we help, every community we uplift, is a tribute to his legacy and vision."

Public service is among the highest callings in our nation, and President Carter set an example that few will be able to surpass but all of us can follow. While we honor his life, FEMA will carry on the legacy he established for emergency response and management.



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