

FEMA Led Historic Pandemic Response, Supported Record Number of Disasters in 2020

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WASHINGTON – The year 2020 presented unprecedented challenges to FEMA. The agency led its first ever operational response to a nationwide pandemic and responded to a record amount of disasters, including devastating wildfires in the West and the most active Atlantic hurricane season in history.

For the first time in the agency’s history, FEMA responded to simultaneous disasters in Washington, D.C., five territories and all 50 states. During one of the most demanding disaster years the country has yet faced, FEMA was there to provide assistance as the agency’s staff answered the call to help people before, during and after these events.

2020 FEMA Highlights by the Numbers

- **230 presidentially declared emergencies and major disasters**, passing the previous high of 128 declarations in 2011.
- **78 [Fire Management Assistance Grant](#) declarations** to assist governments in fighting wildfires.
- **\$568.9 million in grants** to disaster survivors for immediate needs after disasters.
- **\$19.7 billion in grants** to help rebuild communities after disasters.
- **\$927 million in mitigation grants** to help communities reduce the impacts of future disasters.
- **\$830 million in flood insurance payments** to policy holders.
- **\$1.8 billion in 2020 DHS preparedness grants** to help communities prepare for disasters.
- **\$700 million in grants** to hire and equip our nation’s firefighters.
- **Over 11,000 alerts** sent over FEMA’s Integrated Public Alert and Warning System.



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Support to Puerto Rico

- FEMA responded and provided support to Puerto Rico for the largest series of earthquakes to hit the island in 100 years. More than **1,200 FEMA employees** supported the earthquake response.
- FEMA provided more than **\$71 million** in grants to earthquake survivors and more than **\$242 million** in grants to local governments for the island's response and recovery from the earthquakes.
- In addition to earthquake recovery, FEMA awarded the agency's largest infrastructure project grants in history to assist with Puerto Rico's ongoing recovery from hurricanes Irma and Maria.
 - More than **\$11.6 billion in grants** to the island to rebuild its electric grid and education facilities.
 - **\$3.7 billion in grants** to help rebuild the island's public water and sewer facilities starting this year.

Whole-of-America COVID-19 Response

- For the first time in history, the President issued a nationwide emergency declaration, resulting in major disaster declarations for COVID-19 in all 50 states, five territories and Washington, D.C. The number of disaster declarations between March and April 2020 was nearly twice as many as occurred during any other two-month period over the last 20 years.
 - FEMA's National Response Coordination Center (NRCC) was activated for a record 314 days in 2020, with 300 of those days and more than **5,300 staff** deployed to support those response operations during the pandemic response. The previous record was in 2017 when the NRCC was activated for 78 days.
 - 2020 marked the first time in FEMA's history the agency led an operational response to a pandemic.
- FEMA served as a member of the White House Coronavirus Task Force.
- During the response, FEMA created Project Airbridge to expedite the transport of critical supplies from the global market to domestic supply chains.
 - From March 29, 2020 through June 30, 2020, **249 Project Airbridge flights** transported more than **1.1 billion** pieces of medical supplies to the United States.
- As of Jan. 1, 2021, FEMA, the Department of Health and Human Services and the private sector coordinated delivery of or are currently shipping:



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- **41 billion gloves.**
- **1.7 billion surgical/procedural masks.**
- **422 million N95 respirators.**
- **786 million coveralls/gowns.**
- **91 million eye and face shields.**
- Additionally, the agency-coordinated efforts included distributing PPE care packages to **15,400 nursing homes** across the country.
- In partnership with the Department of Labor, FEMA provided **\$42.5 billion in financial assistance** through Lost Wages Assistance grants to assist Americans who were unemployed as a result of the pandemic.
- FEMA obligated more than **\$3.25 billion** in support of the Department of Defense through Title 32, with the largest and longest sustained use of National Guard forces in support of Stafford Act declarations.
 - At the peak, more than **40,000 guardsmen** were supporting the COVID-19 response operation in 51 states and territories under FEMA’s Mission Assignment to DoD.
 - Additionally, FEMA mission assigned Department of Defense to assist with medical personnel support, including more than **5,300 personnel** to assist overwhelmed hospitals and staff at alternate care facilities.
- FEMA and HHS also deployed **40 federal medical stations kits** and mission assigned the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to construct **38 alternate care facilities** to assist with overwhelmed health care systems, resulting in more than **22,000 hospital beds** added across the nation.
- 2020 marked the first operational use of the Defense Production Act’s Title VII Voluntary Agreement. This is only the second time the voluntary agreement was implemented since 1950; however, it was never operationalized before this pandemic response.

Hurricane Season

- FEMA responded to the most active Atlantic hurricane season in history. More than **5,000 FEMA employees** deployed to support both Atlantic and Pacific hurricane responses in 2020.
- 2020 saw **30 record named storms**, with the previous record of 27 named storms in the 2005 hurricane season.
 - Twelve of these storms made landfall in the U.S., surpassing the 1916 record of nine storms making landfall in the U.S.



- September 2020 set a record with 10 named storm formations. On Sept. 18, three Atlantic storms formed within six hours, which previously occurred only one other time in 1893.
- Five of the named storms made landfall in Louisiana.
 - As of Jan. 4, 2021, FEMA has provided over **\$245 million in grants** and **\$1.2 million in flood policy payments** to survivors in Louisiana.
 - FEMA also provided more than **\$2.3 million in grants** to governments and nonprofits to assist with response efforts and rebuild infrastructure.

Wildfires

- FEMA responded to the most active West Coast wildfire season on record. More than **1,200 employees** deployed to support the response to western wildfires.
 - These included the largest wildfire in Colorado's recorded history, the Cameron Peak fire, and five of the 10 largest fires in California's history.
- FEMA processed three major declarations due to wildfires.

FEMA rose to meet new challenges during this historic year. The agency's close collaboration with federal, state, local, tribal and territorial partners made it possible to serve millions of Americans in their time of need through locally executed, state managed and federally supported disaster response.

As we begin a new year, each family and individual should take disaster and emergency preparedness seriously. Visit [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) today and [make a plan](#) for what you and your family can do to stay safe during a disaster.

