

Public Safety & Emergency Management Committee

Policies and Priorities

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) believes emergency preparedness and public safety is best achieved through a holistic and regional approach. Involving regional councils in the coordination, planning, response, and recovery efforts will promote safer, healthier and more resilient communities. Public safety and emergency management takes the coordinated efforts of numerous jurisdictions to successfully protect both metropolitan and rural regions of the nation. A network of more than 500 regional councils of government throughout the country covering more than 35,000 of the 39,000 local governments can help develop strategic assessments and plans for assuring communities are prepared.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- NARC urges the federal government to support regional collaboration and partner with local governments across multiple policy sectors to coordinate and carry out emergency preparedness and public safety goals
- NARC urges the federal government to invest in public-private partnerships to leverage resources in emergency preparedness to leverage resources
- NARC urges the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to ensure regional council representation on FEMA Regional Advisory Councils and on the FEMA National Advisory Council
- NARC urges the federal government to recognize the role of regional planning organizations in emergency preparedness and response as an integral part of resilient communities

NARC supports federal legislation that:

- Formalizes the role of regional planning organizations in emergency preparedness and response similar to that of metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in transportation planning, implementation, and capacity buildings
- Allocates emergency preparedness, response and recovery funding to urban, suburban and rural localities.
- Establishes a competitive grant program for regional planning organizations to enhance emergency regional planning and response.
- Prioritizes grant funding based on regional or multi-jurisdictional planning and collaborative efforts
- Streamlines federal homeland security grant application and planning requirements.
- Supports Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) grants, which establish a strategic direction for the enhancement of regional response capability and capacity.

- Requires states to pass-through a percentage of local funding to develop regional security assessments and plans, including upgrades in GIS or other programs or needed equipment, consistent with local and regional needs assessment.
- Includes public safety and emergency preparedness as key elements of resilient communities
- Provides funding on the basis of identified needs, particularly for critical infrastructure and multi-state regions.
- Promotes interagency sharing of equipment and training opportunities via regional planning organizations among all levels of government.
- Allocates sustainable funding for interoperable communications between local governments, first responders, and citizens.
- Continues the deployment of a nationwide interoperable wireless broadband network for public safety with strong participation and input from local elected officials and regional planning organizations.
- Encourage and provide funding for regional data collection, greater use of GIS and the use of regional scenario planning tools.