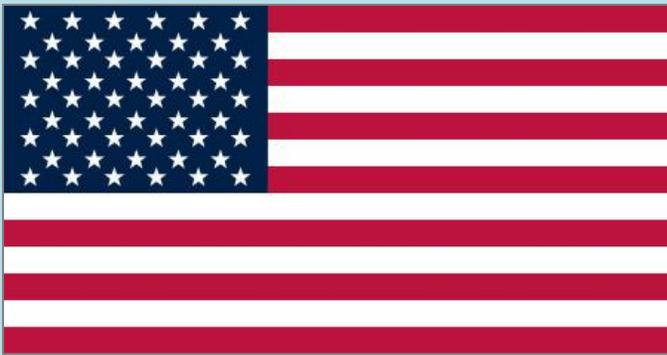


UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



- [NATIONAL PROFILE](#)
- [DISASTER RISK PROFILE](#)
- [INSTITUTIONAL SETUP](#)
- [INITIATIVES](#)

1. NATIONAL PROFILE

1.1 General¹

The United States is situated mostly in central North America and bordered by Canada to the north and Mexico to the south. The area with 9.628 million square kilometers consists of forty-eight states in mainland, the state of Alaska, and the state of Hawaii. It has geographic variety with its large size, divided by the old mountainous area of the eastern states, the coastal plain of the Atlantic seaboard, the western states with rugged mountains, and the flat prairie in the central states. It also has most climate types from a polar climate in Alaska and a tropical climate in Florida, and from an oceanic climate to a continental climate.

The capital is Washington, D.C. The population is 281.42 million. It contains a diversity of races, such as European descent, African descent, indigenous population, and Asian and Pacific descent.

1.2 Physiography²

The United States is the world's third largest nation by total area (land and water). The land area of the contiguous United States is 2,959,064 sq miles (7,663,941 sq. km). Alaska, separated from the contiguous United States by Canada, is the largest state at 663,268 sq. miles (1,717,856 sqkm). Hawaii, occupying an archipelago in the central Pacific, southwest of North America, is 10,931 sq miles (28,311 sqkm) in area.

1.3 Climate³

Mostly temperate, but tropical in Hawaii and Florida, arctic in Alaska, semiarid in the great plains west of the Mississippi River, and arid in the Great Basin of the southwest; low winter temperatures in the northwest are ameliorated occasionally in January and February by warm chinook winds from the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains.

1.8 Socio-economic Profile^{4,5}

Socio-economic Indicators		
GDP: Gross domestic product (million current US\$)	2011	14991300
GDP per capita (current US\$)	2011	47882.0
GNI: Gross national income per capita (current US\$)	2011	48585.0
Population (millions)	2014	320.05
Urban (% of population)	2014	82.89
Sex ratio (males per 100 females)	2012	97.6
Life expectancy at birth (females/males, years)	2010-2015	81.3/76.2
Adult literacy rate (% ages 15 and older)	2014	99
Expenditure on education (% of GDP)	2014	5.62

1.9 Administrative Setup⁶

The United States is the world's oldest surviving federation. It is a constitutional republic and representative democracy, "in which majority rule is tempered by minority rights protected by law". The government is regulated by a system of checks and balances defined by the U.S. Constitution, which serves as the country's supreme legal document.

In the American federalist system, citizens are usually subject to three levels of government: federal, state, and local. The local government's duties are commonly split between county and municipal governments. In almost all cases, executive and legislative officials are elected by a plurality vote of citizens by district. There is no proportional representation at the federal level, and it is very rare at lower levels.

The federal government is composed of three branches:

Legislative: The bicameral Congress, made up of the Senate and the House of Representatives, makes federal law, declares war, approves treaties, has the power

of the purse, and has the power of impeachment, by which it can remove sitting members of the government.

Executive: The president is the commander-in-chief of the military, can veto legislative bills before they become law (subject to Congressional override), and appoints the members of the Cabinet (subject to Senate approval) and other officers, who administer and enforce federal laws and policies.

Judicial: The Supreme Court and lower federal courts, whose judges are appointed by the president with Senate approval, interpret laws and overturn those they find unconstitutional. The House of Representatives has 435 voting members, each representing a congressional district for a two-year term. House seats are apportioned among the states by population every tenth year. At the 2010 census, seven states had the minimum of one representative, while California, the most populous state, had 53.

The Senate has 100 members with each state having two senators, elected at-large to six-year terms; one third of Senate seats are up for election every other year. The president serves a four-year term and may be elected to the office no more than twice. The president is not elected by direct vote, but by an indirect Electoral College system in which the determining votes are apportioned to the states and the District of Columbia. The Supreme Court, led by the Chief Justice of the United States, has nine members, who serve for life.

The state governments are structured in roughly similar fashion; Nebraska uniquely has a unicameral legislature. The governor (chief executive) of each state is directly elected. Some state judges and cabinet officers are appointed by the governors of the respective states, while others are elected by popular vote.

2. DISASTER RISK PROFILE¹

2.1 Vulnerability

The United States has wide variety of disasters such as earthquake, Tsunami, flood, sediment disasters, volcanic eruption, hurricane, tornado, drought, heat wave, heavy snow, forest fire, and coastal erosion.

Top 10 Natural Disasters in United States for the period 1900 to 2014 sorted by numbers of killed⁷

Disaster	Date	No Killed
Storm	8/Sep/1900	6000
Earthquake (seismic activity)	18/Apr/1906	2000
Storm	Sep/1928	1836
Storm	29/Aug/2005	1833
Extreme temperature	Jun/1980	1260
Extreme temperature	Jul/1936	1193
Wildfire	15/Oct/1918	1000
Storm	17/Mar/1925	739
Storm	Mar/1913	732
Extreme temperature	14/Jul/1995	670

Top 10 Natural Disasters in United States for the period 1900 to 2014 sorted by numbers of total affected people⁷

Disaster	Date	No Total Affected
Flood	9/Jun/2008	11000148
Storm	5/Sep/2004	5000000
Storm	13/Sep/1999	3000010
Storm	1/Sep/2008	2100000
Storm	30/Aug/1985	1000000
Wildfire	21/Oct/2007	640064
Storm	29/Aug/2005	500000
Epidemic	Jan/1993	403000
Storm	27/Aug/2011	370000
Storm	23/Sep/2005	300000

Top 10 Natural Disasters in United States for the period 1900 to 2014 sorted by economic damage costs⁷

Disaster	Date	Damage (000 US\$)
Storm	29/Aug/2005	125000000
Storm	28/Oct/2012	50000000
Earthquake (seismic activity)	17/Jan/1994	30000000
Storm	12/Sep/2008	30000000
Storm	24/Aug/1992	26500000
Drought	Jun/2012	20000000
Storm	15/Sep/2004	18000000
Storm	13/Aug/2004	16000000
Storm	23/Sep/2005	16000000
Storm	24/Oct/2005	14300000

2.1 Recent Major Disasters

I. Flood (June 2008)

After months of heavy precipitation, a number of rivers overflowed their banks for several weeks at a time and broke through levees at numerous locations. 24 people were killed, and 11,000,000 people were affected. Estimated damage cost is US\$10 billion.

II. Hurricane Katrina

During the period of 23 to 30 August 2005, a hurricane which is named Katrina caused severe destruction along the Gulf coast from central Florida to Texas. The total number of fatalities is 1,833, and over 1.2 million people were affected. A preliminary estimate of the total damage cost is assumed to be roughly \$81 billion.

III. Northridge Earthquake (January 1994)

In the morning of 17 January 1994, an earthquake of magnitude 6.7 occurred in the Los Angeles region of southern California. 57 people died, more than 9,000 were injured, more than 20,000 were displaced, and more than 1,600 buildings were totally damaged.

3. INSTITUTIONAL SETUP

Legal System⁸

3.1 Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction (SDR)

The Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction (SDR) is a Federal interagency body of the U.S. National Science and Technology Council under the Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Sustainability. Chartered in 1988, the SDR provides a unique Federal forum for information sharing; development of collaborative opportunities; formulation of science- and technology-based guidance for policy makers; and dialogue with the U.S. policy community to advance informed strategies for managing disaster risks.

The mandate of SDR is to advise the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and others about relevant risk reduction resources and the related work of SDR Member Agencies.

Mitigating natural and technological disasters requires a solid understanding of science and technology, rapid implementation of research information into disaster reduction programs and applications, and efficient access to diverse information from both public and private entities. To help meet these needs, the **SDR developed the Grand Challenges for Disaster Reduction, a ten-year national strategy document for prioritizing Federal investments in science and technology to reduce disaster risks and promote resilient communities.** In subsequent years, the SDR has published a series of complementary, hazard-specific Implementation Plans that identify the actions that the Federal agencies, in collaboration with individuals and organizations at all levels, must take in order to meet the six Grand Challenges.

3.2 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)⁹

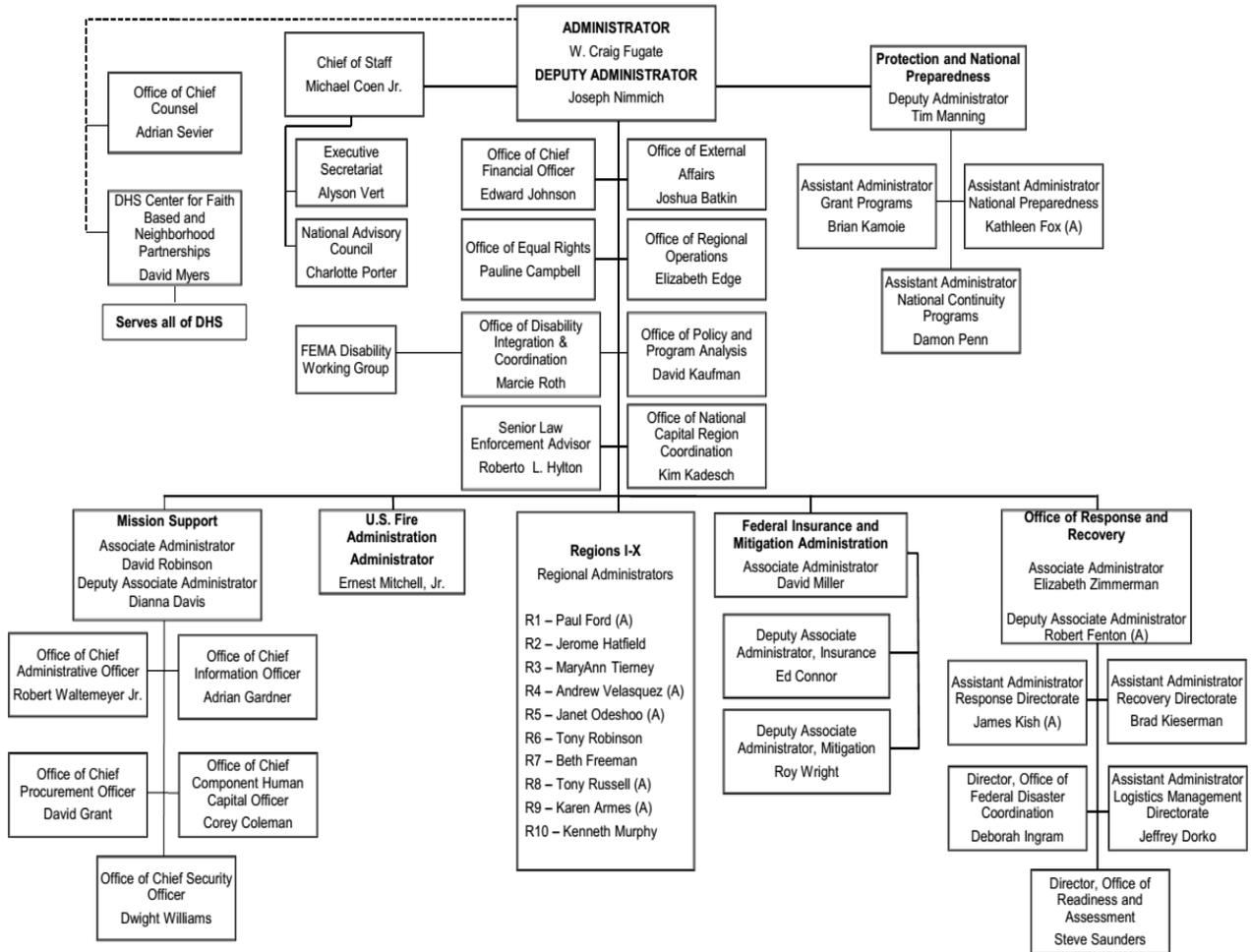
On April 1, 1979, President Jimmy Carter signed the executive order that created the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror. On March 1, 2003, the FEMA became part of

the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). FEMA's mission is to support citizens & first responders to ensure they work together to build, sustain and improve the capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from and mitigate all hazards. Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, Public Law 100-707, signed into law November 23, 1988; amended the Disaster Relief Act of 1974, Public Law 93-288. It created the system by which a presidential disaster declaration of an emergency triggers financial and physical assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This Act gives FEMA the responsibility for coordinating government-wide relief efforts.



FEMA

US Department of Homeland Security/FEMA



FEMA Corps:

On March 13, 2012, the White House announced an innovative partnership between the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to establish a FEMA-devoted unit of 1,600 service corps members within AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) solely devoted to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

FEMA has 14,844 employees across the country – at headquarters, the ten regional offices, the National Emergency Training Center, Center for Domestic Preparedness/Noble Training Center and other locations.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror. FEMA can trace its beginnings to the Congressional Act of 1803. This act, generally considered the first piece of disaster legislation, provided assistance to a New Hampshire town following an extensive fire.

In the century that followed, ad hoc legislation was passed more than 100 times in response to hurricanes, earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters.

By the 1930s, when the federal approach to disaster-related events became popular, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation was given authority to make disaster loans for repair and reconstruction of certain public facilities following an earthquake, and later, other types of disasters.

- In 1934, the Bureau of Public Roads was given authority to provide funding for highways and bridges damaged by natural disasters.
- The Flood Control Act of 1965, which gave the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers greater authority to implement flood control projects, was also passed.

- This piecemeal approach to disaster assistance was problematic. Accordingly, it prompted legislation to require greater cooperation between federal agencies and authorized the President to coordinate these activities.
- The 1960s and early 1970s brought massive disasters requiring major federal response and recovery operations by the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration, established within the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
- These events served to focus attention on the issue of natural disasters and brought about increased legislation.
- In 1968, the National Flood Insurance Act created the Federal Insurance Administration and made flood insurance available for the first time to homeowners.
- The Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 made the purchase of flood insurance mandatory for the protection of property located in Special Flood Hazard Areas.
- In the year following, President Nixon passed into law the Disaster Relief Act of 1974, firmly establishing the process of Presidential disaster declarations.
- However, emergency and disaster activities were still fragmented. When hazards associated with nuclear power plants and the transportation of hazardous substances were added to natural disasters, more than 100 federal agencies were involved in some aspect of disasters, hazards and emergencies.
- Many parallel programs and policies existed at the state and local level, simplifying the complexity of federal disaster relief efforts.

- The National Governor's Association sought to decrease the many agencies with which state and local governments were forced work. They asked President Carter to centralize federal emergency functions.

4. INITIATIVES

4.1 Statutory Authority⁹

1. **Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act:** This Act signed into law on November 23, 1988; amended the Disaster Relief Act of 1974, Public Law 93-288. It created the system in place today by which a presidential disaster declaration of an emergency triggers financial and physical assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Act gives FEMA the responsibility for coordinating government-wide relief efforts. It is designed to bring an orderly and systemic means of federal natural disaster assistance for state and local governments in carrying out their responsibilities to aid citizens. The intention was to encourage states and localities to develop comprehensive disaster preparedness plans, prepare for better intergovernmental coordination in the face of a disaster, encourage the use of insurance coverage, and provide federal assistance programs for losses due to a disaster. This Act constitutes the statutory authority for most federal disaster response activities especially as they pertain to FEMA and FEMA programs.
2. Homeland Security Act
3. Post Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA) (PDF 300KB)
4. Sandy Recovery Improvement Act of 2013 (SRIA)
5. FEMA Implementation of the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act

4.2 Executive Order 12127⁹

President Carter's 1979 executive order merged many of the separate disaster-related responsibilities into the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Among other agencies, FEMA absorbed:

- The Federal Insurance Administration
- The National Fire Prevention and Control Administration
- The National Weather Service Community Preparedness Program
- The Federal Preparedness Agency of the General Services Administration
- The Federal Disaster Assistance Administration activities from HUD
- Civil defense responsibilities were also transferred to the new agency from the Defense Department's Defense Civil Preparedness Agency

The agency coordinated its activities with the newly formed Office of Homeland Security, and FEMA's Office of National Preparedness was given responsibility for helping to ensure that the nation's first responders were trained and equipped to deal with weapons of mass destruction.

In March 2003, FEMA joined 22 other federal agencies, programs and offices in becoming the Department of Homeland Security.

4.3 FY 2012 Emergency Management Performance Grants Program¹⁰

The purpose of the FY 2012 Emergency Management Preparedness Grants (EMPG) Program is to provide grants to states to assist state, local, tribal and territorial governments in preparing for all hazards, as authorized by the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.). Title VI of the Stafford Act authorizes FEMA to make grants for the purpose of providing a system of emergency preparedness for the protection of life and property in the United States from hazards and to vest responsibility for emergency preparedness jointly in the federal government and the states and their political subdivisions. The federal government, through the EMPG Program, provides necessary direction, coordination, and guidance, and provides necessary assistance, as authorized in this title so that a comprehensive emergency preparedness system exists for all hazards. The FY 2012 EMPG plays an important role in the implementation of Presidential Policy Directive – 8 (PPD-8) by supporting the development and sustainment of core capabilities to fulfill the NPG.

The State Administration Agency (SAA) or the state's Emergency Management Agency (EMA) is the only entity eligible to apply to FEMA for the EMPG Program funds on behalf of state and local emergency management agencies, however only one application will be accepted from each state or territory. All 56 states and territories, as well as the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia, are eligible to apply for the FY 2012 EMPG Program funds.

4.4 Plan, Prepare & Mitigate¹¹

Actions should be taken before, during and after an event that are unique to each hazard. Identify the hazards that have happened or could happen in the area and plan for the unique actions for each. Local Emergency management offices can help identify the hazards in the specific area and outline the local plans and recommendations for each. Share the hazard-specific information with family members and include pertinent materials in your family disaster plan.

4.5 National Preparedness System¹²

The National Preparedness System outlines an organized process for everyone in the whole community to move forward with their preparedness activities and achieve the National Preparedness Goal. The National Preparedness System has six parts:

- **Identifying and Assessing Risk.** This part involves collecting historical and recent data on existing, potential and perceived threats and hazards. The results of these risk assessments form the basis for the remaining steps.
- **Estimating Capability Requirements.** Next, you can determine the specific capabilities and activities to best address those risks. Some capabilities may already exist and some may need to be built or improved. FEMA provides a list of core capabilities related to protection, prevention, mitigation, response and recovery, the five mission areas of preparedness. To see a full list of the core capabilities, including details about each one, visit our Core Capabilities page on this site.

- **Building and Sustaining Capabilities.** This involves figuring out the best way to use limited resources to build capabilities. You can use the risk assessment to prioritize resources to address the highest probability or highest consequence threats.
- **Planning to Deliver Capabilities.** Because preparedness efforts involve and affect the whole community, it's important that you coordinate your plans with other organizations. This includes all parts of the whole community: individuals, businesses, nonprofits, community and faith-based groups, and all levels of government.
- **Validating Capabilities.** Now it's time to see if your activities are working as intended. Participating in exercises, simulations or other activities helps you identify gaps in your plans and capabilities. It also helps you see progress toward meeting preparedness goals.
- **Reviewing and Updating.** It is important to regularly review and update all capabilities, resources and plans. Risks and resources evolve—and so should your preparedness efforts.

4.6 Institutional Structure / National Platform Description¹³

The Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction (SDR) is charged with facilitating and promoting natural and technological disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The SDR provides a senior-level interagency forum to leverage expertise, inform policy-makers, promote technology applications, coordinate activities, and promote excellence in research. The SDR mission encompasses catastrophic and non-catastrophic hazards, whether domestic or foreign, natural or technological in origin.

National progress report on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (2011-2013) – Interim

http://www.preventionweb.net/files/28816_usa_NationalHFAProgress_2011-13.pdf

Lessons learned from the Fukushima nuclear accident for improving safety of U.S. nuclear plants.

<http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=38756&pid:0>

References

¹<http://www.adrc.asia/nationinformation.php?NationCode=840&Lang=en&NationNum=29>

²http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States

³<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html>

⁴<http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/USA>

⁵<http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=United%20States%20of%20America>

⁶[http://future.wikia.com/wiki/United_States_of_America_\(HM's_World\)](http://future.wikia.com/wiki/United_States_of_America_(HM's_World))

⁷<http://www.emdat.be/result-country-profile>

⁸<http://www.americangeosciences.org/critical-issues/research-database/orgs/subcommittee-disaster-reduction-sdr>

⁹<http://www.fema.gov/about-agency>

¹⁰<http://www.fema.gov/fy-2012-emergency-management-performance-grants-program>

¹¹<http://www.fema.gov/plan-prepare-mitigate>

¹²<http://www.fema.gov/national-preparedness-system>

¹³<http://www.unisdr.org/partners/countries/>