

Office of Emergency Management

LOB #246:

PLANNING

Purpose

Plans are the operational core of preparedness and provide mechanisms for setting priorities, integrating multiple jurisdictions, organizations and functions, establishing collaborative relationships, and ensuring that communications and other systems effectively support the full spectrum of emergency management and incident response activities. The OEM Planning Division coordinates the development, review, maintenance, approval and distribution of Fairfax County all-hazards emergency plans. The Planning Division coordinates committees and partnerships involving many County agencies, regional and state agencies, businesses, and individuals to create emergency response, recovery, and mitigation plans.

Description

The OEM Planning Division is comprised of two County staff members, and is augmented by UASI grant funding. This grant funding covers the salary of an additional planning position.

The Planning Division is responsible for creating and maintaining numerous plans including the Emergency Operations Plan, Pre-Disaster Recovery Plan, Volunteer Management Annex, Donations Management Annex, Commodity Points of Distribution Annex, Service Information Center Annex, Business Emergency Operations Center Plan, and special event consequence management planning. This can be a difficult process because all of these plans involve input of multiple County, state, and federal agencies as well as non-profits, private businesses, and individual citizens. Planning is collaborative, and often the process of planning is as important as the final product. Planning brings partners to the table to discuss capabilities and strategies for responding to emergencies. A government centric approach to emergency management is not enough to meet the challenges posed by a catastrophic incident; OEM leverages and involves the Whole Community in planning. The OEM Planning Division facilitates the input of all of the partners involved in a plan, for instance, the Emergency Operations Plan alone involves 27 County agencies and various other partners. In addition to the plans managed by OEM, the Planning Division facilitates and acts as a subject matter expert on over 20 other County emergency plans. The Planning Division works with planners from around the County to create an annual schedule for the update of plans, ensure that plans are trained on and exercised, and makes completed plans accessible during emergencies.

In addition, the OEM Planning Division is responsible for various initiatives including coordinating the Emergency Data Gathering Repository (EDGR) project. EDGR is a tool used by County agencies to update the status of County facilities; in addition, it has a link to the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system to display road closures. The Planning Division manages the office strategic and operational planning initiatives. By order of the County Executive, the Planning Division reviews and suggests amendments to the facility emergency plans of nursing homes, assisted living facilities, childcare facilities and adult day care centers. The COOP Planner reports directly to the Agency Coordinator and manages the countywide Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) process. This process includes plan development, training, exercises and updates.

The Planning Division participates in regional emergency coordination and planning as a member of the Metropolitan-Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) and the NCR. In partnership with NCR jurisdictions, OEM planners have helped to develop the Regional Target Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA), Emergency Operations Center Guide, Sheltering Guide, Hazard Mitigation Plan, World Police and Fire Games Consequence Management Plan, and the Regional Transportation Evacuation Plan.

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Benefits

Planning is the foundation of the preparedness cycle and makes it possible to effectively manage a large-scale incident or event. Planning establishes priorities, identifies expected levels of performance and capability requirements, develops standards, and helps stakeholders become familiar with their roles. Planning is essential for ensuring that contingencies are in place to help the Fairfax County government, residents, and businesses prepare for, respond to, and recover from a disaster.

The OEM Planning Division integrates the needs of the Whole Community, and plans for and engages individuals with access and functional needs, in accordance with federal laws and regulations.

The plans developed by the Planning Division are used in disaster response and recovery and help to reduce the impact on County residents. Some of OEM's plans can help to reduce the impacts of a disaster before they strike, such as the Northern Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan. Other plans, such as the Emergency Operations Plan guide how the County responds to large-scale incidents or events. The Volunteer Management Plan and Donations Management Plan provide a framework for the County to utilize the generosity of its residents during an incident or event. By effectively planning for incidents and events, the impact on residents may be reduced, thus helping to maintain a healthy economy. While all of the plans OEM has produced aid in this, the Pre-Disaster Recovery Plan directly addresses the way the County, its residents, and businesses recover from a disaster. The plan addresses the process for returning the County to an economic and functional sense of normalcy.

As important as the completed plans OEM develops are, the biggest benefit to planning is the process of planning itself. Planning brings governmental agencies from all levels, the private sector, non-profits, and individuals together to discuss resources, capabilities and strategies. Bringing all of these partners together on a regular basis maintains the relationships that are imperative to emergency response and recovery.

Mandates

National Incident Management System (NIMS):

Commonwealth of Virginia Executive Order 102 (2005) made local adoption of the NIMS a requirement for receiving federal preparedness funding that passed through the Commonwealth. The Board of Supervisors adopted NIMS as the County standard for incident management on November 22, 2005. NIMS Component I: Preparedness, Section 4. Preparedness Elements directs that preparedness efforts should validate and maintain plans. NIMS is generally not specific on what plans a locality must maintain, plans that define the scope of necessary activities for preparedness, emergency management, and incident response and states that plans should address continuity of government.

Disaster Law of 2000:

The Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Law of 2000, Section 44-146.19, and Section 14-1-4 of the Fairfax County Code requires Fairfax County to prepare and keep current a local emergency operations plan. The Fairfax County Emergency Operations Plan was last approved in June 2015 and must be updated every four years.

Title 44 CFR 201.6:

Title 44 CFR 201.6 of the Federal Code states, "a local government must have a mitigation plan approved pursuant to this section in order to receive [Hazard Mitigation Grant Program] project grants." In addition, having an approved Hazard Mitigation Plan impacts the County's rating on the National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System, which in turn leads to a discount in resident flood insurance rates. This mandate is fulfilled through the Northern Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan. The plan must be updated by February 2017, and the OEM planning section is serving as the project manager for the update of the regional plan.

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Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2015:

The Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2015 (Pub. L. No. 114-4); authorized by the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as amended, requires localities to have a Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and Emergency Operations Plan in order to receive Department of Homeland Security Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) funds. The planning section in OEM is responsible for creating both of these documents. Fairfax County completes an annual update to the regional THIRA. HSGP is comprised of several grant programs including the UASI, the County receives millions of dollars in USAI grants annually including the funding for full time positions within OEM.

Trends and Challenges

The purpose of planning is to provide a framework for preventing, protecting against, mitigating, responding to, and recovering from all hazards that may affect the County. The process of planning brings all of the partners together to discuss their roles and capabilities before, during and after a disaster. The process of planning is very important, but the nature of it also creates challenges. All of the plans that OEM is responsible for involve the effort of multiple County agencies and take significant staff hours to complete. For instance, the EOP is a partnership between the Office of the County Executive, 27 agencies and the Towns of Herndon and Vienna.

It can be challenging to focus efforts on scenarios that may not affect the County for many years when there are other initiatives that require immediate attention from OEM staff and the staff of partner agencies. OEM's priority is to plan for these events but we are challenged bringing partners to the table that are not as vested in emergency management as our organization. OEM also faces the challenge of budget constraints on the County and its partners.

Since 1953, Fairfax County has had 16 federally declared disasters: 5 hurricanes, 5 severe storms, 4 snowstorms, 1 flood, and 1 ice event. Of these 16 disasters, two occurred in the 1970s. The other 14 happened between 1993 and 2012. In fact, 2003 and 2010, each had two declarations, and 2012 had three. Although the number and frequency of declared disasters rises and falls cyclically, the overall trend indicates the frequency and total numbers of declared disasters nationally is increasing. Additionally, the data supports that there is a clear upward trend in the frequency of federally-declared disasters in Fairfax County.

This upward trend increases the need to plan and prepare for disasters. Historically, after every major disaster in the United States, the Federal Government creates new mandates on emergency management. Often, these mandates are not directly required of states, but are made conditions of receiving federal funds, and an ever-increasing number of plans are required to comply with the mandates.

In addition to an increase in total federal disaster declarations, the cost of disasters is increasing. There is a greater interdependence with the private sector partners, and reliance on technology, and an ever-aging infrastructure. Emergency Management planning has to be adaptive and prepared for an ever-changing threat and hazard environment that includes manmade disasters such as cyber-attacks, and civil unrest. Fairfax OEM also faces new natural disasters that have been brought to the forefront such as earthquakes and severe weather in the form of the Derecho.

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Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
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FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$182,014	\$181,753	\$187,052
Operating Expenses	0	0	5,000
Total Expenditures	\$182,014	\$181,753	\$192,052
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$182,014	\$181,753	\$192,052
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	2 / 2	2 / 2	2 / 2
Total Positions	2 / 2	2 / 2	2 / 2

Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Development, review, or update of OEM managed plans	2	2	1	3	4
Development, review, or update of National Capital Region managed plans	2	2	3	3	3

The updating of plans in OEM is cyclical. Generally, plans are updated on a four year cycle, but plans must constantly be reviewed to make sure they reflect current situations, such as changes in technology or changes in environmental factors. The number of plans that OEM writes and maintains is slowly increasing as a result of mandates, after action reports, and lessons learned from disasters both in Fairfax County and throughout the world. Over the last several years, OEM has written several new plans in addition to maintaining the current ones. This trend is expected to continue; for example, in FY 2016 OEM will be writing a Business Emergency Operations Center (OEC) Plan, which will aim to engage the business community in EOC operations, and facilitating the update of the Northern Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan. Due to the complexity and large number of stakeholders, updating an emergency management plan often takes more than one year, and significant staff hours.

In addition to managing the plans owned by OEM, the Planning Division acts as subject matter experts and help facilitate the production of over 20 other plans countywide, and numerous regional, state, and federal plans.