

2019-2023

Chatham EMA Strategic Plan



Chatham Emergency Management Agency
124 Bull Street, Room 140
Savannah, Georgia 31404
(912) 201-4500



*Chatham Emergency Management Agency
2019-2023 Strategic Plan*



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FOREWORD

Chatham Emergency Management Agency is pleased to present the Chatham County Whole Community Emergency Management Program Strategic Plan for 2018-2022. This Plan is a continued effort towards becoming the Premier Emergency Management Program within the state of Georgia.

In preparation for a new fiscal year, the CEMA Staff held a retreat to review the ending year and to set goals for a new Fiscal Year. This retreat provided an opportunity for CEMA to review what worked under the reorganization from the previous year and to set new goals for the upcoming year and further into the future. The most important outcome of this retreat was the setting of a new mission, vision and values for CEMA. The mission is now the main focus for all activities in which CEMA undergoes.

During Fiscal Year 2018, CEMA focused more on community involvement, applying a “Whole Community” approach to all areas in which CEMA is involved. Whole Community is a large focus of the Emergency Management Planning Advisory Committee (EMPAC) which meets quarterly to discuss how CEMA and its partners are working together to meet the needs of each municipality within Chatham County. The theme for the 2016 Hurricane Conference was also Whole Community Emergency Management and how it takes a team, and not just an individual agency to work together during a disaster. As CEMA looks to the future, Whole Community is the backbone in which planning, training and exercise are based on.

We hope that this Strategic Plan provides you with a blueprint of where CEMA is heading in the future. We are excited about the progress we have made in the past years and anticipate even greater progress in the future. It is with your support that we are able to continue growing and providing great customer service.

Dennis Jones
Chatham EMA Director

VISION

Make Chatham County Resilient to Disasters.

MISSION

Promote Emergency Management Principles Across the Whole Community.

VALUES

Commitment, Professionalism, Accountability, Dependability



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Chatham County Emergency Management Agency is known as a leader in the emergency management discipline throughout the State of Georgia. The success of the program is due to teamwork and support from agencies that make up the County's emergency management team. Chatham County has embraced the "Whole Community" concept of emergency management linking public, private, non-profit and faith-based organizations in coordination of disaster and emergency prevention, protection, response, recovery and mitigation.

Annually, the emergency management team, which includes all partners, analyzes the goals from the previous year to identify strengths and areas of improvement. Those strengths and areas of improvement are used to develop the next multi-year strategic plan. In addition to these measures, CEMA reviews threats, hazards and vulnerabilities with all partners to ensure measures are taken to protect the citizens, guests, and property in Chatham County. New objectives and action items are added to the strategic plan based on this analysis. CEMA reviews each goal, objective and action item quarterly to make certain measures are met and productivity levels are maximized.

This strategic plan will be used as a roadmap for the multifaceted approach to make the community more disaster resilient. This year's plan focuses more on the five (5) mission areas of emergency management: prevention, protection, response, recovery and mitigation. The National Preparedness Goal identifies these five mission areas, in which it groups the 32 core capabilities. The Chatham County Emergency Management Team has established objectives to support these mission areas and build a stronger emergency management program.

Community resiliency and sustainability is a key part of emergency management. Community resilience is the capacity of the community as a whole to prepare for, respond to, and recover from adverse events and unanticipated crises that threaten the community

Achieving community resilience means involving the full range of community-based organizations and agencies in preparedness, response and recovery planning activities; and broadening the understanding of disaster preparedness to include community health and well-being. Agencies must plan, respond and recover in a coordinated effort. Because resources are limited, it is increasingly recognized that communication, coordination and mutual assistance is critical to a community's ability to reduce recovery periods after an emergency. Along with preparedness, response and recovery activities, mitigating hazards is a primary focus of the Strategic Plan.

This Plan will help guide CEMA's activities and the County's emergency management team to make Chatham County the most resilient community in the State of Georgia.

2.0 WHAT IS A STRATEGIC PLAN?

By definition, a strategic plan aligns an organization and budget structure with organizational priorities, missions and objectives. A strategic plan describes the mission and vision of an organization or unit; the criteria, values or guiding principles; and long-term goals, objectives and strategies.

A strategic plan is not a response plan or an operations plan. Response and operations plans are designed to guide agencies and individuals in the conduct of emergency activities and coordination during an emergency or disaster. This Strategic Plan captures strategic goals and objectives that will help improve emergency preparedness and increase the County's capabilities for successfully resolving future emergencies and disasters.



Director Jones provides EMPAC members with an update regarding CEMA's goals and objectives for FY 2017 and onward.

3.0 STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The Strategic Plan was developed in five steps:



- **Establish Benchmarks**

In the first phase, CEMA staff met to establish a series of benchmarks that articulated the desired end state of the emergency management capabilities within five years. These benchmarks were further refined through additional stakeholder review and comment. National Standards, such as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Target Capabilities List, National Incident Management System (NIMS), Incident Command System (ICS) and Emergency Management Accreditation Program Standards, were used to develop the benchmark assessment tool.
- **Assess Current Capabilities**

An assessment of current capabilities were preformed through data gathering and stakeholder interviews. Once determined, the capabilities were measured against the identified benchmarks from the first phase.
- **Perform Gap Analysis**

After completing the capability assessment interviews and obtaining a snapshot of the County's current capabilities, a comprehensive gap analysis was performed.
- **Develop Strategic Goals and Draft Plan**

The Strategic Plan identifies emergency management strategic goals based on input from partners. The draft plan was reviewed by the Emergency Management Program Advisory Committee and comments were incorporated into the final plan.
- **Finalize / Implement Plan**

Stakeholders reviewed and commented on the Strategic Plan as it was being developed and finalized. Stakeholder support and involvement was essential to Plan development and will continue to be essential throughout implementation.

4.0 WHOLE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

More than 100 stakeholders from 54 organizations, including Local, State and Federal government agencies and departments, and private sector, non-profit, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), were involved in developing this Strategic Plan. These partners provided invaluable insight through their subject matter expertise, knowledge of their respective organizations, and understanding of how the whole community works together to support multiple capabilities.

The partners' honest feedback and frank sharing of information was integral to developing the program's goals and objectives. Often departments at all levels of government are reluctant to identify emergency preparedness gaps and submit realistic corrective action documents, for fear these can be misconstrued as shortcomings or weaknesses when, in fact, nothing could be further from the truth. The end goal is for the County as a whole to be prepared for, versus reactive to, significant and destructive events. Identifying areas for improvement is the first step toward strengthening the whole community emergency management plan.



Community partners choose the areas they want CEMA to focus on for the upcoming year.





Director Jones accepts a Proclamation regarding Chatham County's Prepare-a-Thon from Chairman Scott.

5.0 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The primary purpose of the Chatham County Emergency Management Program's Strategic plan is to be a comprehensive document that addresses both practical needs at the local department level and planning needs at a county-wide level. As a result, the list of goals and objectives are extensive.

Because the planning process must be adaptable, this strategic plan does not represent the entirety of what CEMA hopes to accomplish over the coming years. It does; however, service as a framework to make difficult decisions, focus on our resources, and advance the emergency management program.

Our office is dedicated to the development and enhancement of the emergency management program for Chatham County. It is through strong partnerships that success will be achieved, even in the face of a major disaster. While there will never be enough resources and support during a catastrophic disaster, the program and community can remain resilient through a cooperative and coordinated response.

6.0 WHOLE COMMUNITY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The County's emergency management program strength is from our partnerships with other county departments, constitutional agencies, municipalities, non-profits, faith-based and private organizations. These partnerships, forged over the last decade, have enabled the program to grow through planning, training, exercises and responding to emergencies in a coordinated effort. CEMA will continue to strengthen the program by including and working closely with new members and agencies.

CEMA recognizes the importance of engaging partners when making decisions regarding Chatham County. Planning, a cornerstone of CEMA, works more fluidly when all parties have an equal voice and the opportunity to express what will and will not work in a disaster experience. By incorporating the comments and opinions of our partners, CEMA is able to publish plans that are effective, set procedures that are approved and accomplishable by our partners, and provide information to outside agencies in a consistent manner.



7.0 ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Emergency Management Planning Advisory Committee (EMPAC) is made up of multiple partners from all areas of Chatham County. These partners are invested in the future of emergency management and as such, have a defined interest in maintaining a high level of quality across the county. When determining who to invite to attend EMPAC, CEMA strived to include key personnel from each municipality, agencies with ties to disaster response and other entities who have a stake in ensuring the County's resiliency before, during and after a disaster.

Each of the quarterly meetings of the EMPAC focuses on one piece of the emergency management needs of the entire County. During these meetings, the attendees are tasked with creating responses to specific situations, polled for any current unmet needs, and asked to help identify any gaps or weaknesses within CEMA's current plans. These meetings are used as a means to bring all the important and necessary players to the table in order to encourage communication and teamwork while building relationships and ensuring that connections are made before they are needed.



8.0 VISION

The vision of CEMA is to “Make Chatham County Resilient to Disasters”.

In determining an updated vision for CEMA, the entire staff determined the most important aspects in which the County and its communities relied on CEMA to provide. Using this information, CEMA developed a vision statement that encompasses its focus on planning efforts and an enhanced training and exercise program.

9.0 MISSION

The mission statement of CEMA is “Promote Emergency Management Principles Across the Whole Community”.

In order to effectively embody the vision statement, CEMA staff set forth the mission statement as a means of further defining what CEMA provides to its partners and the Chatham County Community.

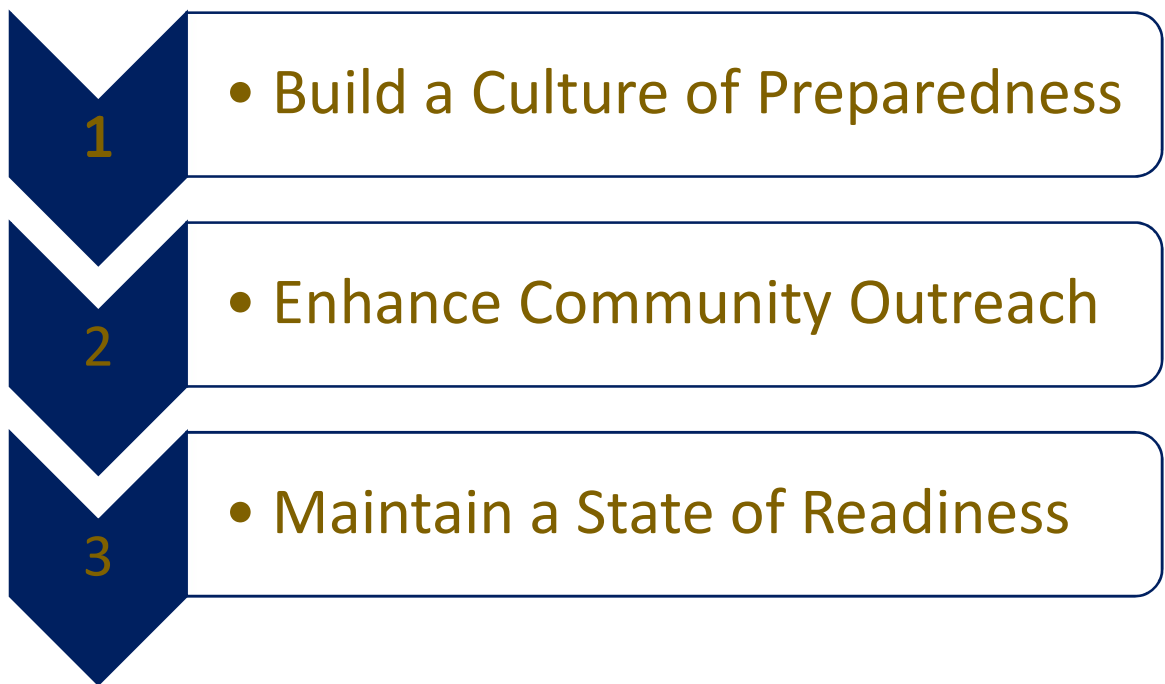
10.0 VALUES



When building the framework for CEMA’s Mission and Vision Statements, CEMA staff chose the values that most described them as individuals as well as the Agency as a whole. These values are the driving force of CEMA’s focus on the Whole Community. As an Agency, CEMA promises to provide the utmost **commitment** when working with partners in a **professional** manner that ensure **dependability** and **accountability** from the beginning of a project or situation to the close. As these values are important to all of the staff, each strives to embody them on a daily basis.

11.0 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve CEMA's overarching mission, members of EMPAC were polled to determine what goals and objectives they would most like to see CEMA focus on. These goals and objectives have been reviewed by CEMA and local partners to ensure that Chatham County receives the best service possible from CEMA and their emergency management partners. These goals were originally part of a nine goal process, in order to align with what FEMA has produced, CEMA consolidated the nine goals, without losing content and now they have been broken out into three strategic goals. Each goal will have subset of objectives to help accomplish the goal.



GOAL ONE BUILD A CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS

Description: CEMA is made up of five different divisions, two of those divisions fall under the purview of “Building a Culture of Preparedness”, the Preparedness Division and the Recovery Division. The Preparedness Division’s objective is to build a safer and more disaster resilient County through coordination of comprehensive planning, training, exercise, evaluation and mitigation programs. Below can be found more objectives that will allow CEMA to produce quality material and programs the Chatham Community in order to be better prepared for future disasters. On the other side of preparedness is the Recovery Division, whose overarching objective is to ensure the County is ready and capable of performing Recovery activities in a quick and reliable timeframe that is consistent with State and Federal commonalities.

Objectives

- 1.1 Ensure emergency plans are up-to-date, consistent, comprehensive, and compliant with State and Federal Guidelines

Emergency Planning is a major component of the Community Emergency Management Program. Support should be collective to ensure every emergency management partner agency develops specific plans to align with the Program, prepare for emergencies and resume operations.

- 1.2 Use the exercise and training program to test and improve emergency management plans, policies and capabilities.

Effective training and exercise are central to responsible action and successful cooperation during emergencies. CEMA actively revises processes and procedures for exercises and training to meet the challenges of preparedness and coordination in actively shifting emergency situations to employ contemporary strategies in emergency management. The Homeland Security Exercises and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) process is used to develop trainings and exercises to use standardized policy, methodology, and terminology for exercise design, development, conduct, evaluation and improvement planning. This ensures exercise programs use best practices and are unified and consistent with efforts at all levels of government.

- 1.3 Ensure Emergency Management planning activities target areas where resources are prioritized to lessen impacts on employees, citizens and property.

Mitigation includes those capabilities necessary to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. It is focused on the premise that individuals, the private and nonprofit sectors, communities, critical infrastructure, and the community as a whole are

made more resilient when the consequences and impacts, the duration, and the financial and human costs to respond to and recover from adverse incidents are all reduced.

1.4 Enhance the county's ability to recover from major emergencies or disaster.

Recovery includes those capabilities necessary to assist communities affected by an incident to recover effectively. Support for recovery ensures a continuum of care for individuals to maintain and restore health, safety, independence and livelihoods, especially those who experience financial, emotional, and physical hardships. Successful recovery ensures that we emerge from any threat or hazard stronger and positioned to meet the needs of the future. Recovery capabilities support well-coordinated, transparent, and timely restoration, strengthening, and revitalization of infrastructure and housing; an economic base; health and social systems; and a revitalized cultural, historic and environmental fabric.

F.5 Help citizens and partners prepare for disasters.

Preparedness efforts must be applied to the whole community. Increasing preparedness efforts across all sectors creates a more disaster resilient Chatham County.

F.6 Better learn from past disasters, continuously improve and innovate.

No two incidents are the same. Learning from disasters is necessary to increase resiliency. Incorporating lessons learned not only from disasters that directly impact Chatham County, as well as others areas across the nation and world can help to build a more resilient Chatham County.

GOAL TWO ENHANCE COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Description: Community safety is of the utmost importance to Chatham County and Chatham EMA. Working with and maintaining partnerships with community members and leaders are keys to supporting the County's preparedness activities and programs. CEMA works to interface local businesses, academic institutions and local citizens to increase the public's preparedness and response to disasters. Community outreach is one of the five divisions of CEMA. The objectives for Community Outreach can be found below.

Objectives

2.1 Enhance citizen preparedness by hosting public awareness events.

Coordinate and expand community outreach efforts and actively establish and maintain partnerships with community leaders, academic institutions, community groups, and neighborhood associations, faith-based and non-profit organizations that facilitate more effective prevention, protection, mitigation, and response and recovery activities throughout the County.

2.2 Maintain a social media presence with Facebook and Twitter to provide the community with EM updates and information on an on-going basis during emergency events.

Social media is a major platform for information. Many residents of Chatham County have and use different forms of social media so using these platforms to get a message out is crucial. Because technology has come so far, getting a message out using social media is quicker than producing an email. By using social media and getting out correct information regarding an event, CEMA can brand its public alerts as a trusted source of official information, not only is this relevant through social media but also through CEMA's mobile application.

2.3 Strengthen the Joint Information Center and emergency public information and warning capabilities

Chatham County has a Chatham County Public Information Officers Association that meets in order to discuss public information plans and how to work together during a disaster event. For so long, this was just practice, in recent years, the amount of events in Chatham County requiring the activation of a Joint Activation Center has increased, therefore the need to strengthen and improve the current plan is more important now than ever

2.4 Develop a Praise and Preparedness Program

Engaging the many churches in Chatham County in our emergency preparedness programs is crucial to the outreach program. The preparedness and outreach divisions will work together to host a festival annual to engage the church community in emergency preparedness planning.

2.5 Develop a Business Resilience Partnership Program

While there is a large showing for big business in Chatham County, the goal is to work with large and small business owners in Chatham County to build resiliency. After a disaster it is common for a lot of small businesses to shut their doors, it is generally a cost that cannot be recovered. With this program, the preparedness division and outreach division will work together to host an annual workshop for business owners to attend and learn about disaster preparedness and how to be more resilient.

GOAL THREE MAINTAIN A STATE OF READINESS

Description: Maintaining a state of readiness is one of the most crucial elements of response, also why response is the first objective listed below. At the crux of what Emergency Management is, it is being able to respond to events effectively to coordinate resources as necessary to prevent the loss of lives and property.

Objectives

- 3.1 Improve the capability to respond to emergency events and to identify, arrange and track community-wide resources that could be available during emergency and disaster situations.

Response includes those capabilities necessary to save lives, protect property and the environment, and meet basic human needs after an incident has occurred. It is focused on ensuring that the Chatham Community is able to effectively respond to any threat or hazard, including those with cascading effects. Response emphasizes saving and sustaining lives, stabilizing the incident, rapidly meeting basic human needs, restoring basic services and technologies, restoring community functionality, providing universal accessibility, establishing a safe and secure environment, and supporting the transition to recovery.

- 3.2 Ensure an effective and redundant emergency communications system that will establish, utilize, maintain and augment backup communication methods.

Maintain a continuous flow of critical information among multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary emergency responders, command posts, agencies, and government officials for the duration of the emergency response operation as required by the National Incident Management System. Establish plans and backup systems for public safety communications, including critical components such as standards-based networks, support systems, personnel, and an appropriate level of redundant communications systems in the event of an emergency.

- 3.3 Maintain the Emergency Operations Center at a constant state of readiness.

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is the heart of coordination for emergency planning, training, response, and recovery efforts for Chatham County. EOC processes follow the national all-hazards approach to major disasters that require involvement by multiple jurisdictional departments and agencies.

- F.4 Organize the “BEST” (Build, Empower, Sustain and Train) Scalable and Capable Critical Workforce.

Properly trained personnel is a critical component to any disaster response, or during the execution of any plan / standard operating guide. Through the BEST method, a reliable, effective and efficient workforce can respond as needed to ensure services are being delivered to the community.

F.5 Improve Continuity and Resilient Communication Capabilities.

An effective continuity plan is the backbone of any agency during a disaster. Ensuring employees have the ability to perform necessary functions to provide goods and services to the community is essential. Part of this process is the requirement for sustainable and resilient communication capability.

F.6 Develop innovative systems and processes that enable CEMA to rapidly and effectively deliver the Agency's Mission.

CEMA is a premier Emergency Management Agency because of its progressive nature. Through constant innovation and incorporation of new systems, processes and technology, CEMA can become more effective during operations to deliver Emergency Management principles across the whole community.

12.0 OVERARCHING PRIORITIES

Customer Service: Preparing partners and citizens is why we exist. Our Mission, Vision and Values support our dedication to maximizing the service provided to all people in our community.

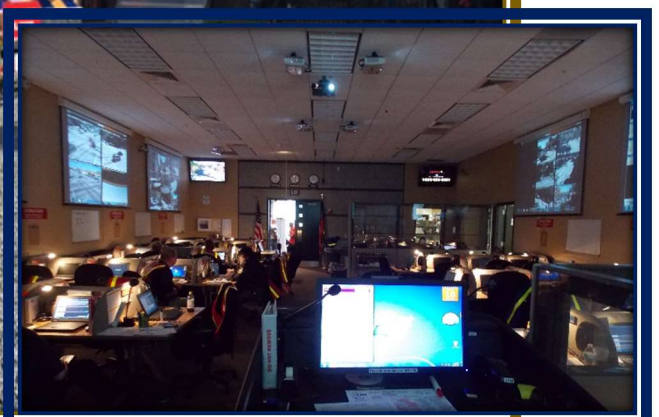
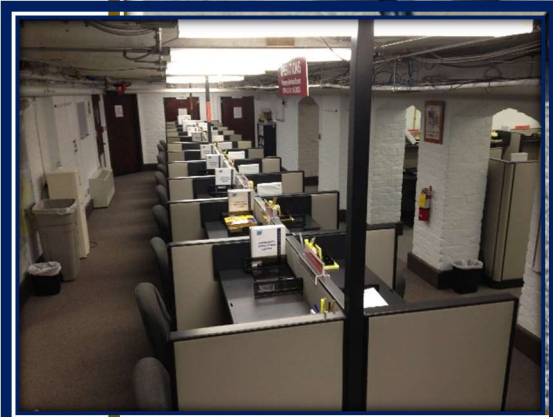
Emergency Operations Center: A well prepared emergency management program includes a prepared and capable emergency operations center. Our focus is to have an emergency operations center that is 100% ready 100% of the time.

Professional Development: The field of emergency management is constantly improving. As such, emergency management staff must also improve. Professional development is a key factor in ensuring we stay informed of and engaged in emerging trends and initiatives.

13.0 PROGRAM MAINTENANCE

The emergency management program has many elements and many stakeholders. In order for the program to be successful, it is necessary to ensure a documented schedule and plan to ensure plans are evaluated, maintained and revised as appropriate.

CEMA maintains three Emergency Operation Centers (EOC): a primary EOC located in downtown Savannah, a secondary EOC located towards west Chatham and a Mobile EOC that can be deployed to assist on-scene.



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