

DISASTER RESILIENCE RESOURCES

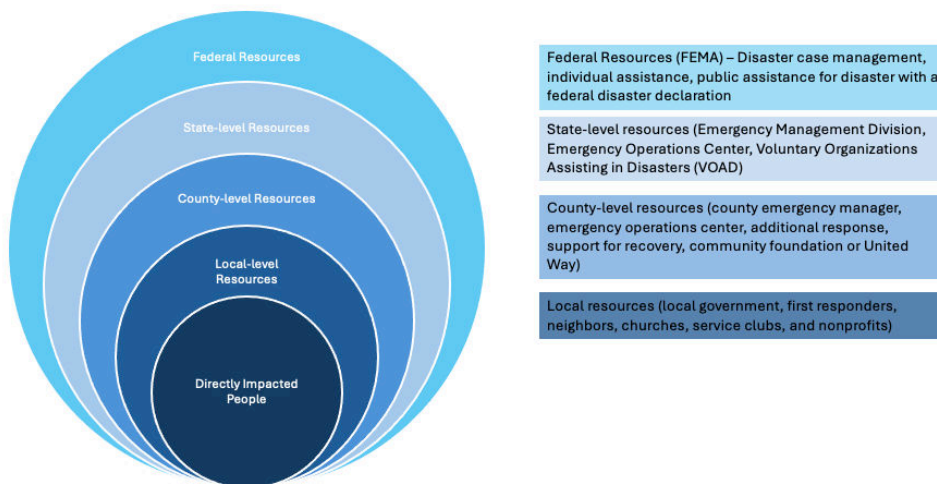
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WHERE TO START,
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Emergency Management Partners in Washington State

To access help for your community in the event of a disaster, you need to understand how emergency management is organized in Washington State. Emergency management can be depicted as concentric circles starting with those who are directly affected by the emergency and radiating outward to other resources depending on the severity of the emergency and the skills and/or resources needed to address it.

In the case of a single-family house fire, local resources may be enough to address the emergency. The family is directly affected, local fire fighters put out the blaze, and the local community rallies to provide food and temporary shelter. After the fire, the family may also receive assistance from local nonprofits and file an insurance claim to help with rebuilding their home.

Community-wide emergencies may require an expanded circle of support including one or more of the circles shown below. Your first request for assistance will be to the County Emergency Manager, which is why this is a critical relationship to have in advance of an emergency.



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Local governments have primary responsibility for emergency management. They are supported by county-level emergency managers and by the [Washington Emergency Management Division](#). With fewer resources available at the federal and state levels, local ownership for emergency preparation is more important than ever.

The Role of the Washington Emergency Management Division

The Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD), part of the Washington Military Department is tasked with state-level disaster preparedness and mitigation support and response.

The preparedness section does statewide planning, supports local planning, runs a statewide training program, and coordinates exercises that improve readiness. They also work to ensure that all state agencies have a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) and a Continuity of Government Plan (COG).

The mitigation section coordinates and supports mitigation planning and manages most federal hazard mitigation funding processes for WA communities.

The response section handles state logistics and communications during major disasters, runs the state Emergency Response Center, the State 911 system, tsunami protection, and jointly administers distribution of federal disaster recovery funds for individuals and local governments.

EMD also coordinates county-level emergency managers, linking local to state to federal disaster services.

The Role of Local Government

Remember, local government is ultimately responsible for disaster planning and response. This is why it is important to do what you can, when you can to increase your resilience as a community. Fortunately, there are partners that can help and resources to support planning,

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readiness, and projects to increase your resilience. You can also form joint emergency management districts to prepare collaboratively.

Nonprofit Organizations

Nonprofit organizations also play a vital role in emergency response and recovery. Organizations like the American Red Cross, Food Lifeline, and The Salvation Army who provide disaster relief and recovery services are networked via [Washington Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster](#) (WAVOAD) and the wider National VOAD network. VOADs facilitate a coordinated response when disaster strikes. In addition, local nonprofits are a key resource, often flexing to meet basic needs of disaster survivors and organize local volunteers. Your local community foundation or United Way may also be able to rally community resources, coordinate volunteers, or provide a trusted avenue to receive financial donations.

What about FEMA?

FEMA is our federal emergency response system. See the separate factsheet summarizing the role of FEMA.

Next Steps

Training and networking can help you better understand the network of organizations that respond to emergencies. Relationships developed now will be helpful later. Who in your community can learn more now and be a point person? In many communities, this role falls to interested volunteers.

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