



SECURE & PREPARED

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Special points of interest:

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- How do you split the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) passed through to support local emergency management agencies? See page 3.
- Public Information Officers from seven state agencies recently met to discuss roles and responsibilities during disasters and emergencies. See page 5.

HSEMD Web Site Gets New Look

The Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division has launched its new Web site under the same URL/address of www.iowahomelandsecurity.org. The site has a fresh new look including the Division's new logo.

As far as content, new information has been added and much of the information that was on our old site is included. Organization of the site has also changed and while it might take a couple times to get used to it, hopefully users will find it easier to navigate. The site also has a working search engine and self-updating site map to help with navigation.

The main tabs are now found at the top of the pages on the site, with subsections under each tab. County emergency management coordinators will still have a password protected section. Password/login information will remain the same. As a side note, our www.BeReadyIowa.org site remains the same and is not affected by the change to our Division site.

If you have questions or suggestions to improve the site, please let us know. This is still a work in progress and there are still some kinks to be worked out, so please bear with us. A big thank you to Alliance Technologies, to those who were part of the Web Redesign Team and others who gave us their feedback during the construction phase of this site!



Severe Weather Awareness Week Approaches

HSEMD and the National Weather Service are promoting April 7-11, 2008 as Severe Weather Awareness Week in Iowa. A statewide tornado drill will be held on April 9 starting at 10 a.m.

Once again HSEMD is promoting its www.BeReadyIowa.org Web site, which contains useful safety tips such as learning warning signals, purchasing a NOAA Weather Radio, organizing a family emergency plan, and putting together an emergency supply kit. Knowing what to do in advance can help prevent unnecessary panic and confusion when severe weather does strike.

Safeguard Iowa to Host Workshops

The Safeguard Iowa Partnership in association with the Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and the Iowa Department of Public Safety will be sponsoring three public-private emergency coordination workshops in June.

The goal of the workshops is to demonstrate successful public-private initiatives and provide an emergency coordination model for individual communities, as well as regional and statewide efforts. Presentations will include lessons learned from recent incidents, public-sector assessment tools for business preparedness and other varied topics. Each attendee will receive preparedness education materials to take back to his/her organization.

The audience for these workshops is private- and public-sector individuals invested in emergency preparedness and response, including but not limited to professionals in business continuity, emergency management, emergency medical, fire, hospitals, intelligence, law enforcement, public health, public works, utilities, volunteer organizations and private businesses.

The workshops will be held from 9:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at the following locations and dates:

Denison - June 2

Cedar Rapids - June 4

Altoona - June 5

Topics include: public-private exercises, fusion centers and intelligence, pandemic influenza, making an emergency operations center work, Des Moines' Barton Solvents fire response, and business continuity.

To register, go to www.PrepareIowa.com. There is no cost to attend and lunch will be provided for registered attendees at each location. The workshops are funded through Iowa Department of Public Health grant funds and contributions from the members of Safeguard Iowa Partnership.

Legislative Update

The second funnel has passed. Some of the bills HSEMD has been watching are still alive, while one has already been signed by the Governor.

HF 2366 was signed into law by Governor Culver on March 13. The bill designates emergency services communication equipment as an essential county or city purpose that authorizes the issuance of general obligation bonds to fund the purchase of this equipment.

Bills that are still alive include House File 2564, which increases the application income limits and maximum awards for the Iowa Individual Assistance Disaster Grant Program. House File 247 deals with 911 Service Board memberships, while Senate Study Bill 3219 looks to make changes to how funds are disbursed from the wireless surcharge funds to the Local E911 Service Board.

One bill that all local, county, and state levels of government need to review is Senate File 2378. This bill deals with open meetings law as well as open records. If this bill is passed and signed into law, it will have some significant impacts on open meetings and what can be considered an open meeting. As the bill stands presently, it only has minor impact on the open records side of things. According to review by our Attorney General representative, the open records language does not adversely impact any of the confidential elements of existing plans.

Lastly, HSEMD is monitoring the appropriation bills as they make their way through the process. The General Assembly is scheduled to finish their business on April 22.

How EMPG Dollars Are Allocated

How do you split the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) passed through to support local emergency management agencies? Traditionally the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division has split the grant 50-50 and passed half on to eligible local emergency management agencies. That's the easy part. It is the distribution of these pass-through dollars that was a major point of discussion recently at a meeting with the Executive Committee of the Iowa Emergency Management Association (IEMA) and the management team of HSEMD. This article will explain the current allocation formula and how it was derived.

Two Schools of Thought

There are two predominant schools of thought regarding the challenges associated with allocating EMPG. On one hand you could argue the dollars should be allocated based on population. Counties with more people arguably have the most risk and demands, this theory goes, so the dollars should be allocated based on population. The other side of the coin would argue for equal shares. This school of thought says regardless of the population, basic requirements of the grant are the same – planning annexes are the same, training requirements for the coordinator are the same, and the exercise requirement is also the same.

How the Current Allocation Works

The current EMPG allocation takes both schools of thought and splits the difference, with a twist.

1. Half of the money allocated for the pass through is established as a base amount and shared by all that apply and are eligible for the grant. This base amount is divided equally by all of the participating counties with this first wrinkle; part-time coordinators receive a half share, and the remaining amount is then split equally by all full time coordinators. This is designed to reward commissions that support full-time coordinators and encourage commissions to move coordinators to full time status.
2. The other half of the allocated pass-through is split by population. Populations are computed for counties and this half is then allocated based on their county's percentage of the total population covered by the grant. Here is the second wrinkle; a cap of \$39,000 was established which was reached last year by nine counties. Dollars over that cap are distributed to the remaining counties that have not reached it.

How this Formula was derived

Changing the formula from the old salary-based allocation to a fairer more work-related allocation has been a long-standing priority of Dave Miller and many county coordinators. Miller first approached county coordinators and asked them for a recommendation. Unfortunately, no clear solution was attainable, so HSEMD took the job. Lynda Wessel led a very involved, time consuming process to come to this formula. She reviewed allocation formulas from other states and came up with six different solutions. These were thoroughly briefed to county coordinators at Regional Meetings and at the Governor's Homeland Security Conference. In the end, coordinators said, pick a formula that spreads these dollars as fairly as possible while minimizing impact on current budgets. That's one of the main reasons the \$39,000 cap was established.

Splitting the pie is not an easy task and Miller said at the meeting he is certainly willing to review the current formula. He asked IEMA leadership to develop a consensus recommendation from its members and told the coordinators he'd welcome the chance to adjust the current formula based on future funding levels and changing needs.

NIMS Update

Recently, the FY2008 National Incident Management System (NIMS) requirements were released and there have been inquiries as to whether there are any changes from last year. The guidance that was distributed last year will remain the same for 2008. The only change is that ICS 400 needs to be completed by September 30, 2009.

As a reminder, the following is the guidance on who needs to take this course. The individuals needing to take these courses will be those responding as the Incident Commander or in a leadership role within the Incident Command Structure, in a Type 3 incident.

A Type 3 incident is one in which the capabilities have exceeded the initial attack, the appropriate ICS positions should be added to match the complexity of the incident. This type of incident will require a significant number of resources, extend into multiple operational periods and require a substantial number of responders from multiple jurisdictions and multiple agencies. A written Incident Action Plan (IAP) may also be required for each operational period.

Few people in Iowa will need to take these courses. The largest (by population) 20 cities and/or 15 counties will need to send personnel. However, these are only the personnel who will fill ICS command positions, not all personnel. ICS 300 and ICS 400 are both two-day courses, taken in a classroom setting, not independent study. In addition to these positions, all emergency management coordinators are required to take ICS 300 and 400.

To obtain training for the ICS 300 and 400, contact the Iowa Central Homeland Security Training Center at (515) 576-0099, ext. 2150 or the Fire Service Training Bureau at (888) 469-2374.

NIMS workshops will be held during the month of April in each of the six regions. During these workshops, we will be covering '08 requirements, projected '09 requirements, the five-year training plan, ICS 300 and ICS 400, National Response Framework, resource typing, ongoing training, credentialing and the NIMSCAST. A list of dates, times and places will be released in the near future.

Joint Field Office Closes

The FEMA Joint Field Office in Urbandale closed on March 21. During the past few months, HSEMD has worked alongside FEMA representatives to help provide Public Assistance dollars to communities affected by the December 14 ice storm.

On January 4, Iowa received a Presidential Disaster Declaration for the ice storm for the following counties: Adair, Adams, Appanoose, Cedar, Clarke, Clinton, Davis, Decatur, Fremont, Iowa, Jefferson, Johnson, Jones, Keokuk, Linn, Lucas, Madison, Mahaska, Marion, Monroe, Montgomery, Page, Ringgold, Taylor, Union, Van Buren, Wapello, Warren, Washington and Wayne.

As of March 12, over \$22.7 million had been approved for Public Assistance projects.

HSEMD also worked with the Department of Human Services to assist individuals through Iowa's Disaster Reimbursement Grant Program. A total of 89 applications were approved for a total of approved amount \$50,052.06

Iowa Homeland Security & Emergency Management Division

A Division of the Department of Public Defense

Administrator

David L. Miller

7105 N.W. 70th Avenue
Camp Dodge, Bldg W-4
Johnston, IA 50131

Phone: 515-725-3231

Fax: 515-725-3260

Web Site:

www.iowahomelandsecurity.org

Secure & Prepared is published by the Iowa Homeland Security & Emergency Management Division for those involved in the homeland security system in the state of Iowa. For more information, contact: Kara Berg, 515-725-3271, kara.berg@iowa.gov; or Lucinda Robertson, 515-725-3239, lucinda.robertson@iowa.gov.

News Team

Kara Berg

Beth Gathercole

David Johnston

Kyle Karsjen

Lucinda Robertson

Kathy Stodola

Bret Voorhees

Lynda Wessel

HSEMD Mission

Lead, coordinate, and support homeland security and emergency management functions in order to establish sustainable communities and ensure economic opportunities for

State Agency PIOs Hold Workshop

Public Information Officers from seven state agencies recently met to discuss roles and responsibilities during disasters and emergencies.



The goal of the meeting was to familiarize new Public Information Officers (PIOs) with the operation of the state Joint Information Center (JIC), provide a refresher to those who had worked in the JIC in the past, and to prepare all participants to effectively work together during disasters.

The participating PIOs, representing Homeland Security Executive Group agencies, were from the Iowa Departments of Administrative Services, Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Natural Resources, Public Health, Transportation, and the Governor's Office. Several of the PIOs attending were new to state government and state emergency operations, while others had provided support to the public information function in past disasters.

"It's important that we understand our roles before a disaster strikes," said HSEMD Communications and Technology Bureau Chief Bret Voorhees. "Providing information to the public and the media during disasters is crucial to the safety of citizens. The more PIOs understand their roles, the better prepared we are to work together," said Voorhees, who is HSEMD's lead PIO and oversees the workings of the state JIC during disasters.

Iowa Central to Pilot Rural PIO Course

A new one-day rural PIO course piloted by Iowa Central Community College, will be held at 9 a.m. on April 23 at Camp Dodge in building W34. Iowa Central is working with the Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium to pilot this basic PIO course for rural first responders and public information officers.

This is the first of several pilots to be offered on this course with the intent of getting feedback from students to improve the course and hopefully make it a regular course offering through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Grants and Training.

The course is free of charge. To register, visit <http://hls.extension.iastate.edu/calendar/>.

We're on the Web!

www.iowahomelandsecurity.org