

Region 7 ESF-6 Embarks on a New Path

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FEMA Region 7, as Emergency Support Function-6 (ESF-6) Coordinator, hosted a virtual meeting of the Regional Interagency Steering Committee (RISC) ESF-6 Subcommittee on November 4, 2021. For the first time, our invitation was spread far and wide to include local-level mass care partners. More than 80 people from all four Region 7 states participated – 47% participating for the first time. Of the non-FEMA participants, 27% represented non-governmental organizations, 20% local government, 38% state government, 11% federal government, and 4% unknown.

The resilience theme was considered from several angles - together exploring a strategic path to this new normal, equitable applications in program delivery, self-care around disaster and compassion fatigue, and network expansion to include partners from every level. Additionally, FEMA, state and whole community partners provided operational updates, and the states and FEMA recognized partners for their creativity and achievements in meeting unprecedented needs. Participants also approved the updated subcommittee charter. Please see the meeting notes for more detail. [*<insert link if possible>*](#)

Seven strategic priorities for the next 3-5 years were ranked by participants during collaborative discussions. The following priorities garnered the most interest, with the first two being the 2022 focus.

- Closing capability gaps through partner development and engagement
- Building capacity through coordinated training and mentoring
- Expanding resources through effective volunteer and donations management
- Increasing operational efficacy through organizational structure and process improvements

Outcomes from the strategic-action breakout discussions will serve as the starting point for a multi-year regional ESF-6 strategic path. Training breakout participants expressed interest in equitable stakeholder engagement, planning process, and disaster housing workshops as well as regular mass care-related trainings to ensure partner network readiness and resilience. Future training and workshop offerings will include virtual and hybrid formats to allow for broader participation.

Inclusion and engagement of a broad cross-section of partners will help us all to fulfill an important purpose of the ESF-6 Subcommittee meetings: *to increase capabilities and capacity through interactive cross-state partner awareness and engagement, relationship building, information-sharing, and ongoing development of mass care knowledge and skills*. Our partners are vital to address a broad range of needs, including those of our most vulnerable, marginalized, and underserved communities. Moving forward, FEMA and a partner organization will co-host for a quarterly, half-day meeting mass care partners at every level on topics of interest to their stakeholders. This is done best with input from all the partners! Increasing ESF-6 partner and network capabilities in this way builds resilience at organizational, local, state and regional network levels. The ESF-6 Subcommittee's 2022 looks to be an exciting year, and all Mass Care Partners are welcome to join us on our resilient path forward!

Please contact us at FEMA-R7-VAL-MassCare@fema.dhs.gov to learn more.