

**International Association of Emergency Managers
2009 Government Affairs Committee**

EMPG Funding Summary Report

On April 29, 2009, the Government Affairs Committee of IAEM asked our regional presidents and state associations of local emergency managers to distribute a link to an internet survey to association members in their respective areas. The short 16-question survey solicited information in two areas related to local emergency management: 1) the role of Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) funds, and 2) the impact of the economic downturn.

The survey, hosted by Survey Monkey, was accessible from April 29-May 6, 2009. In total, 348 individuals completed the survey. Selected demographic information and survey limitations are in the appendix at the end of this report.

The EMPG Funding Summary Report presents the findings related to role of EMPG funds in local emergency management programs.

Findings

The survey asked emergency managers to respond to four questions about the role of EMPG funds in local emergency management programs. The first survey question asked emergency managers how much EMPG funding they received in fiscal year 2008 and fiscal year 2009.

Of the 42 states who responded to our survey, more than one-third of emergency managers had not yet received their 2009 fiscal year allocation of EMPG funding. The amount of EMPG funds received by the remaining two-thirds for 2009 (N=230), and all of the emergency managers for 2008, is detailed in the table below.

EMPG Funds Received				
	25% of respondents	25% of respondents	25% of respondents	25% of respondents
2008	\$0- 9,964	\$10,000- 28,000	\$29,000- 55,000	\$55,049- 360,406
2009	\$0- 12,000	\$12,500- 30,192	\$30,321- 68,000	\$70,000- \$439,000

When EMPG, then referred to as State and Local Assistance, was introduced in the 1950s, it was intended to be a 50% federal and 50% state and local matching program. Most of the local jurisdictions represented in this survey did not receive a 50% match from EMPG funding. In fact, the majority of jurisdictions derived 25% or less of their local emergency management budgets from EMPG funding.

Only 10 emergency managers reported that their jurisdictions had derived 50% of their local emergency management budget from EMPG funding in 2008; and only 12 emergency managers reported that their jurisdiction had derived 50% of their budget from EMPG funds in 2009. The data analyzed from this survey suggests that the local jurisdictions are overmatching EMPG funds. The percentages of local emergency management budgets derived from EMPG funding are depicted in the table below.

% of Local Emergency Management Budget Derived from EMPG Funding*		
	# jurisdictions 2008	# jurisdictions 2009
0	38	33
1-5%	16	13
6-10%	31	25
11-15%	21	25
16-20%	29	26
21-25%	30	28
26-30%	30	19
31-35%	20	22
36-40%	14	16
41-45%	8	7
46-50%	25	17
Total	262	231

*Information for this table was calculated using data from surveys that had complete data for questions 7 and 8.

The second survey question asked emergency managers to identify how their jurisdiction used EMPG funds to support local emergency management efforts from a provided list. The table below lists the potential activities supported by EMPG funds from which emergency managers chose as well as the breakdown of respondent's choices.

Types of Activities Supported by EMPG Funds					
	%	#		%	#
Personnel Salaries/Benefits	82.7	259	Exercises	55.9	175
EOC	64.2	201	Software/Technology	39.0	122
Local Training	62.0	194	Mitigation	33.2	104
Operational Costs	62.0	194	CERT/Citizen Corp	31.0	97
Equipment	60.7	190	Regional Activities	30.7	96
Public Outreach	57.8	181	Mapping	18.5	58
Other Training	56.2	176	Other	11.2	35
Total Answered Question					313
Skipped Question					35

The third question related to EMPG funds was open-ended and asked emergency managers to describe the role of EMPG funds in their jurisdictions. Analysis of emergency manager responses, revealed a contrast in what EMPG funding meant to jurisdictions.

Many emergency managers perceived EMPG funding to be integral to their programs' continued capability and capacity building while other emergency managers perceived EMPG funding to be integral to their programs' very survival. This contrast in the role of EMPG funding can be explained in part by the differences between local emergency management programs in urban and rural jurisdictions. Yet, regardless of the size of population they served, jurisdiction they represented, and area of the country in which they were geographically located, emergency managers credit EMPG funding with their jurisdictions' emergency management accomplishments.

Of note, the quotations from emergency manager responses included below in italics represent only a small fraction of the total responses from emergency managers along the two themes.

Presentation of Themes

EMPG funding has been instrumental in increasing the capability and capacity of local emergency management programs across the country. EMPG funds have been used by jurisdictions for training, exercising, planning, emergency operations centers, communications interoperability, institutionalization of the NIMS and the ICS, work with special needs populations, and volunteer management, among other uses.

EMPG funds are a critical component of our local emergency management budget. It raises the level of importance for local funding for our disaster preparedness training, exercise, and planning. Repeatedly, we have held training sessions and exercises using EMPG funding and shortly thereafter, had an actual disaster where these skills ensured safety of our responders and better coordination of activities for public response, recovery, and mitigation. We rely on this funding for most of our public outreach & emergency responder training.

Through several years of EMPG funding we have been able to establish an EOC in the county where none existed before. Although simple in design and function, we have established radio and data connectivity with the state and other emergency management partners. This facility proved crucial during severe wildfires in our jurisdiction in 2005 and again in 2006. Without this facility, or the personnel to operate it, the response to these disasters would have been severely hampered. Continued EMPG support is critical to the survival of most small emergency management jurisdictions.

Because of EMPG funds, accomplishments in Lane County include, but are not limited to: institutionalization of Incident Command System / NIMS in first responder agencies throughout Lane County; completion of a hazard vulnerability analysis that is used extensively for the development of a variety of different response plans; countywide collaboration on emergency warning systems, exercises and training - particularly for a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake & tsunami; regular emergency operations planning updates; hazard mitigation planning; and community wildfire protection planning.

EMPG funds have helped support...various emergency management activities which have had a significant impact on our level of preparedness. These activities include implementing a countywide Reverse 9-1-1[®] system; establishing a county [Joint Information Center] Plan so we will have a better flow of information during emergencies; promoting public awareness and education through press conferences, employee preparedness campaigns, and school awareness campaigns; upgrading EOC equipment and supplies; maintaining CERT training; enhancing protection equipment for vulnerable structures; updating NIMS plans to meet compliance requirements; updating Hazard Mitigation plans to meet compliance requirements; obtaining required emergency management related training for appropriate personnel, including ICS training; upgrading radios to be interoperable with other agencies and jurisdictions; and, implementing WebEOC[®].

EMPG funds have allowed our department to establish training programs for the volunteer fire and EMS departments in our county. We use funds to publish educational information for the public and teach public training classes to prepare for disasters. We have been able to utilize dollars to remodel an office for a dedicated EOC.

We have been able to provide a number of training opportunities for our volunteer staff and local response agency volunteers. We have upgraded equipment, software, communications, and severe weather operations technology in our EOC. We have provided technology and communications in our mobile command units. We have provided public awareness enhancements by partnering to provide citizen preparedness guides specifically for our county. We have used funds to assist in putting on exercises for our CERT teams and emergency responders.

Our jurisdiction has been actively planning for the care of individuals with disabilities in the event of a disaster. We have established a coalition representative of our disabled population to help in this process. Currently, we are working on the development of a database to help in locating individuals if needed.

Establish and train a county CERT team, write plans for hazard mitigation and debris management, develop a credentialing program for county first responders and essential personnel, create a county wide HAZMAT team, train county storm spotters for the NWS, and help train local first responders in ICS.

Because of EMPG funds, Elbert County Emergency management has made great strides toward implementation of greatly needed mitigation practices that are being integrated into our county master plan. This provides for safer communities through better planning and building regulations. The support of EMPG funds has enabled one additional staff person, and opened doors for improving the county's capability to respond by building a new communication and 9-1-1 center (EM acted as the project manager), secure a state communication tower and join the state DTRS system. EMPG funds have allowed us to carry a workload that has helped us to lead first responders toward unified command practices in a very spread out county.

The funds allocated have facilitated several exercises and drills that have increased preparedness. In addition, they have allowed for much needed training. One example of success was demonstrated in a neighboring county that suffered a devastating series of fires. Many surrounding counties, including this one, worked well together in handling that emergency.

Because of EMPG funds, the following are some of what we have been able to accomplish for emergency management in my jurisdiction: implement a countywide Reverse 9-1-1[®] system; establish a county [Joint Information Center] so we will have a better flow of information during emergencies; promote public awareness and education through press conferences, employee preparedness campaigns, and school awareness campaigns; upgrade EOC equipment and supplies; maintain CERT training; enhance protection equipment for vulnerable structures; update NIMS plans to meet compliance requirements; update hazard mitigation plans to meet compliance requirements; obtain required emergency management related training for appropriate personnel, including ICS training; upgrade radios to be interoperable with other agencies and jurisdictions; and implement WebEOC[®] systems.

EMPG funds have allowed us to provide important and required training to our jurisdiction. We have also developed our WebEOC[®] (EOC management software) program with EMPG funds, and provided WebEOC[®] training and assistance to cities within our jurisdiction. EMPG funds also enable OES staff to attend important training, conferences and other workshops that we might not otherwise be able to attend. These training opportunities are necessary to ensure we continue learning how to run our programs more effectively and stay informed about changing laws, regulations, and guidance at the federal and state level.

Several new programs have been started with EMPG funding that would not have been possible without these funds. "Turn Around Don't Drown" Program, security measures at the EOC to include cameras and door code entry system, public education programs such as "Marine Waterway Safety - Severe Weather", and many more.

Clearly, EMPG funds have played an important role in improving capability and increasing the preparedness and response capacity of local jurisdictions. The continued funding of EMPG ensures that many local emergency management programs will be able to continue to build their programs.

Survival

While many emergency managers used EMPG funds to enhance their programs, many other emergency managers indicated that their local emergency management program would not survive without EMPG funds—even in a more normal economic setting.

Emergency managers whose jurisdictions rely on EMPG funds for survival explained their reliance on the funds in terms of the rural nature of their jurisdictions. Small populations and, subsequently, small tax bases mean that rural counties struggle to provide basic services to their constituents. Emergency management, while recognized as important, may struggle in perceived competition with such basic services as road repair and public safety. As a result, in many jurisdictions first responders (e.g., law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services) are viewed as funding priorities whereas the funding of other public safety functions (e.g., emergency management) may be placed on hold without regard to qualified personnel or the ability to continue the development of local emergency management capacity.

EMPG provides just enough funding to keep emergency management programs in rural areas viable.

Our EMA program depends on EMPG funding because our county is too small and does not have funds to support our program alone.

All emergencies or disasters are local, but unfortunately funding for an adequate program is not available at the local level. Without sufficient EMPG funding from the federal level, most EM programs will stall or disappear.

Without EMPG funds this county would not have an emergency management program. Our county's tax base and population do not supply sufficient funds. We rely heavily on the EMPG funds each year.

My small rural parish NEEDS it terribly and could NOT operate without it.

It is my sincere belief that rural counties such as the one I represent would not have an emergency manager or an emergency management program without EMPG funding. Our needs in planning, training and exercising are the same as the larger jurisdictions that have more resources.

For small rural counties, EMPG is the lifeblood of our programs. We do not have the tax base to fully fund a disaster preparedness and response program. We depend on EMPG funding to sustain our programs.

Please realize the importance of EMPG funding to states - the affect to smaller populated counties are great - in that if funding is cut and population is the factor in which states divide allocation; then smaller populations get even less to run and do the same work as larger populations. Protecting and preparing a county's population has become more and more difficult for local government to do.

During tough economic times, such as these, funding issues for emergency management in rural jurisdictions have been exacerbated. Please see the Economic Downturn Summary Report for more detailed information on issues related to the funding of emergency management during this economic downturn.

Continue to operate an emergency management program. Without the EMPG funding, the program would likely not survive the tough economic times.

Without the funding, emergency management in this county would be only a title because it is required by the State.

EMPG funding assures that rural jurisdictions are able to do the bare minimum with respect to emergency management—dedicate at least one person to emergency management part-time.

With the EMPG funding, we have been able to keep an emergency manager on staff at least fifty percent of the time.

Emergency management in rural Oregon is largely accomplished by part time people or as duties assigned to a person in addition to other, non-emergency management, responsibilities. Without EMPG, funding most rural counties would not have even a part-time position to devote to emergency management. In the five county region that I work most with there are no full-time emergency management positions. Emergency management has largely assumed the responsibilities of assisting with and reporting compliance with NIMS, without which counties would not be eligible for DHS grant funding. Any loss of EMPG funding would result in less prepared communities if/when a disaster occurs.

EMPG funds help rural jurisdictions in keeping up with the demands of an emergency management program.

The emergency management program in total depends upon these funds. Therefore, all that has been accomplished is a result of EMPG funding.

Local agencies are finding it harder to be in compliance the plethora of requirements, guidance, directions, and regulations that impact emergency management best practices, most stop once the minimum requirements are met...EMPG funds to our jurisdiction directly affect our capacity to deliver planning, training, exercise and education programs. Over the past few years we have invested in our citizen-based programs, like CERT. Unfortunately we now find that there is little funding to continue to support or expand this very popular and important program. Emergency management is a system of principles, the heart of which is preparedness. When we stop supporting public education and basic emergency preparedness to our residents we adversely affect the resiliency of our communities.

It is important that local jurisdictions—rural and urban alike—not only maintain their current level of service but also continue the development of their emergency management programs.

The Link between EMPG Funds and Overall Preparedness

When investments are made in local emergency management programs, local preparedness increases. And, when local preparedness increases, the strength of the national emergency management system increases. Local, state, and federal government can each fulfill their role in emergency management effectively and efficiently.

Cottonwood County, like many other rural counties has struggled for some time with funding to establish a strong program. Historically, this program has been a "part-time" employed program. On November 1, 2008, the board of Commissioners elected to hire a full-time Director, and Cottonwood County received additional EMPG dollars to assist the county in this endeavor. This move has bolstered public safety in Cottonwood County tenfold. Better plans are being written, better planning and response activities are being conducted, and new partnerships are being formed which were not there before. Without EMPG, emergency management functions in Cottonwood County would likely take a reactive position, and be pushed to a department that would not be interested in furthering the program, or becoming further educated in the field of emergency management, which would negatively affect the safety and preparedness of the citizens of this county and state.

Local emergency management programs are doing their part to support the development of emergency management within their jurisdictions, but in order to continue to do so local emergency management programs must receive more EMPG funding.

Currently, many jurisdictions across the country are struggling without the 50% match in EMPG funds. Local jurisdictions want to keep emergency management programs; and, when possible, they are willing to more than match the federal government's investment in their program.

Our local government... provides about 75% of funding for our EM program.

St. Clair County, Alabama has consistently supported the county EMA program way over the supposed 50% match of EMPG funds. We have never received a true 50% match. Because of that, our efforts to take our EM program to a higher level and state of readiness for various hazards/disasters, has been limited. Our county has taken on the heavy load of just trying to maintain the 'bare bones' of our program.

Yet, respondent comments (in the accompanying Economic Downturn Summary Report) indicate that many jurisdictions may not be able to continue to overmatch given current economic conditions.

Whether emergency managers rely on EMPG funds to survive or to enhance local capability and capacity, emergency managers believe EMPG is a critical piece of the national preparedness puzzle that must be increased.

The fourth survey question asked emergency managers what their priorities would be if their jurisdictions were to receive additional EMPG funds; and, we discovered they would develop their emergency management programs in important ways. Emergency managers would utilize an increase in EMPG funds to tackle a variety of priorities; however, priorities most frequently mentioned by emergency managers are core components of a basic emergency management program. In other words, they are only asking for money to do the basic and are not seeking funding to buy unnecessary equipment, unnecessary supplies, or unessential training. The table below lists the priorities for the use of additional EMPG funds mentioned by more than 100 emergency managers.

Most Frequently Mentioned Priorities
Training
Personnel
Planning
Public Outreach Activities
Exercises
EOC
Equipment

Other frequently mentioned priorities (less than 100 mentions) included: increased participation in regional activities, improving communication and/or interoperability, increasing development of volunteer and/or CERT programs, improving warning/alerting/notification systems, software/technology improvements, mitigation, and GIS.

Implications

No emergency manager wants to lose the capacity that EMPG has allowed his or her jurisdiction to maintain, or build, in recent years. Moreover, states and federal departments and agencies do not want to lose the local level emergency management capacity that has been built in recent years since events, like September 11th and Hurricane Katrina, provided vivid reminders that the strength of our entire system is threatened when any level of government is not capable of preparing for, responding to, recovering from, and mitigating against incidents.

EMPG funding is a mechanism that is already in place to support local emergency management and our survey results indicate that what needs to be addressed is how to increase the amount of EMPG funding that local jurisdictions receive.

The amount of EMPG passed through to local governments varies greatly from state to state. Some respondents expressed concern about the amount of EMPG funding retained by their state versus that passed through to local governments.

Most of the EMPG funding remains with [our] state (66%) while the remainder is distributed to the counties (33%).

In our state, the emergency management agency budget consists of 80% EMPG dollars and 20% state general fund dollars while at the local level we typically fund our budget with 80% local general fund dollars and 20% EMPG dollars. The state uses our local funds overmatch to justify retaining the additional EMPG funding. There seems to be an issue of equity here.

...A study should be undertaken to evaluate the percentage of EMPG held by various states.

There is a definite need to increase funding through EMPG. These funds enable us to enhance our systems to provide better overall emergency response to our jurisdictions and surrounding areas with mutual aide, [EMPG] also helps to employ qualified personnel in those positions which in turns helps with the overall emergency management program.

The EMPG program, which dates back to the 1950's, was intended to be a 50% federal and 50% state and local match program. This partnership recognized there was a federal interest in building emergency management capacity at the local level. Local jurisdictions have been significantly overmatching the funding passed through to them by the states while the federal requirements have increased.

EMPG funding is not enough in and of itself to help local jurisdictions fund emergency management; however, it is a much-needed lifeline. Responses to this survey emphasize the importance of EMPG funding in sustaining, developing, and, where possible, advancing basic emergency management capability at the local government level in the United States. During this time of economic downturn, it is particularly important that EMPG funding be increased.

Jessica Jensen from the Center for Disaster Studies and Emergency Management at North Dakota State University facilitated the survey design, data collection and analysis, and report writing IAEM's Government Affairs Committee.

Appendix

Jurisdictions Represented

	County/ Parish	City	Village/ Town	State	Other
Percentage of Respondents	75%	21.3%	4.9%	.9%	4.3%

Population Size

	25%	25%	25%	25%
Population Served	10- 15,069	15,070- 45,000	45,001- 128,937	128,938- 11,000,000

Emergency Management Program Budget

	25%	25%	25%	25%
2008	\$1,000- 60,000	\$60,857- 125,030	\$130,000- 297,003	\$300,000- 10,731,396
2009	\$1,175- 67,504	\$68,349- \$143,000	\$143,748- 331,000	\$335,880- 11,828,642

Survey Limitations

The survey represents a broad cross section of agencies across the country and there was a large response to the survey; however, the survey has certain limitations that should be taken into account when interpreting the results.

- The sample for this survey was not randomized; therefore, the results from this survey are not generalizable to all local emergency managers or all local emergency management programs.
- Moreover, responses from emergency managers from several states are overrepresented in the sample and there were no responses from emergency managers in nine states.
- Emergency managers who completed the survey did not necessarily answer all of the survey questions.

Survey Responses By State Represented

Alabama (20)
 Alaska (1)
 Arizona (1)
California (28)
Colorado (23)
 Connecticut (2)
 Florida (20)
 Georgia (16)
 Idaho (1)
 Illinois (5)
 Iowa (3)
Kansas (25)
 Kentucky (5)
 Louisiana (3)
 Maine (4)
 Maryland (6)
 Massachusetts (7)
 Michigan (1)
Minnesota (27)
 Mississippi (2)
 Missouri (2)
 Montana (7)
Nebraska (16)
 Nevada (1)
 New Hampshire (2)
 New Jersey (3)
 New Mexico (6)
 New York (2)
North Carolina (17)
 Ohio (2)
 Oregon (14)
 Pennsylvania (11)
 Rhode Island (2)
 South Carolina (7)
 Tennessee (2)
 Texas (14)
 Utah (2)
 Virginia (20)
 Washington (13)
 West Virginia (1)
 Wisconsin (8)