



Meg Prior
Candidate for IAEM-USA Student Region Treasurer

All government agencies charged with Emergency Support Functions must purchase the resources essential for the performance of their duties using a carefully vetted procurement process. As tax payers, citizens demand that their dollars are spent wisely, according to the principles of transparency and competition. Effective and nimble procurement is particularly essential in terms of emergency management, where time is of the essence and lives hang in the balance. When an emergency strikes it is the function of government procurement to make sure that whatever resource is needed, whatever service required can be acquired in a timely, legal, and cost effective process that provides best value to the government.

The operational reality of emergency management however, represents enormous challenges to that directive and the emergency procurement system is constantly the subject of ongoing development. In the first years of the new millennium, this procurement system has been put to the test, processing an unprecedented amount of contracts. The events of 9/11 and the ongoing war on terror, coupled with the severe hurricane season of 2005 – including Hurricane Katrina, have placed federal procurement under intense scrutiny and were the impetus for ongoing review and reform federal procurement guidelines.

When one thinks of “emergency management professionals”, we tend to think first of those on the front lines – Police, Fire, Search & Rescue teams, etc. However, every single item or service needed to support our frontline responders must go through the government procurement process. As a government contracting subject matter expert, I work to recruit, train, and retain the best talent into the government workforce and execute fair, competitively transacted contracts for emergency goods and services. I believe it is my job to make sure emergency planning, response, recovery, and mitigation is fully supported in their procurement needs before, during, and after an emergency. As a member of the International Association of Emergency Management, I feel my area of study is an essential compliment to the skills of emergency managers and first responders. I understand the business of government business and look forward to my continued contribution to the field of emergency management research and application.