



**2024-2026**

# **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN**



**Forsyth County  
Emergency  
Management Agency**

*3520 Settingdown Road  
Cumming, GA 30028*

*3/7/2024*

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# ACRONYM DEFINITIONS

AAR	After Action Report
COOP	Continuity of Operations Plan
EMA	Emergency Management Agency
EMAP	Emergency Management Accreditation Program
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
ESF	Emergency Support Function
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
IAP	Incident Action Plan
IC	Incident Commander
ICS	Incident Command System
IMT	Incident Management Team
JIS/JIC	Joint Information System/Center
LEPC	Local Emergency Planning Committee
MCI	Mass Casualty Incident
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NRF	National Response Framework
NRP	National Response Plan
NWS	National Weather Service
PIO	Public Information Officer
SITREP	Situation Report
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
THIRA	Threat and Hazard Identification and Assessment



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Forsyth County Emergency Management Agency (FCEMA) is committed to developing a coordinated and cooperative program that engages the “whole community” in all efforts possible to prevent, protect, mitigate, respond to, and recover from identified natural and man-made disasters.

The dynamics and demographics of Forsyth County are evolving faster than ever, and the challenges of providing emergency, infrastructure, and human needs support are growing consistent with these changes in population, threats, and rising customer expectations. The nature of the multicultural community coupled with an ever-expanding tourist population and a diverse business and industrial platform presents unique challenges in achieving the mission. Additionally, through attrition, the institutional knowledge of many agency and department representatives is lost as their departures compound the complexity.

This Strategic Plan is designed to determine the overall Program’s direction and to focus organizational efforts to achieve the Mission and Vision. The plan endeavors to set a road map for the next three years, complete with goals and objectives necessary to meet the overall Mission of The Forsyth County Emergency Management Program.

This Strategic Plan is intended to be a living document that reflects the Vision of a safer future through effective programs, partnerships, and an engaged community that is committed to saving lives and reducing the impact of any natural or man-made disaster. Continuous re-evaluation of the Plan is required to determine whether the Plan is current and adequate to protect life, property, and the environment of Forsyth County. This Strategic Plan will not succeed without the unwavering support of our Administration, Public Safety departments, critical infrastructure partners as well as our whole community.

 Date: 1/27/24

Thomas S. Cisco  
Director  
Forsyth County Emergency Management



# INTRODUCTION

*The Forsyth County Emergency Management Agency is responsible for minimizing the effects of all natural and man-made disasters the community may face as well as increasing community resilience, maintaining a functional emergency operations center, coordinating communication between state and local government, and increasing community preparedness to disasters through whole-community planning and training initiatives.*

## MISSION STATEMENT

*The mission of the Forsyth County Emergency Management Agency (FCEMA), in coordination with our community partners, is to minimize the effects of natural and manmade disasters through prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery programs.*

*A resilient, safe, and prepared  
Forsyth County, Georgia.*

## VISION STATEMENT



# FOUNDATION FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN

*This Strategic Plan outlines the goals and objectives the Forsyth County Emergency Management Program must implement to strengthen the agency and carry out our mission. The 2024 – 2026 Strategic Plan will mobilize the whole community to build a culture of preparedness, engage partners and stakeholders in the process, and ensure the capabilities of the emergency management program are sustainable for the future.*

## PLAN DEVELOPMENT

### STAKEHOLDER INPUT

*Feedback from executive leadership, stakeholders, partners, and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Management Team members were gathered from after-action reports, operational area meetings, and training feedback evaluation forms and used to develop this Strategic Plan.*

- ✓ After-Action Reports
- ✓ Operational Area Meetings
- ✓ Training Evaluation Forms
- ✓ Stakeholder Briefings



## STRATEGIC GOAL 1:

### BUILD A CULTURE OF RESILIENCE (Protection and Prevention)

Strategic Goal 1 promotes the idea that everyone should be prepared when a disaster strikes. The Program will focus on preparing and engaging residents, schools, partners, and county departments in disaster resiliency by identifying and communicating risks, fostering partnerships with the public and private sectors, and focusing investments to build and sustain capabilities to protect against and possibly prevent emergencies or disasters.

## STRATEGIC GOAL 2:

### ENSURE READINESS TO RESPOND (Preparedness)

Strategic Goal 2 builds on activities from Strategic Goal 1 and focuses on enhancing readiness to respond to disasters. The readiness of our community depends on emergency management professionals who can effectively coordinate disaster response activities and deliver competent and consistent emergency services. The Program will focus on building preparedness capabilities through trainings and exercises, improve continuity of operations through planning and updating equipment, and ensure a common operating picture by consolidating data management systems.

## STRATEGIC GOAL 3:

### ENHANCE RESPONSE CAPABILITIES (Response)

Strategic Goal 3 will work to build the Emergency Management Program's operational capability through the organizational structure, technological advancements, and public education/information. The Program will focus on building response capabilities through trainings and exercises, updating equipment, and ensuring a common operating picture.

## STRATEGIC GOAL 4:

### STRENGTHEN RECOVERY CAPABILITIES (Recovery)

Strategic Goal 4 will work to build new and strengthen existing partnerships and initiatives to become a more resilient community. Strategic Goal 4 will work to ensure our recovery plans, post disaster reconstruction, and redevelopment efforts are in place and inclusive of the whole community.





## STRATEGIC GOAL 5:

### STRENGTHEN MITIGATION CAPABILITIES (Mitigation)

Strategic Goal 5 will ensure that the whole community will continuously work together towards building a disaster-resilient community.

## STRATEGIC GOAL 6:

### STANDARDIZE THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Strategic Goal 6 promotes the standardization of the emergency management program by developing plans, policies, and procedures that are consistent with the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) standards, updating local resource management procedures, and ensuring disaster recovery plans and procedures are in place.



# STRATEGIC GOAL 1: BUILD A CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### 1.1 Promote Community Preparedness, Prevention & Protection for Disasters

The Forsyth County Program will partner with faith-based, community-based, and non-profit organizations to establish a coalition of Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) to prepare for and recover from disasters. The Program will engage residents and families in preparedness, protection and prevention activities.

### 1.2 Identify and Communicate Disaster Risk

The Forsyth County Program will collaborate with the city, schools, and all other operational area partners in the process of coordinating preparedness, prevention and protection activities, to monitor the identified threats and hazards, and to adjust the level of prevention activity commensurate with the risk.

### 1.3 Build and Sustain Communications, Alert and Notifications Systems

The Forsyth County Program will design operational procedures for the communications, notification, and alert and warning system(s) that address the following: identified hazards, potential operating environments, decision-making processes or pre-determined criteria.

### 1.4 Improve Community Resilience to Disaster

The Forsyth County Program will make strategic investments using disaster preparedness funding to reduce disaster risk, build community resilience to disaster, and sustain and enhance citizens' capabilities to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disaster.



# PERFORMANCE MEASURES

## STRATEGIC GOAL 1: BUILD A CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS

**YEAR 1:**  
2024

- VOAD Coalition membership identified, and bylaws developed, begin coordination meetings
- Conduct Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment with community partners
- Increase number of outreach engagements (i.e., meetings, events)
- Increase number of preparedness plans updated/developed

- Increase County National Incident Management System (NIMS) training compliance to 80%
- Hazard Mitigation Plan updated from THIRA
- Increase number of Memorandum of Understandings with partner agencies
- Increase number of outreach engagements (i.e., meetings, events)
- Increase number of preparedness plans updated/developed
- Increase VOAD coalition membership; quarterly meetings held

**YEAR 2:**  
2025

**YEAR 3:**  
2026

- Increase VOAD coalition membership; quarterly meetings held
- Increase County NIMS training compliance to 90%
- Increase number of MOUs with partner agencies
- Increase number of outreach engagements (i.e., meetings, events)
- Increase number of preparedness plans updated/developed



# STRATEGIC GOAL 2:

## ENSURE READINESS TO RESPOND

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

#### 2.1 Build and Sustain the Best Incident Response Personnel

The Forsyth County Program will develop the best scalable and capable incident management team by identifying new Team members, provide training and exercise opportunities that will progressively challenge and develop skills, and promote credentialing of the incident personnel.

#### 2.2 Improve Continuity of Operations and Resilient Communication Systems

The Forsyth County Program will improve Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) by developing new and updating county department COOP plans, developing the Continuity Of Government (COG) plan, and documenting communications systems and strategies for risk communications. The Program will also make strategic investments to enhance the County's disaster cache and redundant communications systems. In addition, the Program will ensure the primary and alternate EOCs are in a ready state at all times by updating technology and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

#### 2.3 Enhance Situational Awareness and Common Operating Picture

The Forsyth County Program will enhance situational awareness and common operating picture by enhancing management data systems within the Program to provide situational awareness and oversight of risks, threats, and assigned resources. Management and data systems such as Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), Baron Weather, WebEOC, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) will be used to assist with making decisions regarding incident response strategies and local resource allocation.



# PERFORMANCE MEASURES

## STRATEGIC GOAL 2: ENSURE READINESS TO RESPOND

**YEAR 1:**  
2024

- Review Emergency Support Functions (ESF) 1-5
- Increase EOC Management Team (EOCMT) members
- Increase number of training and exercise opportunities for EOCMT
- Update Operational Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP)
- Update EMA COOP Plans; increase number of plans updated
- Complete 100% of identified After-Action Items
- County Continuity of Government Plan developed
- Evaluate data systems
- Identify county staff available for assignment during disaster

- Review ESFs 6-10
- Increase number of EOCMT members
- Increase number of credentialed EOCMT members
- Update the Operational Area IPP
- Update county COOP plans; increase number of plans updated
- Complete 100% of identified After-Action Items
- Upgrade technology in the primary and alternate EOCs

**YEAR 2:**  
2025

**YEAR 3:**  
2026

- Review ESFs 11-15
- Increase number of EOCMT members
- Identify qualified/credentialed EOCMT members for local Incident Management Team development.
- Update the Operational Area IPP
- Update County COOP plans; increase number of plans updated.
- Complete 100% of After-Action Items
- Disaster cache established with minimum identified stock levels.



# STRATEGIC GOAL 3: ENHANCE RESPONSE CAPABILITIES

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### 3.1 Expand Operational Capabilities

Enhance Standard Operating Procedures that address response activities among all personnel with emergency response roles including higher, lateral, and subordinate elements, as well as neighboring jurisdictions.

### 3.2 Enhance Training & Exercise Programs

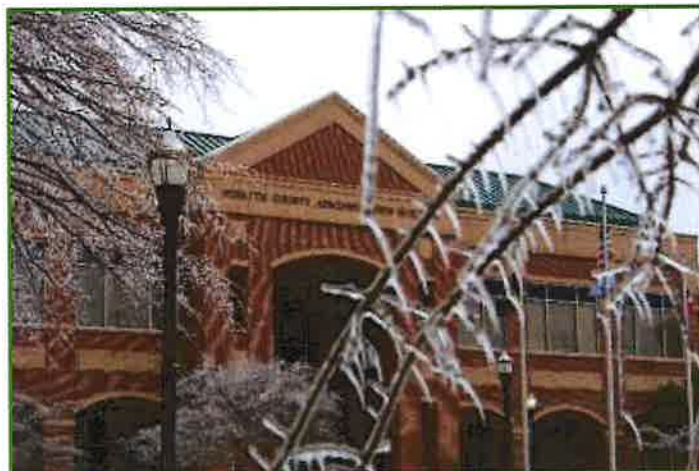
The Forsyth County Program will update the training and qualification standards for EOC, Joint Information Center (JIC), and elected or appointed officials and publish the new training standards. The Program will also standardize the process to identify and track operational area resources during a response in real-time. In addition, the Program will update policy and procedures for requesting and deploying operational area resources.

### 3.3 Align the Emergency Management Program with National Standards

The Forsyth County Program will align the Emergency Management program with national standards outlined in Program EMAP. The Program will assess response readiness for accreditation and implement changes to bring the program up to national standards.

### 3.4 Enhance Crisis Communications

The Forsyth County Program will enhance the capacity for crisis communications, public information, and education to disseminate information that protects public health and safety. Forsyth County will proactively engage with the latest technological advances in the development of Joint Information Systems (JIS) , JIC and Mass Notification.



# PERFORMANCE MEASURES

## STRATEGIC GOAL 3: ENHANCE RESPONSE CAPABILITIES



- Develop Incident Support Plans: Family Assistance Center, Shelter/ Evacuation Plan, Mass Fatality
- Training requirements for EOC, JIC, and Elected/Appointed Officials updated.
- Develop Hazard Specific Plans: Tornado, Transportation, Flood
- Develop Human Services Work Group – begin Coordination

- Develop Hazard Specific Plans: Wildland Fire, Cyber, Pandemic
- Develop Training & Exercise Program
- Policy and procedures developed for EOC Activation
- Everbridge procedures documented



- Records management system sustained with policy and procedures in place
- Operational Area resources inventoried, and credentialed personnel catalogued



# STRATEGIC GOAL 4: STRENGTHEN RECOVERY CAPABILITIES

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### 4.1 Building Partnerships

The Forsyth County Program will build partnerships and initiatives that promote more resilient post-disaster reconstruction and redevelopment.

### 4.2 Recovery COOP

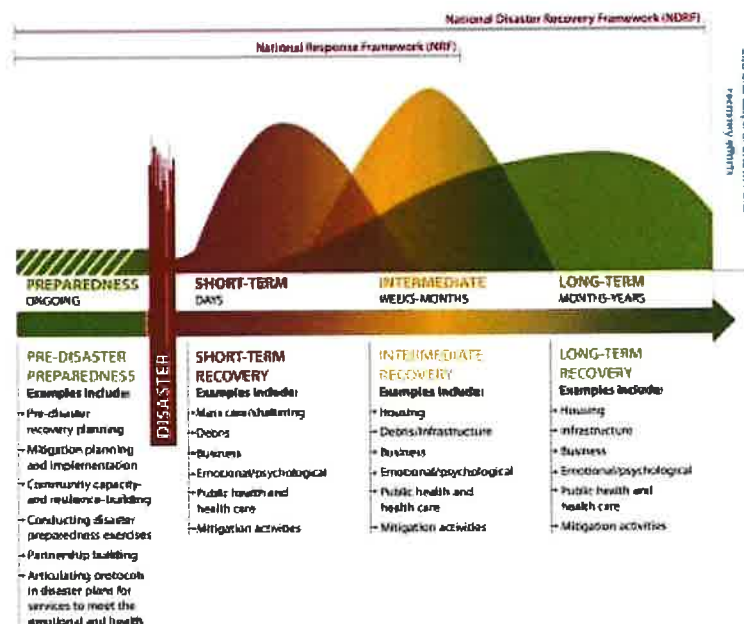
The Forsyth County Program will redesign the Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plans for the departments, agencies and organizations with essential program functions, and Continuity of Government (COG) Plan.

### 4.3 Align the Emergency Management Program with National Standards

The Forsyth County Program will align the Emergency Management program with national standards outlined in Program EMAP. The Program will assess the recovery program for accreditation and implement changes to bring the program up to national standards.

### 4.4 Disaster Recovery Program, Plans, Policies, and Procedures

The Forsyth County Program will develop a robust disaster recovery program. The Program will develop plans, policies, and procedures for implementing disaster recovery activities and ensuring current practices align with best practices for disaster cost and community recovery.





# PERFORMANCE MEASURES

## STRATEGIC GOAL 4: STRENGTHEN RECOVERY CAPABILITIES

**YEAR 1:**  
2024

- Develop Recovery Committee/ Working Group
- Develop procedures to modify the EOC for Disaster Recovery focused operations
- Policy and procedures identified to track disaster costs for recovery
- Create a needs assessment process to assist impacted businesses
- Engage community leaders to identify, monitor, and record resiliency activities

- Post Disaster Re-development Plan Developed
- Cost recovery documentation standards developed
- Policy and procedures developed for disaster cost recovery
- Identify Disaster Recovery Center services and staffing
- Develop procedures for Disaster Recovery Center
- Develop Long Term Housing Plan

**YEAR 2:**  
2025

**YEAR 3:**  
2026

- Train on Post Disaster Re-development Plan
- Exercise Post Disaster Re-development Plan



# STRATEGIC GOAL 5: STRENGTHEN MITIGATION CAPABILITIES

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### 5.1 Collaboration

The Forsyth County Program will continuously work with our partners and the community toward building a disaster-resilient community.

### 5.2 Enhance the Mitigation Program

The Forsyth County Program will improve the identification, prioritization, and implementation of all hazard mitigation projects that reduce the risk and consequences of hazards. Align the process to monitor the overall progress of the mitigation activities and documents, completed initiatives, and their resulting reduction or limitation of hazard impact on the jurisdiction with other mitigation and resilience programs.

### 5.3 Align the Emergency Management Program with National Standards

The Forsyth County Program will align the Emergency Management program with national standards outlined in Program EMAP. The Program will assess the mitigation program for accreditation and implement changes to bring the program up to national standards.

### 5.4 Local Mitigation Strategy

The Forsyth County Program will enhance the Local Mitigation Strategy and Floodplain Management Plan. The Program will strive to educate the whole community on mitigation efforts and build collaborative partnerships to build resilience.

**More Mitigation Measures,  
More Savings**



**One dollar invested in mitigation =  
13 dollars U.S. saves in future costs**



# PERFORMANCE MEASURES

## STRATEGIC GOAL 5: STRENGTHEN MITIGATION CAPABILITIES



- Hazard Mitigation Plan updated from THIRA
- Create an initiative tracking mechanism
- Review mitigation team membership
- Policy and procedures identified to track disaster costs for recovery

- Create a list of successful mitigation projects
- Assist Healthcare facilities and nonprofits in developing mitigation efforts
- Redevelop the project proposal form



- Hazard Mitigation Plan updated from THIRA Operational Area resources inventoried, and credentialed personnel catalogued



# STRATEGIC GOAL 6: STANDARDIZE THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### 6.1 Improve Records Management Policies and Procedures

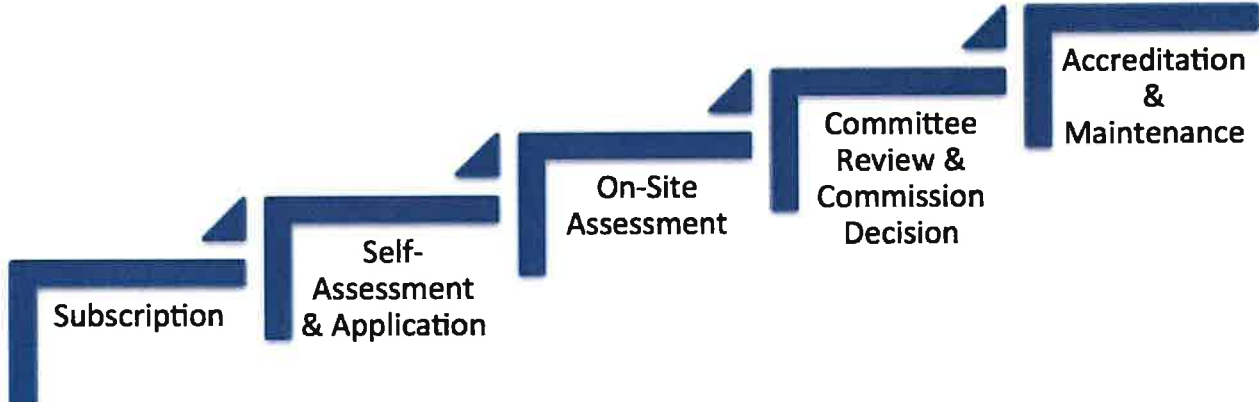
The Forsyth County Program will identify office records and establish records management policies and practices that supports EMAP standards and ensures long-term sustainment of the emergency management program.

### 6.2 Document Local Resource Management Practices and Incident Personnel Training Standards

The Forsyth County Program will update the training and qualification standards for EOC, JIC, and elected or appointed officials and publish the new training standards. The Program will also standardize the process to identify and track operational area resources in real-time. In addition, the Program will update policy and procedures for requesting and deploying operational area resources.

### 6.3 Align the Emergency Management Program with National Standards

The Forsyth County Program will align the Emergency Management program with national standards outlined in Program EMAP. The Program will assess readiness for accreditation and implement changes to bring the program up to national standards.



# PERFORMANCE MEASURES

## STRATEGIC GOAL 6: STANDARDIZE THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

**YEAR 1:**  
2024

- Office records identified and records management plan outlined
- Enhance the Intern Program
- Accreditation Coordinator assigned and Program personnel trained in EMAP standards
- Align Performance Measures with EMAP Standards
- Apply to EMAP

- Records management plans, policies, and procedures developed
- Records management system identified and implemented
- EMAP Assessment
- Emergency Pay Policy development

**YEAR 2:**  
2025

**YEAR 3:**  
2026

- Records management system sustained with policy and procedures in place
- Maintain Storm Ready status
- Emergency Management program operating at national standard
- Emergency Management Program 2027-2029 strategic plan drafted



# IMPLEMENTATION AND MAINTENANCE

The 2024–2026 Emergency Management Strategic Plan contains strategic goals and objectives designed to drive the agency’s actions over the next three years. To ensure that meaningful action is taken to achieve these priorities, the Forsyth County Program has identified performance measures and milestones that will track the progress of the emergency management program and provide insight to how successful the program is in achieving results.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

This Strategic Plan will be implemented 2024 and the performance period will end 2026.

## EVALUATION SCHEDULE

This Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually at the beginning of the last quarter of the current calendar year. The next review is scheduled to begin September 1, 2024. An annual performance report will be produced by the Emergency Management Program Coordinator and will measure performance based on criteria established in this Strategic Plan.

## REVISION AND UPDATE SCHEDULE

This Strategic Plan will be revised as needed, and the development of the 2027-2029 edition will begin after the strategic plan workshop in 2026.



# CONCLUSION

This Strategic Plan is not only the Forsyth County Emergency Management program's path forward but also describes a future state to which the entire emergency management community may collectively aspire. When achieved, it will change the way the Program does business and improve the support it provides before, during, and after disasters. With this Strategic Plan, we have set big goals and laid the groundwork for how they will be achieved over the next three years and sustained into the future.

Forsyth County represents the very best of Georgia's Government public service – providing front-line support to county departments, local jurisdictions, partners, and residents during times of greatest need. This Strategic Plan presents an outstanding opportunity for the Forsyth County Program to improve by standardizing our processes, strengthening our incident workforce, and building and sustaining new and stronger partnerships with the whole community. In this, the Program will achieve its mission to provide a safe and resilient community through emergency management and coordination within Forsyth County to protect lives, property, and the economy by preparing, planning, mitigating, responding to, and recovering from disasters and emergencies.



# APPENDIX A: MILESTONES

