

Lesson 1: Course Overview

Course Welcome

This course provides an introduction to Mass Care and Emergency Assistance (MC/EA) support, with a focus on Whole Community, by outlining the importance of collaboration and coordination between government, non-profit, public, and private sectors.

As FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate said “Government can and will continue to serve disaster survivors. However, we fully recognize that a government-centric approach to disaster management will not be enough to meet the challenges posed by a catastrophic incident. That is why we must fully engage our entire societal capacity.”

In this course you will learn how this concept of a whole community approach to emergency management applies to the provision of MC/EA support.

This course should take approximately 1 hour to complete. You must pass the final exam to receive credit for taking this course.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course you will be able to:

- Explain the importance of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the National Response Framework (NRF), and the Whole Community approach to emergency management.
- Identify MC/EA activities.
- Describe a suggested sequence of support for MC/EA.
- Explain the importance of thinking about MC/EA activities in an interoperable way.

Lesson Overview

This lesson provides an overview of the course by introducing the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the Whole Community approach to emergency management, the National Response Framework (NRF), and Mass Care and Emergency Assistance (MC/EA) activities.

Upon completion of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Describe the purpose of the course.
- Explain the importance of NIMS, the NRF, and the Whole Community approach to emergency management.
- Identify MC/EA activities.
- Explain the importance of thinking about MC/EA activities in an interoperable way.

This lesson should take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Course Purpose

The purpose of this course is to provide an overview of MC/EA support focusing on Whole Community by outlining the importance of collaboration and coordination between government, non-profit, public and private sectors.

Before you learn about specific MC/EA activities, it is important that you understand the importance of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), Whole Community, and the National Response Framework (NRF).

You will begin by learning about NIMS.

National Incident Management System (NIMS)

What? Provides a systematic approach of working together...

Who? For the various segments of the community...

When? In response to all disaster incidents, ranging from daily occurrences to incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response...

Why? In order to reduce the loss of life, property damage, and harm to the environment.

National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Mass Care

NIMS provides a consistent approach and framework for responding to all disaster incidents and it is within that framework that MC/EA activities occur.

One of the key focus areas of NIMS is resource management; NIMS describes standardized resource management practices such as typing, inventorying, organizing, and tracking. Mass care resources are currently being typed. For up to date information on resource management, visit <http://www.fema.gov/resource-management>.

Throughout this course, as you learn about MC/EA activities, keep in mind the importance of consistent implementation of NIMS to ensure effective preparedness, planning, and response.

Whole Community

Now that you understand the importance of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) to MC/EA, you will learn about the Whole Community approach to emergency management.

As a concept, Whole Community is a means by which residents, emergency management practitioners, organizational and community leaders, and government officials can collectively:

- Understand and assess the needs of their respective communities; and
- Determine the best ways to organize and strengthen their assets, capacities, and interests.

Whole Community Principles

Understand and meet the actual needs of the whole community

Community engagement can lead to a deeper understanding of the unique and diverse needs of a population, including its demographics, values, norms, community structures, networks, and relationships.

The more we know about our communities, the better we can understand their real-life safety and sustaining needs and their motivations to participate in emergency management-related activities prior to an event.

Engage and empower all parts of the community

Engaging the whole community and empowering local action will better position stakeholders to plan for and meet the actual needs of a community and strengthen the local capacity to deal with the consequences of all threats and hazards.

This requires all members of the community to be part of the emergency management team, which should include diverse community members. Community members to include:

- Social and community service groups and institutions
- Faith-based and disability groups
- Academia, professional associations
- Private and nonprofit sectors
- Government agencies who may not traditionally have been directly involved in emergency management.

When the community is engaged in an authentic dialogue, it becomes empowered to identify its needs and the existing resources that may be used to address them.

Strengthen what works well in communities on a daily basis

A Whole Community approach to building community resilience requires finding ways to support and strengthen the community. This requires identification of institutions, assets, and networks that already work well and whose goals are to address issues/needs that are important to community members on a daily basis.

Existing structures and relationships that are present in the daily lives of individuals, families, businesses, and organizations before an incident occurs can be leveraged and empowered to act effectively during and after a disaster strikes.

Whole Community Resources

There are many community resources available to support disaster activities. Often, as the community gets involved, they discover many “gems” or specialties not previously considered that are valuable to the disaster response.

Nonprofit Sector

- Voluntary organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Community-based organizations
- Foundations
- Professional associations
- Academic institutions

Private Sector

- Chambers of commerce
- Businesses
- Professional groups
- Other for-profit organizations

Government

- Local
- State
- Tribal
- Territories and Commonwealths
- Federal

Public Sector

- Individuals with specific skills (e.g., chefs, nurses, early childhood development specialists, veterinarians)
- Unions
- Spontaneous volunteers
- Community members

The National Response Framework (NRF)

The second edition of the NRF, updated in May 2013, provides context for how the whole community works together and how response efforts relate to other parts of national preparedness. The NRF reinforces a comprehensive, national, all-hazards approach to domestic incidents. It guides local, State, and Federal entities, enabling partners to prepare for and respond under a unified command structure. Select this link to view a copy of the NRF: <http://www.fema.gov/national-response-framework>

The NRF established Emergency Support Functions (ESFs).

The ESFs provide the structure for coordinating Federal interagency support for a Federal response to an incident. They are mechanisms for grouping functions most frequently used to provide Federal support to States and Federal-to-Federal support, both for declared disasters and emergencies under the Stafford Act and for non-Stafford Act incidents.

The ESF #6 Annex is entitled "Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Temporary Housing, and Human Services.

ESF #6: Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Temporary Housing, and Human Services Annex

The ESF #6 Annex of the National Response Framework describes how the Federal government coordinates these four functions:

- Mass Care
- Emergency Assistance
- Temporary Housing
- Human Services

This course will focus only the first two functions: Mass Care and Emergency Assistance (MC/EA).

Mass Care and Emergency Assistance (MC/EA) Activities

Now that you have learned about the National Incident Management System (NIMS), Whole Community, and the National Response Framework (NRF), you will learn about MC/EA activities including:

- Sheltering
- Feeding
- Distribution of Emergency Supplies
- Reunification Services
- People with Disabilities and Other Access and Functional Needs
- Mass Evacuation Support
- Household Pet and Service Animal Support

In Lesson 2, you will learn more about sheltering, feeding, distribution of emergency supplies, and reunification services. You will also learn how mass evacuation support, people with disabilities and other access and functional needs support, and household pets and service animals support are a part of each of these MC/EA activities.

Interoperability of Mass Care and Emergency Assistance (MC/EA)

As you learn about the MC/EA activities, remember they are all interrelated. For example, sheltering is not just about housing individuals and families in a school facility. When providing sheltering, you must also consider the demographics of the community in order to address dietary concerns and provide support of people with disabilities and other access and functional needs.

Providing sheltering will also involve coordination with other MC/EA activities such as reunification services and mass evacuation support.

MC/EA activities cannot be addressed in isolation, but rather as an interdependent process.

Lesson Summary

Let's summarize what you have learned in this lesson:

- This Course provides an overview of MC/EA activities, focusing on Whole Community involvement.
- The National Incident Management System provides a systematic approach of working together with the various segments of the community in response to all disaster incidents.
- Whole Community is an approach that reinforces that the entire community should be involved in disaster preparedness, prevention, response, recovery, and mitigation activities.
- The National Response Framework established ESF #6 Annex, which is the primary source of direction and information for the MC/EA activities.
- MC/EA activities include sheltering, feeding, distribution of emergency supplies, and reunification services. Support for mass evacuation, people with disabilities and other access and functional needs, as well as household pets and service animals are a part of these activities.
- MC/EA activities should be thought about in an interoperable way.

Now that you've been introduced to the main topics of this course, you'll learn more about the MC/EA activities.