



AUGUST 2023
VOLUME 4

EMA NEWSLETTER

EMA strives to advance public safety for Ohioans through effective collaborations with local, state, and federal partners.

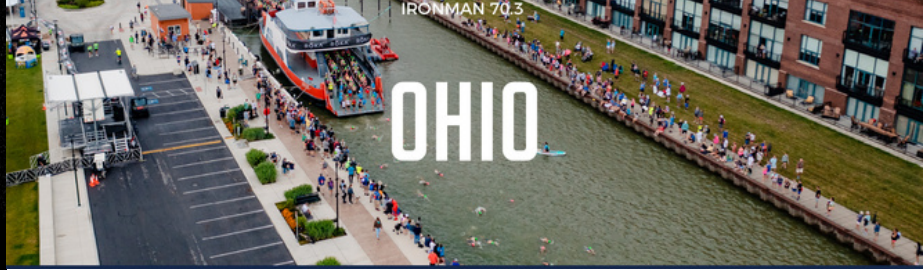
ECLIPSE UPDATE:

What are you doing to prepare for the April 8 2024 Total Solar Eclipse? Because this is such a rare and unique event impacting the majority of the state, we want to work smarter, not harder. We have created a survey to try to capture what county EMAs and other local partners are doing to best prepare.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the survey below. The intent is to compile these results and publish them in the next newsletter. The link for the survey can be found here, on our Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and in the email EMAO sent with this newsletter. Thank you in advance for your assistance with this. We value your input and expertise.

<https://bit.ly/EMAOEclipse>

Event Highlight: Ironman 70.3 Ohio



The 2nd annual Ironman 70.3 Ohio Triathlon was held on July 23, 2023 in Sandusky, Ohio.

We know that many of our counties have large events, but we felt that it was important to highlight this one due to its high-profile and complex nature. This race starts with swimmers jumping off of a ferry boat into Lake Erie for a 1.2 mile swim, cycling 56 miles along rural roads, and finishes with running 13.1 miles through Downtown Sandusky. This event is primarily held in Erie County, Ohio but a portion of the 56 mile long bike ride is within the Sandusky County, Ohio area. This may seem slightly confusing because the event itself is held in the City of Sandusky (which is actually in Erie County).

One of the challenges that presented last year, was that there is only a limited amount of places for spectator viewing along the bike portion of the race. That is because much of this portion of the race is along rural and residential areas. Another challenge was in coordinating with Ironman staff about how to denote the position of a race participant along the bike route. Ironman staff would refer to the mile markers of the route (because not being from the area, and being very familiar with the route, this was easiest), This was something that the local response agencies themselves were not well-versed with, because they were very familiar with the area, but the route and it's mile markers was new to them. This issue led to the subsequent placement of large-scale maps and rolling whiteboards in the IC post in Sandusky County. Another issue, which we all know is always an issue, was communications. Those involved use different radio systems which was a cumbersome process to work through. When you have multiple agencies involved, interoperability always tests us to the limits. Ironman being such a large-scale event only added to that complexity.

Erie and Sandusky County EMAs have a great working relationship and were able to integrate very well for this event. The Ironman staff has stated to them multiple times that they would have never known last year was the first year for this event, and if they didn't know any better they would have thought this had been hosted in Sandusky for years. If that isn't a testament to great working relationships, flexibility, and professionalism we don't know what is. Thanks to Tim Jonovich (Erie County EMA Director) and Lisa Kuelling (Sandusky County EMA Director) for contributing to this article and for all you do.

You're Invited!



We are thrilled to announce that the National Weather Service Weather Forecast Office and River Forecast Center in Wilmington, Ohio are hosting a joint, partner open house on Friday, August 25th, 2023 from 10 am to 2 pm.

Please respond to the official invitation using [this form](#). If you are unable to fill out the form, let us know.

NWS Wilmington Ohio
Open House Team

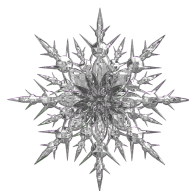
UPCOMING EVENTS

EMA 2023 Fall Conference

Thursday September 28, 2023
Virtual Delivery
9am-12pm

EMA 2023 Winter Conference

December 7-8, 2023
Salt Fork Lodge
Cambridge, OH



Executive Director: Michelle Fitzgibbon
88 East Broad Street, Suite 1305
Columbus, OH 43215 (614) 378-2156

Officers: Jeff Klein (Wood), President
Thomas Smoot (Summit), President-Elect
Sarah McNamee (Marion), Vice President

Alex McCarthy (Tuscarawas), Secretary
Jon Kochis (Fairfield), Interim Treasurer
Mark Christie (Cuyahoga), Past President



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Preparing for Disaster Recovery & the FEMA PA Program

By Joseph Villegas, Deputy Director PA/ Recovery for 

As a county emergency management professional, it is essential to establish policies, procedures and plans to be ready to respond during a disaster. However, we must not overlook the importance of being prepared for recovery.

The FEMA Public Assistance Program is a complex and unfamiliar process to many county emergency management agencies. However, there are things we can do now to prepare and mitigate potential issues which could result in reduced reimbursement eligibility. Apart from forming partnerships with local response agencies and volunteer organizations, pre-planned management strategies and exercises can effectively aid recovery.

FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO HELP ENSURE YOU ARE READY FOR RECOVERY:

1. The county emergency management office should establish transparent internal processes for identifying, documenting, and tracking eligible expenses related to the emergency or disaster while in the EOC. During disaster response, it's easy to rampantly approve contracts and purchases while losing track and not knowing which expenses are PA-eligible. Note that ICS-460- Finance/Administration Section Chief training provides an overview of how to track and manage time, equipment, and expenses for reimbursement eligibility.

2. Update and exercise your county COOP (Continuity of Operations Plan), specifically, your county's ability to access records and data during severe situations where your information system is damaged. Be sure to have access to staff records, including work descriptions and benefits. This information will help with proper documentation, especially when your emergency response (or EOC) staffing increases during the response phase. Access to county asset insurance information will help create your Damage Inventory report.

3. Understanding the FEMA Public Assistance Process is essential to manage community expectations regarding grant awards and reimbursements. Familiarize yourself with each Public Assistance milestone and the roles of the State (Recovery Branch) and FEMA representatives throughout the process. Also, know what you can and cannot do during the Public Assistance performance period. You can access the FEMA Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG) at https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_pappg_v4-updated-links_policy_6-1-2020.pdf. The Ohio EMA website provides a link to FEMA Public Assistance at <https://ema.ohio.gov/mitigation-recovery/government-private-non-profit/public-assistance>.

4. Coordinate with local municipalities to ensure all eligible expenses are captured, and all documentation is in order. It is beneficial to understand how each municipality manages procurement/contracting, timekeeping, and purchases and find ways to align these with FEMA reporting requirements. Conducting tabletop exercises can help identify these gaps.

5. The county emergency management office should ensure compliance with all applicable regulations and guidelines related to FEMA Public Assistance. For example, debris monitoring is required for Category A reimbursement eligibility. There are also other requirements involving Mitigation (406 or 404) and CDBG-DR during the PA process. Maintaining your County Mitigation Plan helps identify 406 or 404 eligible projects and helps establish an advisory committee for project prioritization. Pre-planning for a clear methodology for prioritizing and distributing CDBG-DR funds will streamline the award process.

6. Pre-plan and train your Damage Assessment Team. Having a core group already trained to work with State and FEMA representatives during the Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment will help minimize errors in reporting. It may also help in providing "Just-In-Time Training" for additional help. Take current pictures of county property (or whenever updated) to help with damage assessments and eventually aid during the Recovery Scoping Meetings. Ensure maintenance records are current since FEMA will request this information when determining eligibility.

7. Prepare for audits and monitoring by FEMA, including developing procedures for responding to audit findings and addressing any issues identified. Maintain accurate and complete records of all expenses related to the emergency or disaster, including invoices, receipts, and other supporting documentation. Common mistakes include Duplication of Benefits (DOB), where insurance coverage may overlap PA-eligible expenses. Keep all financial and program documentation for three years after the final submission document (SF-425) date. Several exceptions to this timeframe may require longer retention periods, including exceptions relating to real property and equipment disposition, audits, SLTT laws, and litigation.

8. Establish a Professional Services Agreement with a reputable Public Assistance Grant Management contractor. A well-rounded PA Grants Management Contractor should be capable of navigating through the FEMA Public Assistance Program and helping maximize your reimbursement eligibility. They should also provide support during audits. These services are usually funded and paid for through the Public Assistance Grant under Management Costs. Pre-positioning this service agreement before disasters will help cut time in the procurement process and allow you to issue purchase orders. Note that it's possible to create multiple service agreements with different contractors to ensure availability and bandwidth to help you when a disaster hits.

By following these tips, a county emergency management office can be better prepared for FEMA Public Assistance and ensure that all eligible expenses related to the emergency or disaster are correctly documented and reimbursed.



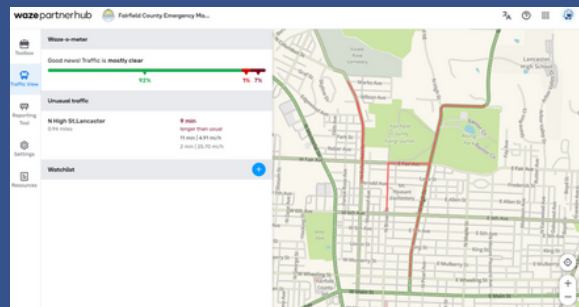
Enhance your situational awareness by joining the Waze for Cities Partner program

This valuable tool grants you and your agency free access to the extensive data collected by Waze and Google Maps services. The Partner Hub serves as an exceptional resource for both day-to-day situational awareness and planned events.

The program offers access to several essential tools, including:

- **Traffic View:** A real-time map that enables you to monitor traffic conditions and reported roadway hazards.
- **Waze Map Editor:** Allows you to temporarily close streets for planned construction or special events.
- **Reporting Tool:** Report traffic incidents and other roadway hazards, automatically deploying them on the Waze application.
- **Unusual Traffic Alerts:** Enroll in email alerts for specific roadways within your jurisdiction to receive notifications when traffic patterns deviate from the norm.
- **Analyze Data:** Gain access to historical traffic data for comprehensive analysis.
- **Crisis Event Support:** In the event of a major disaster, reach out to Waze for assistance in listing shelter locations, evacuation zones, and critical messaging, all integrated within the Waze and Google Maps app.

TO LEARN MORE OR GAIN ACCESS VISIT:
[HTTPS://SUPPORT.GOOGLE.COM/WAZE/PARTNERS/WFC/?HL-EN#TOPIC=10617535](https://support.google.com/waze/partners/WFC/?hl-en#TOPIC=10617535)



USE CASE: 2023 FOURTH OF JULY FIREWORKS TRAFFIC MONITORING FROM THE PUBLIC SAFETY INCIDENT COMMAND POST. AS SEEN ON THE MAP THE RED AREAS INDICATE THAT TRAFFIC IS MOVING SLOWLY WITHIN THOSE AREAS. ON THE LEFT IT LISTS SPECIFIC STREETS AND ESTIMATED TIME IN TRAFFIC.