



FEMA Review Council: Final Report

May 15, 2026

On Thursday, May 7, 2026, the FEMA Review Council (FRC), [established by President Donald J. Trump](#) to undertake a “full-scale review” of the agency, [held its final meeting](#) and voted to approve its [final report](#) of findings and recommendations.

Establishment of FEMA Review Council (FRC)

[Executive Order \(EO\) 14180](#) established the FRC in January 2025 to evaluate FEMA’s operations, staffing levels, alleged political bias, and role in federal emergency management. At approximately the same time, President Trump [dismissed all members](#) of the National Advisory Council, which Congress [established](#) to advise the Administrator on all aspects of emergency management.

Under the terms of the E.O., the Secretaries of Homeland Security and Defense co-chaired the FRC; broader [membership](#) included FEMA and nonfederal representatives. In past meetings, then-Co-Chair Kristi Noem echoed the President’s calls to [eliminate FEMA as it currently exists](#); other members advocated narrower reforms, including reducing [FEMA assistance for smaller disasters](#).

The FRC was to publish a report with findings and recommendations in late 2025; subsequent EOs [extended this deadline](#) to no later than May 29, 2026. News reports described [draft FRC reports](#) and [conflicts](#) over proposed reforms, particularly a [proposed 50% staffing cut](#).

FRC Requests for Information

The FRC [solicited information from the public](#) in March 2025 and received more than [11,700 comments](#). According one outside group’s analysis, most comments were “[overwhelmingly supportive ... of maintaining FEMA’s capacity, and of making good-faith reforms](#).” The FRC [summarized the feedback](#) and cited as common problems “[bureaucratic inefficiencies](#), delays in funding, inconsistent program administration, workforce constraints, and insufficient engagement with local governments.”

Additionally, the FRC reported receiving [1,387 survey responses](#) (from nonfederal and non-governmental partners); [engaging 50 states, territories, and at least 20 tribal nations](#); and conducting [17 listening sessions](#), including in the District of Columbia.

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IN12693

Selected FRC Report Recommendations

A summary of selected FRC final approved recommendations and stakeholder perspectives are below.

- **Evaluating and redistributing FEMA’s workforce** beyond DC to “realize ... efficiencies while reducing staff.” Several key emergency management organizations implored the FRC to preserve FEMA’s workforce; according to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), recent staff reductions have exacerbated persistent workforce challenges.
- **Changing the criteria FEMA uses to evaluate whether the President should declare a major disaster.** The FRC proposed increasing the cost thresholds used to evaluate the need for assistance for rebuilding public and nonprofit facilities (i.e., Public Assistance (PA)), to account for inflation. It also proposed simplifying procedures to determining the need for Individual Assistance (IA), using factors like damage to primary residences. In recent years, GAO and FEMA have both determined that PA cost thresholds are too low. On multiple occasions, FEMA has suspended previous proposals to change how it evaluated the need for PA, following significant criticism. FEMA revised the procedures to evaluate the need for IA in 2019 to establish “more objective criteria.” Some states expressed concerns that the revised procedures lack transparency and do not adequately represent a state’s actual financial capacity to manage disasters.
- **Transforming PA to an up-front lump-sum formula grant** to a state, tribe, or territory (STT) based on hazard characteristics and affected population. This is a change from the current reimbursement-based model based on site-by-site damage assessments. In the new model, STTs would administer project funds, in part to reduce FEMA administrative costs. These changes echo some congressional and industry proposals; though some past awards based on up-front, large-scale estimates have experienced delays and cost overruns. The FRC further recommended implementing sliding scale cost shares for PA and mitigation, to incentivize STT preparedness measures.
- **Continuing the move to risk-based pricing for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)** through Risk Rating 2.0, with premiums priced on risk to individual properties rather than community profiles. The FRC further recommended that FEMA evaluate the development of a centralized clearinghouse to transfer NFIP policies to private insurers.
- **Restructuring the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program** (post-disaster funding to reduce future disaster losses) by modifying advance assistance, available 30 days after a declaration, and prioritizing projects to mitigate repetitive losses and harden critical infrastructure. The future of pre-disaster mitigation funding is not discussed in the FRC report.
- **Expediting assistance to disaster survivors and reducing overhead costs** by consolidating existing IA programs that address housing and other critical disaster-related expenses into a single direct payment for survivors whose homes are rendered uninhabitable that is reflective of the disaster survivor’s needs (with limitations on the assistance amount). The existing IA program is not tied to uninhabitability, and some reports indicate concern that the FRC’s proposed change could mean survivors whose homes are not rendered uninhabitable may be ineligible to receive assistance for certain needs (e.g., funeral expenses, medical costs). The FRC further recommends FEMA focus on emergency/temporary housing and enable STTs and local governments to determine optimal local housing solutions.

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Implementation of Recommendations

Executive actions may implement several recommendations including [changing FEMA’s criteria to evaluate the need for a major disaster declaration](#). Other recommendations would more likely require legislation, including many proposed changes to the structure of disaster grants programs. The FRC indicated that it is “[imperative](#)” to implement recommendations in a phased approach over two to three years.

Relationship to Proposed Legislative Reforms

Several bills introduced within the 119th Congress (for example, H.R. 3251, H.R. 2247, H.R. 3347, H.R. 316) would fundamentally revise FEMA’s authorities to deliver disaster relief. One bill [incorporating fundamental reforms](#), H.R. 4669, the Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act of 2025, was ordered to be reported as amended by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure in September 2025. [News reports](#) indicated that Committee leadership planned to advance the FEMA Act of 2025 irrespective of FRC recommendations. No companion legislation has been introduced to date in the Senate; one [report indicates that](#) formal Senate action on the bill was likely on hold until the release of the FRC’s findings.

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