Earlier this month, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security released a notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) for a cybersecurity grant program for state, local and territorial governments across the county.

Funding from the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP) will help eligible entities address cybersecurity risks and threats to information systems owned or operated by—or on behalf of—state, local and territorial (SLLT) governments. The SLCGP will distribute $1 billion over four years to support projects throughout the performance period of up to four years. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and FEMA will jointly manage the grant program. Each state must establish a Cybersecurity Planning Committee that coordinates, develops and approves a cybersecurity plan. The NOFO requires the State Office of Chief Information Office (OCIO) approve the state plan and all projects to be funded. The NOFO also requires that the State Administrative Authority serve as the administrative entity.

FY 22 funding allocated to Nebraska will be $2.55 million and will require 10% matching funds. The deadline for states to apply is November 23, 2022. Once the application is approved, a Cybersecurity Planning Committee meeting, with composition specifically defined in the NOFO, will determine a process for receiving and recommending approval of applications. Eighty percent of the funds must be passed through to local entities. Twenty five percent of that eighty percent must directly impact rural populations. Defined FY 22 uses are:

- Develop and revise Statewide Cybersecurity Plan
- Implement Cybersecurity Plan (including individual projects)
- Grant administration (5%) Fund and any other appropriate activity determined by the Secretary of Homeland Security and through the Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA).

NEMA is working with the State of Nebraska OCIO to submit the initial application. A Cybersecurity Planning Committee has been named and will soon begin work to articulate application processes and guidelines. One clear goal of the grant program is sustainability. Eligible applicants will be required to demonstrate their proposals are sustainable over time.

This clearly is a good opportunity to address cybersecurity risks and threats to information systems owned or operated by, or on behalf of, the State of Nebraska and local governments.

Sincerely,

Ervin L. Portis
Assistant Director
Smokey Wildfire Burns in Banner County

Incident management assistance team members Fred Reichart, Lexy Hindt and Jeff Rowell observed the fire on a reconnaissance flight.

A UH-60 helicopter reconnaissance flight flies over the Smokey Fire burn scar.

Incident command staff work from the incident command post south of the fire.

Retardant dropped from aerial applicators helped contain the fire.

Smoke drifts on night two of the Smokey Fire.

More than 4,300 acres burned.

A rainbow, Sept. 15, was a happy reminder of rain that helped improve containment on the Smokey fire.

Retardant dropped from aerial applicators helped contain the fire.

Photos by Lexy Hindt and Kyle Winchell
Smokey Fire Photos by Kyle Winchell and Larry Fichtner

The Nebraska State Patrol Drone Unit provided images for the Smokey Fire in Banner County the week of Sept. 12.

Drone footage helps define the fire's footprint and allows incident command to make informed decisions on how to best fight the fire.

“We continued to use LCES (lookouts, communication, escape routes and safety zones) as our safety system to protect our firefighters,” said Incident Commander Tim Grubbs, chief of the Banner County Fire Department. “Every firefighter on the scene knows the LCES system, which includes having a lookout to see potential threats, following a communication plan, making sure there are escape routes and locating a safety zone to provide adequate refuge from an advancing fire.”

Firefighters work to contain fires by building containment lines around the fire. Grubbs said containment refers to the “blackline” of burned fuel, natural fire breaks or bulldozer lines around the outside of the fire perimeter that the fire should not be able to get across in the current weather conditions. The fire will continue to burn inside the perimeter even after it is fully contained.

NEMA Watch Center Supervisor Brent Curtis encouraged all Nebraskans to be cautious of ongoing fire danger, created by warm, dry weather patterns and drought conditions across the state. The entire state is currently in drought status, with 29 percent of the state in extreme or exceptional drought.

“We must remain vigilant,” Curtis said. “Droughts can create persistent, dangerous conditions for wildfires. Dry trees and vegetation ignite and burn easily. In these conditions any ignition source—including lightning, hot machinery, discarded cigarettes, or other sources of heat can easily start a fire. Warmer than normal temperatures and low humidity create favorable conditions for fires to spread quickly.’

Curtis also recommended that anyone with breathing issues or concerns about wildfire smoke visit airnow.gov to check out the air quality impacts for their area.
Adams County Emergency Management received national recognition for weather preparedness. Pictured at left are Director Ron Pughes and assistant director Dawna Whitcomb. For the sixth year, NOAA and the National Weather Service are proud to recognize “Ambassadors of Excellence,” a select number of WRN Ambassador organizations that have made significant contributions to building a Weather-Ready Nation.

**National Preparedness Month Proclamation Held at Capitol**

Emergency management partners attended a proclamation ceremony hosted by Lt. Gov. Mike Foley at the State Capitol on Sept. 6.

Above: Pictured from left are: Brian Smith, National Weather Service; Jim Davidsaver, Lancaster County Emergency Management, Foley; Erv Portis, NEMA; Dawna Whitcomb, Nebraska Association of Emergency Management and Adams County; Sandra Hobson, Nebraska Preparedness Partnership; Soni Cochran, Nebraska Extension; and Josh Yox, NEMA.

Lt. Gov. Mike Foley, NEMA Assistant Director Erv Portis and NAEM President Dawna Whitcomb display the National Preparedness proclamation signed by Gov. Pete Ricketts. The month promotes the importance of being individually prepared for disasters.
The NEMA Recovery Section, consisting of the Hazard Mitigation and Public Assistance Units, traveled to the cities of York and Seward in September to conduct Recovery Life Cycle Training.

**Gary Peterson**, Seward and York, emergency management director reached out to NEMA to provide the training to support his counties, reports Recovery Section Manager Lexy Hindt.

“This training was designed for individuals who will be involved in the disaster recovery process and provides an overview of NEMA’s recovery programs,” said Hindt. “It shows what a community can do to apply for the various funding opportunities the section facilitates.”

Hazard mitigation staff opened the training by discussing the hazard mitigation process. This included eligible mitigation activities and the Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) application process.

Available funding opportunities, such as the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), and how that program differs from public assistance opportunities, were also discussed.

On behalf of the Public Assistance Unit, staff members explained key actions to take before, during and post-disaster.

Topics ranged from using the Grants Portal before a disaster occurs to the purpose of local disaster declarations.

Preliminary damage assessments, disaster thresholds and federal disaster requests during a disaster were also covered.

The training concluded with post-disaster opportunities public assistance offers, and an overview of long-term recovery.

Hindt said the agency’s vision is to provide a resilient Nebraska, built upon inclusive collaboration and communication.

“Events such as the Recovery Life Cycle training embodies this vision, allowing for greater partnership between NEMA and local partners.”

Anyone interested in holding this training in their county can reach out to: lexy.hindt@nebraska.gov.

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**FEMA Releases Emergency Management Guide for Local Elected/Appointed Officials**

FEMA has released the *Local Elected and Appointed Officials Guide: Roles and Resources in Emergency Management*. This guide makes it easier for senior officials to understand, prepare for and execute their leadership responsibilities to help:

- Mitigate community risks;
- Save lives;
- Protect property; and
- Recover from disasters.

The document provides an executive-level introduction to emergency management concepts and principles for local senior officials, and identifies local senior officials’ roles and responsibilities for incident emergency management before, during and after disasters. The guide also explains how to access additional resources.

FEMA will host a series of 60-minute webinars to provide an overview of the guide. The sessions will include facilitated discussions and provide updates since the National Engagement Period. Advance registration is required.

To download the document, quick reference guide, checklists or learn more about the webinar sessions please visit the FEMA website at: [https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/national-preparedness/plan](https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/national-preparedness/plan).
The Disaster Recovery Reform Act (DRRA), Public Law 115-254, was enacted on October 5, 2018, and made numerous legislative changes to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act). Section 1204 of the DRRA amended Section 404 of the Stafford Act to allow FEMA to provide Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) grants in any area that received a Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) declaration even if no major Presidential declaration was declared.

This notice of funding opportunity is a result of FM-5436-NE, Road 702 Fire impacting Red Willow, Furnas, and Frontier counties, which was declared on April 23, 2022. Nebraska is set to receive the following:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disaster</th>
<th>Award Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>FM-5436-NE</td>
<td>$786,552.00</td>
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**Project Prioritization**

Projects will be prioritized in the following manner:

1. Activities that benefit the declared counties or tribal lands, with wildfire hazard mitigation projects, such as defensible space measures, ignition resistant construction, hazardous fuels reduction, erosion control measures, slope failure prevention measures, or flash flood reduction measures.
2. Activities unrelated to wildfire hazard mitigation, such as generally allowable HMGP projects within the declared counties or tribal lands.
3. Activities related to wildfire hazard mitigation, such as generally allowable HMGP projects, outside of the declared counties or burned tribal lands.
4. Activities unrelated to wildfire hazard mitigation, such as generally allowable HMGP projects outside of the declared counties or burned tribal lands.

**Important Dates**

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<th>Important Dates</th>
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<tr>
<td>NOI Submission Date:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application Period End:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period of Performance End:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Important Documents**

- FEMA POLICY: Hazard Mitigation Grant Program - Post Fire Policy #207-088-2
- Hazard Mitigation Assistance Guidance
- Hazard Mitigation Assistance Addendum
- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Post Fire Fact Sheet

L0105

Public Information Basics

Nov. 2-4
Dakota City

Sign up on the NEMA Training site at: https://nema.nebraska.gov/event/L105-public-information-basics-course.
The Nebraska Preparedness Partnership (NPP) hosted the Midwest Resilience and Emergency Preparedness Conference, Sept. 26-27 at the Cornhusker Marriott hotel in Lincoln, as a way to build stronger and more resilient communities. NPP is a coalition of the state’s business and government leaders who share a commitment to strengthen the capacity of the state to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters through public-private collaboration. Nearly 200 participants heard from a variety of speakers who addressed topics including: Agriculture and Livestock Preparedness, Ransomware/Business Email Compromise, Small Business Disaster Planning (Before and After) and Nebraska Wildfire Response.

Pictured Clockwise from top left:
1. Sandra Hobson, program director for NPP, welcomes participants to the conference;
2. Cole Bisgard, left, of Hy-Vee, accepts an Outstanding Partner Award from Dennis Snook, NPP Board of Director’s chair. The award recognizes Hy-vee for its contribution to NPP and the state.
3. Kim Nelson, regional administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health administration (SAMHA), gives a keynote address;
4. Participants listen to a keynote address on day one.
5. Andrea Spillars, FEMA Region VII Administrator, gives the keynote address on day one.
Two Exercise Training Officers and a Planning Specialist Join NEMA

Cathy Link joined Nebraska Emergency Management Agency on Sept. 12 as an exercise training officer (ETO).

Link earned a bachelor of science from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. She taught second grade in Lincoln for six years and was the director of children and family ministries at a local church for 20 years.

Her husband of 27 years, Andy, works for the American Cancer Society. They have a 22-year-old daughter, McKenna, a 15-year-old daughter, Nora, and a one-year-old yellow lab named Charlie.

Link enjoys reading suspense novels, baking and spending time with her family.

Jerry O’Brien joined Nebraska Emergency Management Agency on Sept. 12 as an exercise training officer (ETO).

O’Brien served as a machinist mate in the U.S. Navy Submarine Service on the U.S.S. Jack SSN-605.

He earned his Bachelor of Science from the University of Iowa and a Master of Science from Mississippi State both in geoscience education.

O’Brien taught high school geoscience in Florida for 25 years and in college for 15 years before coming to Nebraska.

His wife of 37 years, Janet, is a nurse, and they have a 27-year-old daughter, Grace.

O’Brien details cars for a hobby in his spare time.

Hunter Hoffman joined Nebraska Emergency Management Agency on Sept. 26 as a planning specialist in the Planning, Exercise and Training.

Hoffman graduated from Upper Iowa University with a Bachelor of Science for public administration with an emphasis in emergency and disaster management.

Hoffman joined FEMA Corps for a year of volunteer service in North Carolina, Texas, Louisiana and Washington D.C.

After FEMA Corps, Hoffman was a FEMA reservist as a planning specialist.

Hoffman is from Indianola, Iowa, where his family still resides. He has a 90-pound, yellow lab named Bella who is 7-years-old. He enjoys walks with Bella, golf and video games.

NEMA is charged by Nebraska statute to reduce the vulnerabilities of the people and communities of Nebraska in terms of injury, loss of life and property damage resulting from natural, technological or man-made disasters and emergencies.

NEMA is responsible for coordinating the state response in any major emergency or disaster including the support of local governments as needed or requested, and coordinating assistance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other federal partners.

The Beacon includes emergency management news and activities from across the state. Please forward story ideas or photos for inclusion in the newsletter to: Public Information Officer Jodie Fawl, 402-471-7428 or jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov.