DISASTER NEWS YOU CAN USE

WWW.I-S-CONSULTING.COM/

INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS CONSULTING

February 2026

Whats Inside:

This Month in Disaster History

2003 Space Shuttle Explosion & Debris Field Ops

Establishing the search area involved interagency coordination led by NASA, with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) providing logistics, the EPA managing hazmat, the FBI assisting with crew recovery and evidence, the U.S. Forest Service, Texas agencies, military units, and thousands of volunteers. Initial efforts focused on eyewitness accounts, radar data, and early debris finds, refining a centerline that was later adjusted. The operation became the largest ground search in U.S. history, using GPS and GIS for precise mapping and grid-based foot searches over hundreds of thousands of acres of varied terrain, including forests and fields. Divers and sonar-equipped vessels searched lakes and reservoirs like Toledo Bend and Nacogdoches for submerged pieces. By the end, approximately 84,000 pieces weighing about 84,900 pounds—roughly 38% of the orbiter's dry weight—were recovered and reconstructed at Kennedy Space Center to aid the investigation. All crew remains were located within a smaller area.

Coordination across all levels of government was central to the response. President George W. Bush issued emergency declarations for Texas and Louisiana, designating the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as the lead federal agency for overall response and recovery.

Continued on Page 2

Levee Safety Program

113,000+ Miles of Undocumented Community Risks

Levees are earthen or structural barriers designed to reduce flood risk by containing rivers and other waterways, protecting millions of people and trillions of dollars in property across the United States. However, they pose significant residual risks to communities. No levee eliminates flood risk entirely; overtopping during extreme events or structural failure can lead to rapid, deep inundation that is often more severe and damaging than flooding in unprotected areas, as water enters quickly and drains slowly. This "levee effect" encourages development in protected zones, amplifying potential economic losses and complicating evacuations when failures occur. Aging infrastructure exacerbates these dangers—many levees are decades old and require ongoing maintenance that is not always adequately funded or performed.

Undocumented levees heighten these risks substantially because they are often...

Continued on Page 5

Did You Miss a Previous Issue?

Access the "Disaster News You Can Use" Library

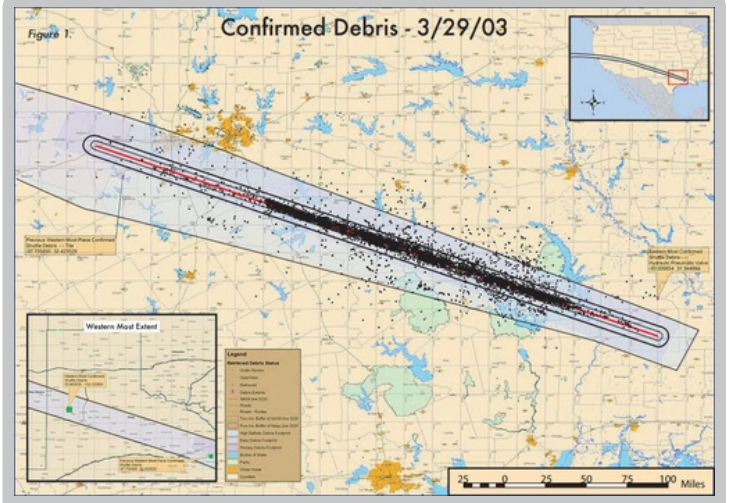
Disaster History

Continued...

2003 Columbia Explosion: Field Recovery and Mission Creep

Continued

NASA directed the technical search and investigation efforts, while FEMA provided logistics, manpower, and funding coordination. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) held primary responsibility for hazardous materials handling and environmental protection. The FBI led efforts to recover and identify crew remains, treating them with dignity and as part of the evidence chain. State agencies, including the Texas Forest Service and Department of Public Safety, alongside local law enforcement and emergency services, played critical roles in ground operations. The U.S. Forest Service managed much of the land search, and the Department of Defense (including the U.S. Navy's Supervisor of Salvage) supported underwater recovery. Over 25,000 personnel from more than 60 federal, state, local, and volunteer organizations participated, operating under a Unified Command structure based on the Incident Command System (ICS) to ensure clear chains of command, communication, and resource allocation. Disaster Field Offices were established in locations such as Lufkin, Texas, and Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana.



Map of 2003 Columbia Space Shuttle Debris Field. Source: NASA, Columbia Accident Investigation Board Report

Establishing the search area relied on rapid integration of data from eyewitness reports, radar tracks, ballistic trajectory modeling, and early debris discoveries. The primary debris corridor stretched approximately 200–600 miles long (with focused intensive searches across thousands of square miles in East Texas and western Louisiana). Search planners refined a centerline and created grid-based sectors using GIS and GPS technology for precise mapping and tracking. Initial efforts prioritized high-probability zones near Nacogdoches, Hemphill, and other communities where debris was first reported. Site investigations began immediately, with teams documenting find locations, photographing items in place, and tagging them to maintain evidentiary integrity for the Columbia Accident Investigation Board (CAIB). Public appeals encouraged residents to report finds without handling them, supported by temporary amnesty periods to facilitate safe collection.

Debris management operations emphasized forensic preservation and were the largest ground search in US History at the time. EPA teams, often HAZWOPER-trained, assessed and neutralized potential chemical threats from hypergolics and other materials while protecting the environment and public health. All recovered items were treated as evidence: cataloged, GPS-located, and transported under chain-of-custody protocols. Land searches involved systematic foot grids by teams walking shoulder-to-shoulder across forests, fields, and rural areas, supported by all-terrain vehicles and aircraft. Site investigations included materials analysis to map thermal damage and breakup sequences, with specialized "hardware search teams" focusing on critical components. Underwater operations in lakes and reservoirs like Toledo Bend and Nacogdoches used side-scan sonar, multibeam systems, and dive teams from multiple agencies, including the Navy and local police, to locate submerged fragments. Approximately 84,000 pieces (about 38% of the orbiter's dry weight) were ultimately recovered through these coordinated efforts.

Reconstruction of the debris at Kennedy Space Center allowed investigators to visualize the failure sequence and confirm the foam-strike breach. This evidence directly informed the CAIB's findings on both technical and organizational causes, including NASA's normalization of foam shedding risks. The interagency experience highlighted the value of pre-established protocols for dispersed, hazardous debris events.

Continued on Page 3

Disaster History

Continued...

2003 Columbia Explosion: Field Recovery and Mission Creep

Continued

Contemporary lessons from Columbia continue to shape emergency management practices. The event underscored the importance of scalable Unified Command and ICS for multi-jurisdictional responses, robust GIS/GPS integration for large-area searches, proactive hazardous materials protocols, and treating debris as both safety hazards and critical evidence. It also highlighted the risks of mission creep for FEMA, particularly after its integration into the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) post-9/11, where expanded homeland security priorities sometimes diverted focus and resources from core all-hazards disaster response and recovery functions. In the Columbia response, FEMA's lead role demonstrated effective coordination in a non-traditional disaster scenario, but broader post-event analyses and subsequent critiques of FEMA's evolving mandate emphasized the need to safeguard its primary mission against dilution by non-disaster duties (such as immigration enforcement or counterterrorism expansions), ensuring that emergency management remains agile, trusted, and adequately resourced for natural and technological incidents without being overburdened. It influenced NASA and FAA standards by driving enhanced contingency planning, independent safety oversight, and probabilistic risk assessments for re-entries. Today, these principles inform Artemis program operations, commercial crew missions, and broader space debris mitigation strategies, including precise deorbit modeling, public safety corridors, and international coordination. The sacrifices of Columbia's crew and the responders reinforce the need for a persistent "sense of vulnerability" in high-risk operations, ensuring that interagency coordination and meticulous debris management remain foundational to preventing future tragedies—while also protecting FEMA's foundational disaster-focused identity amid evolving departmental pressures.

References

- Columbia Accident Investigation Board. (2003). Columbia accident investigation board report (Vol. 1). National Aeronautics and Space Administration.
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration. (2008). Columbia crew survival investigation report (NASA/SP-2008-565).
- U.S. Navy Supervisor of Salvage and Diving. (2003). U.S. Navy salvage report: Space Shuttle Columbia.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2003). After action report: Space Shuttle Columbia response. (Included in compilation of FEMA after action reports).
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2003). Lessons learned: Space Shuttle Columbia response.
- U.S. Forest Service. (n.d.). Searching for and recovering the Space Shuttle Columbia.
- Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2018, February 1). Recovering the Space Shuttle Columbia.
- National Park Service. (n.d.). Space Shuttle Columbia Memorial Special Resource Study.
- U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2003). Geographic information systems: Challenges to effective data sharing (GAO-03-874T).
- Esri. (2003). Space Shuttle Columbia debris recovery enhanced with GIS. ArcNews, Summer.

Disaster Resource Center

Free Tool Kits & Resources

Whether you are dealing with a declared disaster or need program guidance, ISC is there to help you.

Hazard-Specific Tool Kits

Disaster Resource Center

Best Practices Library

On-Call Expert Support

US Levee Safety Program

Continued...

Statistically Represented Surveys to Inform Resilience

Continued

unmapped, uninspected, and unmaintained. These structures, frequently built ad hoc by farmers, landowners, or local entities generations ago, number in the tens or even hundreds of thousands of miles beyond official inventories. Studies have identified over 113,000 miles of such artificial levees in the contiguous U.S., many of which alter floodplain dynamics, shift floodwaters to neighboring areas, and undermine natural flood storage. Because they lack formal oversight, they complicate flood forecasting, emergency response, and risk assessment. Failures of undocumented levees can catch communities off guard, leading to catastrophic outcomes with little warning or coordinated mitigation.

Communities behind levees—both documented and undocumented—face disproportionate vulnerabilities, particularly historically underserved and socially vulnerable populations. Research shows that minority and low-income groups are overrepresented in levee-protected areas, often behind substandard structures with fewer resources for maintenance or upgrades. This inequity increases exposure to levee failures, which can disrupt critical infrastructure, contaminate water supplies, close roads, and cause long-term economic hardship. Nationwide, the known levees in the National Levee Database protect about 23 million people, 7 million buildings, and $2 trillion in property value, yet the true exposed population is likely higher due to undocumented systems.

Levee owners and sponsors, typically local governments, drainage districts, states, or private entities, hold primary responsibility for operation, maintenance, and rehabilitation (OMR). They must ensure structures meet design standards, including freeboard, closure systems, and interior drainage, particularly for National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) accreditation under 44 CFR §65.10. Sponsors conduct routine inspections, repairs, and reporting; federal agencies like the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) inspect ...

Continue on Page 6

US Levee Safety Program

Continued...

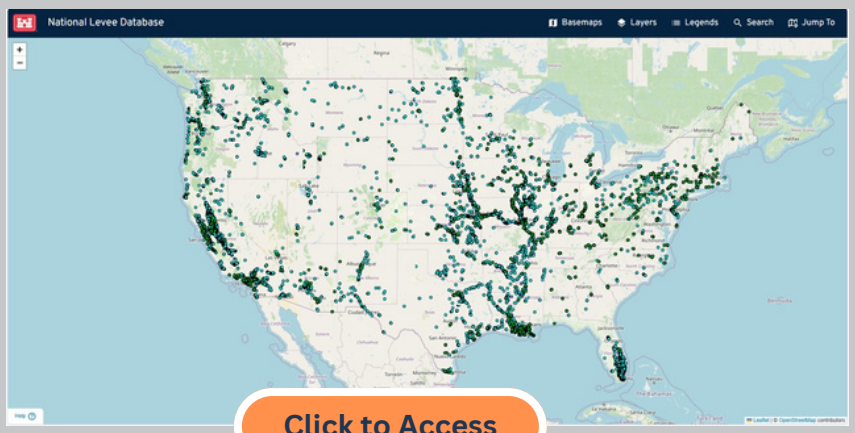
113,000+ Miles of Undocumented Community Risks

Continued

many authorized systems but do not assume day-to-day maintenance for most non-federal levees. Inadequate upkeep can lead to decertification, removal of flood risk reduction credit on maps, mandatory flood insurance purchases, and sharply higher premiums for residents.

The USACE program focuses on federally authorized and inspected levees (roughly 1,600 nonfederal systems plus federal ones), conducting inspections, risk assessments, and partnerships with local sponsors

Interactive Map of National Levee Database



responsible for most operations and maintenance. It covers systems protecting over 13 million people and more than $1 trillion in assets. The National Levee Safety Program, authorized in 2007 and co-led by USACE and FEMA (launched around 2021 and reauthorized in 2022), aims for a comprehensive national approach. Its components include developing voluntary best-practice guidelines, advancing integrated management, enhancing the National Levee Database (NLD), and providing implementation support to improve consistency and resilience across all levees.

Ongoing lawsuits highlight tensions from NFIP and levee designation changes. A prominent multi-state challenge (Louisiana et al. v. Mayorkas, filed 2023) contests FEMA's Risk Rating 2.0 methodology, alleging it undervalues existing levee protections and mitigation investments while over-relying on future climate projections, driving unaffordable premium hikes and policy dropouts. As of early 2026, core claims proceed toward trial after a 2024 ruling denied a preliminary injunction but affirmed standing for some plaintiffs; political pressure from lawmakers for transparency and suspension of the system continues amid reported participation declines. These cases underscore challenges in balancing accurate risk pricing with community affordability and investment incentives in levee-protected areas.

The NLD, redesigned in 2024, now documents over 6,000–7,000 levee systems totaling around 24,000–30,000 miles, serving as a key tool for awareness and prioritization; however, significant gaps remain in identifying and assessing undocumented or non-federal levees. Recent USACE guidance (e.g., 2024 Engineer Circular) updates program implementation, and calls exist for full funding (recommended at around $79 million annually) to complete inventories and address a backlog estimated in the tens of billions for repairs. With increasing extreme weather, ongoing efforts emphasize public awareness, local capacity building, and risk-informed decision-making to better protect communities.

Overall, while levees provide essential protection, their risks underscore the need for sustained investment, better data, and resilient floodplain management strategies.

References

- Federal Emergency Management Agency. (n.d.). NFIP and levees: An overview.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. (2024). Engineer Circular 1165-2-218: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Levee Safety Program.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. (n.d.). Civil works levee safety program.
- Climate Case Chart. (n.d.). Louisiana v. Mayorkas. Sabin Center for Climate Change Law.
- U.S. Senate. (2026, February 3). Kennedy, Cassidy, colleagues urge FEMA to halt Risk Rating 2.0.
- American Society of Civil Engineers. (2025, December 17). Statement for the record to the House Transportation & Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources

Disaster Policy & Research

January 2026

News & Policy

- DHS begins slashing FEMA disaster response staff as 2026 begins
- Author of LAFD Palisades fire report declined to endorse final version
- FEMA publishes new tools to empower communities to assess and manage tsunami risk
- FEMA awards $250 million to secure U.S. skies ahead of FIFA World Cup 2026
- FEMA cuts put disaster recovery burden on states
- At FEMA, $900 million in grants, loans awaits Noem's approval
- Some FEMA employee layoffs put on hold, while reform council renewed
- 'The perfect storm': Trump has left the US less prepared for natural disasters, experts say
- Multilateral financing in the face of natural disasters
- Trump adminn stands up consolidated federal firefighting agency over bipartisan reservations
- Hosting FIFA World Cup 2026: A global event with local consequences
- A year after LA fires, thousands of homes remain unbuilt. State funds aim to curb displacement.
- In the hot seat: State and local governments must protect their people from extreme heat
- St. Petersburg outlines who qualifies for disaster recovery aid, buyouts, as demand surges
- America's disaster costs are soaring — Taxpayers can't keep paying
- FEMA's PrepToolkit helps emergency managers save time and resources
- Emergency managers, meteorologists push back against breakup of NCAR climate research center

Research & Innovations

- One year later: How Los Angeles is recovering from devastating wildfires
- Trends that impact emergency management in 2026
- NOAA deploys new generation of AI-driven global weather models
- Lawmakers told state lacking disaster case managers in long-term recovery efforts
- Same event, different realities: Building accessibility into special events
- After L.A.'s wildfires, reshaping disaster response to address children's needs
- Industrial AI has the power to transform disaster response, but only if we work together
- The State of Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management in K–12 Public Schools: Findings from a 2025 American School Leader Panel Survey
- Federal Policy Changes Are Needed to Accelerate Rebuilding Infrastructure in the U.S. Virgin Islands
- Building a Smarter Wildfire Innovation Ecosystem
- Emerging Technology and Risk Analysis
- Bolstering Responses to Natural Disasters - A Discussion with Experts
- Infrastructure design is the hidden architecture of disaster risk
- Should we be rethinking how we rebuild after storms?
- Tornado-forecast system can increase warning lead times, study finds
- New FEMA Archived Flood Data Website Available
- New IAEA research project to enhance disaster management with AI-augmented non-destructive testing

International News

- Outdated flood maps heighten risk for Canadian homeowners and insurers
- Cyclone Senyar, Indonesia probes whether development amplified scale of disaster
- Indonesia tests pandemic readiness through national PRET table-top exercise
- Flash floods in Indonesia kill at least 16 people and sweep away homes
- Jamaica needs digital disaster infrastructure*
- Wildfires spread to 15,000 hectares in Argentine Patagonia
- South Africa declares disaster after deadly floods

Preparedness Best Practices

Creating Private-Public Partnerships that can Influence Disaster Resiliency

Private-public partnerships (PPPs) are vital for effective disaster management, leveraging the strengths of both sectors. Public entities offer regulatory frameworks, funding, and coordination, while private organizations provide innovation, efficiency, and specialized resources. PPPs enhance disaster preparedness, response, and recovery by enabling rapid resource mobilization, improving infrastructure resilience, and fostering community engagement. these partnerships also facilitate knowledge sharing and long-term planning, mitigating the impact of increasingly frequent and severe disasters, and building sustainable, adaptive systems for resilient communities. Creating a PPP that can be influential in important disaster resiliency initiatives requires a commitment to build a team across all sectors that fosters an environment that is inclusive and facilitates open and honest exchange. The PPP team requires continuous effort, positive attitudes, and constructive energies to establish clear and worthwhile disaster resiliency goals.

Read the Full Article Here

Read the full "Private-Public Partnership Best Practices" here.

Phase I: Strengthen the Brand

Early branding of an emerging organization is paramount to its success. A brand is a company's face to the world. It is a representation of how the company is perceived by its customers as well as the associations and inherent value they place on the organization. Dollar for dollar, it is as important and vital as any other early steps of formalizing an organization. Activities in this phase include:

- *Establishing a Unified Business Strategy*
- *Invigorate Leadership*
- *Empower the PPP Team*

Phase II: Launch a Marketing Campaign

Organizations are sometimes too quick to launch a marketing campaign. Without establishing credibility and legitimacy of the organization, outreach activities will often falter and not meet established expectations. Efforts should be made in broadening public knowledge and perception of what the PPP does and why, how it benefits constituents, the resources it provides, and how it is integrated with regional efforts to build disaster resiliency. The development of a regional marketing campaign would clearly explain and identify through a standard unified design and visual element would improve the image of the PPP and the agency as a whole. This visual identity should, in turn, support the agency's corporate image. Activities in this phase include:

- *Build Legitimacy of the PPP*
- *Establish Creditability of the Organization*
- *Demonstrate a Commitment Through Acts of Reciprocity*
- *Implement the Campaign*

Phase III: Build PPP Membership with Active Outreach

It is essential that the Outreach Program concentrate on building and improving long-term relationships with important constituencies through memberships and strategic partnerships. Forming partnerships with influential and credible organizations would strengthen the programs and initiatives, thereby creating a higher level of trust and confidence in the agency. Although primary attention will be given to concentrating on outreach activities to target important constituencies such as organizational decision-makers and executive management would be the primary goal, communication should be considered for all potentially interested audiences. By increasing the collaborative opportunities of its members and creating synergies between participating organizations, new initiatives and funding opportunities will be identified that will increase the disaster resiliency of their community. These collaborative projects will place the private-public partnership as a positive force and demonstrate its worth to the region.

Response Best Practices:
Critical Role of Community Lifelines

Keeping Communities Running: The Critical Role of Lifelines in Disaster Response

When disasters like hurricanes, earthquakes, or even pandemics strike communities, critical infrastructure fails and services get disrupted. Without electricity, passable roads, healthcare, or running water, communities grind to a halt, with cascading impacts on human health, safety, and economic functions. The immediate priority for response teams must be stabilizing and reconnecting these critical services that communities rely on.

FEMA refers to these essential services as "Community Lifelines" – the infrastructure, assets, capabilities and services that enable all aspects of community functionality. Lifelines are the foundation that supports societies through day-to-day operations and in times of crisis. When disasters sever access to lifelines, decisive and rapid intervention is imperative in order to enable broader community recovery. FEMA established the Community Lifelines concept for disaster management to:

- Reframe incident information into plain language: Lifelines simplify complex infrastructure into easy-to-understand critical services like Food, Water, Shelter, Transportation, Energy. This helps promote unified understanding across government, NGOs, and private sector partners.
- Understand real-world impacts on communities: With lifelines framing, assessments reveal actual access and service delivery issues affecting disaster survivors – not just infrastructure damage. This focuses response on urgent human needs.
- Prioritize response based on community stabilization needs: Lifelines make it clear which services require immediate intervention for community functioning vs longer-term recoveries. Response priorities focus on rapid reconnection of critical lifelines.
- Simplify communications with the public: Lifelines-framed public messaging conveys response progress in straightforward terms related to restoring electricity, healthcare access, passable roads, etc.

Maximize Vital Community Disaster Recovery & Mitigation Funds

Odysseus Features for Disaster Grant Management Solutions

Response Best Practices:
Continued....

Keeping Communities Running: The Critical Role of Lifelines i

The Community Lifelines concept has already been validated during major disaster responses including hurricanes, typhoons, earthquakes, and the COVID pandemic. With each activation, lessons learned further refine the construct to make it an increasingly effective disaster management approach.

In a crisis, the trajectory of the disaster aftermath hangs on the ability to rapidly stabilize and reconnect Community Lifelines. Doing so stems the tide of expanding impacts to human health, public safety, and broader economic functions. By framing disaster management around critical lifelines, assessment and response practices become focused on community priorities, easily understood by all partners and the public. Rapid lifeline stabilization paves the way for accelerated recovery towards full community resilience.

Critical Lifelines as Defined by DHS

For almost two decades, ISC and our team of experts has championed research and development devoted to understanding the interconnectedness of vital community lifelines, their cascading impacts after a disaster, and developing strategies for building resilient infrastructure and communities. From developing sophisticated methodological tools to evaluating over 4,500 indicators and measurements of community lifeline vulnerabilities to evidence-based methods assessing the interdependencies and cascading impacts of vital community infrastructure assets and key resources, ISC has served as an industry leader in Community Lifelines.

The Community Vulnerability, Risk & Resiliency (CVR2) Model

Our leading experts have been focused on developing Community Lifelines innovations and solutions for almost two decades. The Community Lifelines Vulnerability, Risk & Resiliency (CVR2) Model serves as a dynamic planning tool that utilizes proven hazard analysis strategies and processes to build partner consensus, ensure uniformity, and provide results that are operationally significant. CVR2 operates by utilizing a number of input parameters consisting of hazard profiles, economic, social, physical community vulnerabilities, other special community concerns. These inputs are assessed and evaluated to determine the risk to the community from a specific or multiple hazard threat(s). The output of the CVR2 Model is a prioritized indication of planning risk considerations that can be incorporated into the community's comprehensive preparedness efforts, providing a foundation that will increase programmatic efficiency, operational effectiveness, and a unified common operational picture. The CVR2 Model is a culmination of over 100 years of knowledge and incorporates over a decade of research of hazard risk assessment methodologies by several of the nation's premier disaster researchers.

Recovery Best Practices

Critical Operation: Detailed Damage Assessments

360 Degree Damage Inventory Windshield Survey

With the introduction of new FEMA program timelines and opportunities, documenting your disaster damages has never been more important. Being able to show your community before and after the devastation is critical in securing vital disaster assistance funding and advocating to FEMA and others well after the disaster has left the mainstream news cycle. With our 360 Degree Damage Windshield Survey, communities can not only conduct detailed street-level damage assessments of their community within hours but also document the before/after the disaster for future reference. This new technology serves as a best practice for securing disaster assistance funding for your community. Click on the image to see this technology in action.

See the 360 Damage Inventory Windshield Survey in Action

Learn More About Disaster Recovery Innovations

Thoroughly Assess Your Community Disaster Impacts and Immediate Needs

One of the most immediate, and critical, operational needs for successful community disaster recovery is the timely and accurate assessment of post-disaster community needs that is incorporated into community recovery strategy. A timely impact analysis and accurate needs assessment sets the operational tempo for the long-term community recovery and provides the necessary intelligence for local, regional, state and federal partners as to the necessity of disaster recovery support. A community's impact assessment process should be comprised of three stages: 1) community impact profiles, 2) community cross-sector impact analysis, and 3) impact assessment and analysis. This information will be used not only to justify the necessity of disaster assistance, but also provide an operational framework in which disaster management leadership and local community stakeholders are afforded a visionary perspective of potential disaster recovery issues. Most importantly, these assessments provide communities with a strategic perspective that extends beyond tactical operations of delivering immediate community needs and provide a framework for the management of sustained long-term recovery operations.

Read the Full Article Here

Read more on the Community Disaster Recovery Success Series.

Mitigation Best Practices

Creating and Maintaining a Sustainable Hazard Mitigation Program

There is a growing challenge for communities of all sizes to regularly update, maintain, and implement their hazard mitigation plans. However, according to FEMA, over half of the nation's municipal and county mitigation plans have fallen out of compliance and many communities struggle to implement key mitigation initiatives. As a result, communities have wasted the initial investment to develop mitigation plans and find themselves spending the same effort, if not more, in developing a new, compliant plan and be eligible for pre- and post-disaster funding.

ISC's core preparedness philosophy takes a holistic approach to crisis management, prevention, and recovery. We craft an interconnected strategy of planning, training, and crisis response to ensure a community's needs are met in totality.

Our comprehensive and programmatic solutions are executed by knowledgeable staff who have developed plans for some of our Nation's largest communities. We are a team of experts who have implemented billions of dollars in pre- and post-disaster mitigation projects. Our innovations focus on meaningful mitigation processes and outcomes while easing the burden in developing, maintaining, and implementing your community's mitigation investments.

Click below to watch a video on ISC's hazard mitigation program management strategies.

Learn More About Our Work

MITIGATION CORE CAPABILITIES:

- Program Management and Support
- Risk and Disaster Resilience Assessment
- Community Resilience
- Long-Term Vulnerability Reduction
- Threats and Hazards Identification
- Comprehensive Emergency Preparedness and Planning Development
- Hazard Mitigation and Disaster Recovery
- Technical Support
- Committee and Workgroup Governance Development
- Community Outreach
- Grant Management and Procurement Support
- Community Technical Surveys & Analysis
- Mapping and Geospatial Analysis

Disaster News

Current FEMA Disaster Declarations: January 2026

Although we ended 2025 with few Presidential declarations, January 2026 was very active with twelve (12) emergency declarations. The sheer number of emergency declarations may provide a renewed focus on the Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDA) and ensuring that disaster declaration thresholds are exceeded. Has the federal government gone away from rubber-stamp declarations and back to operating in a manner that was intended: by conducting reliable PDAs to ensure damages exceed established thresholds?

On January 23 2026 South Carolina (EM-3632) and Virginia (EM-3631) received Presidential Emergency Declarations for Severe Winter Storms. These were followed by Georgia (EM-3642), Indiana (EM-3641), Mississippi (EM-3640), West Virginia, (EM-3639), Louisiana (EM-3638), North Carolina (Em-3637), Arkansas (EM-3636), Tennessee (EM-3635), Maryland (EM-3634), and Kentucky (EM-3633) also received Emergency Declarations for Severe Winter Storms

Case Study: Rapid Detailed Damage Assessments

When Hurricane Ian unleashed severe flooding across Florida Gulf Coast University's (FGCU) campus and surrounding community, launching swift and thorough damage documentation was crucial for recovery. Within 48 hours of storm onset, the university partnered with ISC to leverage their Odysseus EM365 Site Inspection Tool (SIT) for accelerated mobile assessments.

In under two weeks, comprehensive documentation aligned to FEMA reimbursement requirements for all university property damage from Ian had been gathered. Once online, all details instantly synced with ISC analytics dashboards. FGCU leadership gained vital visualizations of the complete damage picture to inform funding requests and prioritize repairs. Tight system integrations connected findings directly into recovery grant applications.

Click Here to Learn More about the EM365 SIT!

Industry Innovations

ODYSSEUS™

EM365

672% INCREASE IN PROGRAM EFFICIENCY

300X STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

99% REGULATORY & PROGRAM COMPLIANCE

54X RETURN ON INVESTMENT

97% PERFORMANCE RATING

The Industry's First Comprehensive Emergency and Disaster Program Management Software

Odysseus™ offers a suite of tools and systems designed, dedicated to the efficient management of comprehensive disaster and emergency management programs. The union of technological and programmatic features offers organizations an efficient and effective method to systematically design, develop, maintain, and continually improve all elements of a comprehensive emergency management program.

Click Here to Learn More About Our Innovative Technology

EM Innovations in Work

Odysseus™ EM-365
Statewide Comprehensive EM Program Management

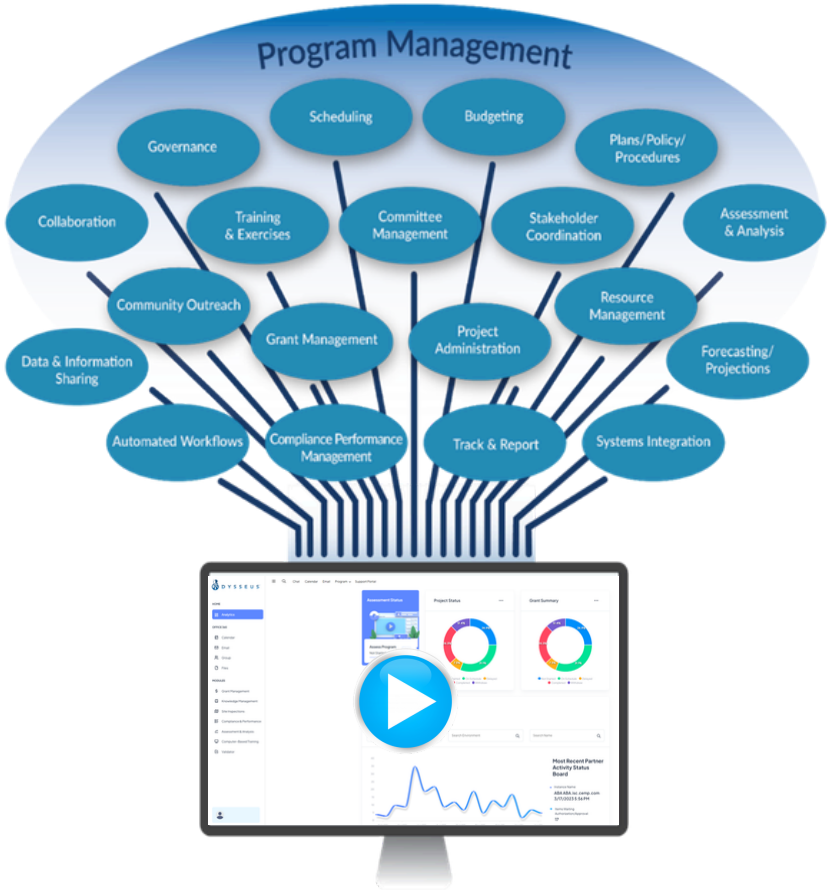
State Emergency Management Agencies

Although they provide much needed resources and capabilities during the time of a crisis or disaster, a State emergency management agency's (EMA) operational focus extends far beyond the response phase of an incident. The reality is that the success of a State EMA's response operation is intimately related to its ability to systematically track, guide, direct, monitor, manage, and administer all aspects of a comprehensive emergency management program across all state agency, county and municipal government partners, regional authorities, and other stakeholders.

Although the value is unmeasurable, many states think that coordinating a statewide comprehensive emergency management program would be a formidable task that would require significant resources. That's not true anymore.

Odysseus™ offers state emergency management agencies a software solution for managing a unified statewide comprehensive emergency management program. Odysseus'™ "system-of-systems" architecture gives state EMA's a force multiplier to manage EMA program requirements statewide.

Designed by our team of leading emergency managers and software technicians, Odysseus™ offers a unique State EMA program management platform. It is a program management tool and allows for the full integration of other incident management software programs.



ODYSSEUS™ IN WORK

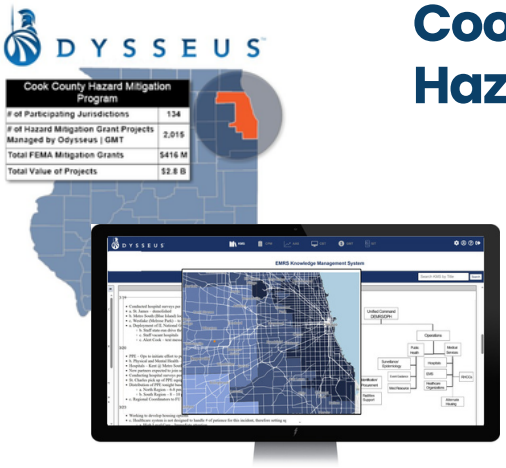
Hazard Mitigation Program Management
Elevate Your Community Disaster Resiliency

Odysseus Features for Hazard Mitigation Program Solutions

Features

- Track Plan Development & Update
- Create Efficiencies with Plan Maintenance
- Track In-Kind Match Effort Contributions
- Mitigation Committee Management Tools
- Assess Hazard Mitigation Opportunities
- Real Time Tracking of Mitigation Grant Funds
- Interactive Mapping & Hazard Modeling
- Streamline Multi-Jurisdictional Planning
- Mitigation Crosswalk Compliance Metrics
- Track Mitigation Plan Participation
- Manage & Track Progress of Community Mitigation Projects
- Train Staff on FEMA Mitigation Requirements and Drive Accountability
- Maximize Federal Funding Possibilities
- Identify Mitigation Funding Gaps
- Adaptable and Customizable to Meet Your Needs
- Increase Hazard Mitigation Program Efficiency

Case Studies



Cook County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

- 136 Participating Jurisdictions
- 230% Increase in HMP Participation
- 2,015 Mitigation Projects Identified
- $400+ Million in FEMA HMGP Grants
- $2.8+ Billion in Pre-Disaster Mitigation Actions
- 100% FEMA Compliant
- Completed in Less Than 5 Months

Click Here to Learn More About

Schedule a Demo

Building a More Resilient Future

INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS CONSULTING

Click Below to Learn How We Build a More Resilient Future

ABOUT US

Integrated Solutions Consulting is a professional services firm focused on developing and implementing comprehensive crisis and consequence management solutions. We are a team of innovative problem-solvers that combine experience and evidence-based knowledge to deliver practical, best practice results across multiple industries to make communities safer and more resilient

Top Supplier Performance Rating
dun & bradstreet
97.1%
Successful Performance

We help our clients by providing comprehensive emergency management consulting services that use data-driven research, sophisticated crisis modeling and seasoned consultants to help our clients manage unexpected emergency and disaster situations.

MARKETS WE SERVE

- Federal, State, and Local Governments
- Tribal Nations & Communities of Diversity & Inclusion
- Organizations & Corporations
- Hospitals & Healthcare
- Schools,Universities, & Education
- Critical Infrastructure
- Ports & Transportation
- Utilities
- Special Venues
- Churches & Community Civic Groups

Expertise: Preparedness

The Value of Preparedness

Recent events remind us that every community must make a continued investment in preparing for the next emergency or disaster. Empirical evidence has shown a direct correlation between the level of preparedness and the level of resiliency in a community. Specifically, the more prepared communities are, the greater their ability to effectively respond to and recover from disaster and minimize the impact of a disaster.

INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS CONSULTING

However, the most resilient communities go beyond simply developing a response plan that "checks the box" and supported by periodic training and scenario-based exercises. The stark reality is that our communities are becoming increasingly complex with intricate relationships and interdependencies between our social, built, and natural environments. These community conditions often intersect with our hazard risks, impacting a community for years to come.