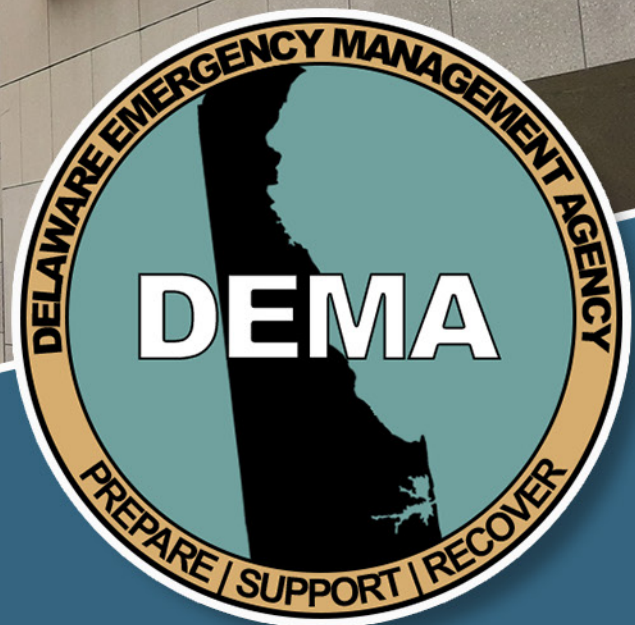


# Year in Review

2023



Prepare | Support | Recover



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## Mission:

The Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) is the lead agency for the support and coordination of emergency preparedness, training, response, recovery and mitigation to save lives, protect property, and reduce the impact of emergencies in Delaware.



DEMA Director A.J. Schall joined Governor John Carney and state and county officials after a tornado struck western Sussex County on April 1.

## From the Director

It is my pleasure to present the “2023 Year in Review,” which highlights key accomplishments by the Delaware Emergency Management Agency in the past year.

As part of its mission, DEMA continued to support county and local agencies in responding to major incidents: an April tornado in Sussex County, a July cyber incident in Kent County, and an August storm in New Castle County. Our staff also made substantial progress on several key initiatives, such as adoption of a new grant platform, a new tool to help efficiently track and administer funding across several major programs, including preparedness, mitigation, and recovery grants. Also, several major plans were updated and approved, including the Delaware Emergency Operations Plan, Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), and State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP), required for Delaware to receive federal funds. DEMA is also upgrading its State Emergency Operations Center with new AV technology, a GIS lab, and improvements to the training area and offices.

The Comprehensive School Safety Program also marked major milestones: new high-resolution school maps for rapid response by emergency officials and a new safety and wellness suite featuring the SAFE DE app, a crisis text line, integrated case management, and anonymous threat reporting.

“Several major plans were updated and approved, including the Delaware Emergency Operations Plan, Continuity of Operations Plan, and State Hazard Mitigation Plan.”

Another highlight was a successful full-scale active assailant exercise at the University of Delaware. The DEMA Training and Exercise section collaborated with state, county, and local agencies with the purpose of improving response and communication capabilities in the event of an actual incident.

DEMA’s Community Outreach team also continued its engagement on preparedness, launching a new “Know Your Zone” resource on the PrepareDE.org website, and partnering with the University of Delaware and Delaware Sea Grant on “DE-PLANS,” a one-stop hub for emergency planning information for older adults. We are incredibly excited to share the hard work and dedication of our team and look forward to continuing our work in 2024.

**A.J. Schall, Director**



# Response and Support

## April: Sussex County Tornado

On April 1 around 6 p.m., an EF-3 tornado cut a 14-mile path of destruction from Bridgeville to Ellendale in Sussex County. The storm caused one death from a collapsed house near Greenwood, the first from a tornado in Delaware since 1983 according to the National Weather Service. DelDOT's maintenance yard on Newton Road had extensive damage. DEMA helped the Sussex County EOC complete initial damage assessments and also worked with the Delaware State Police, Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Sussex County, and DelDOT on initial response. DEMA supported nonprofits including Delaware Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (DE VOAD), Red Cross, United Way, Milford Housing Authority, the Good Ole Boy Foundation, Cornerstone Community Foundation, and area churches to provide debris removal and other housing and food assistance.

## July: Kent County Cyber Incident

Kent County's computer network was the target of a ransomware attack on July 8 around 7 a.m. While there was no disruption of critical county services such as 911 emergency dispatch, routine services such as the website and phone system were down while systems were restored and the investigation continued. DEMA worked with the Delaware National Guard to provide technical support and planning staff services to assist Kent County in its recovery and restoration efforts.

## August: New Castle County Storm

Destructive straight-line winds from a severe storm on August 7 toppled trees and damaged over 50 homes in New Castle County, with several uninhabitable. Hard-hit areas near Newark included the Brookside and Cherokee Woods neighborhoods, which also had power outages due to downed trees. Tree damage and debris also occurred in North Wilmington. DEMA supported New Castle County's Office of Emergency Management and the DE VOAD, who provided volunteers and equipment for cleanup assistance and debris removal to underinsured residents and those with special needs.



An EF-3 tornado on April 1, 2023 caused severe damage to structures in many areas of Sussex County (above), including the DelDOT area 2 maintenance yard (below).



High winds from a severe August 7 storm caused outages and major damage in parts of New Castle County (below).







The Terrorism Preparedness Section ensures our state's readiness by strategizing, managing resources, and partnering with other agencies.



Homeland Security Grant Program funds helped purchase boats and provide training for first responders.

# Terrorism Preparedness

## Grant Programs

The **Homeland Security Grant Program** (HSGP) aims to enhance the capability to prevent, prepare for, protect against, and respond to acts of terrorism and other threats. HSGP provides resources to implement the National Preparedness System and to strengthen community preparedness and resilience.

The **Nonprofit Security Grant Program** (NSGP) provides grant funding for physical and cybersecurity enhancements and related activities to nonprofits at high risk of terrorist or other extremist attack. NSGP seeks to integrate nonprofit preparedness activities with broader state and local preparedness efforts.

The **State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program** (SLCGP) helps state, local governments, and rural areas manage and address cybersecurity risks and threats to information systems, and improve security of critical infrastructure and resilience of services.

## Program Highlights

### ■ Biannual Plan Reviews and Updates

Completed biannual review and update of the DEMA Continuity of Operations Plan with the Dept. of Technology and Information and the Delaware National Guard. Also completed biannual review and update of the Delaware Emergency Operations Plan with stakeholders.

### ■ New Grant Management Suite

Completed cloud-based grant management system build and user testing for HSGP.

### ■ Annual THIRA and SPR Updated

Completed annual review and update of Threat Hazard Identification Risk Assessment (THIRA) and Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR).



### Homeland Security Grant Program

**\$22.6 million**

Managed \$22,662,500 in HSGP funds across 16 disciplines and 340 projects.  
Spent \$4,325,852 in 2023.



### Nonprofit Security Grant Program

**\$5.9 million**

Managed \$5,914,382 in NSGP funding for 51 nonprofits and 63 projects.



### State and Local Cybersecurity Grants

**\$6.7 million**

Managed \$6,771,629 in SLCGP funds for state, local, and rural subrecipients.  
Spent \$171,844 in 2023.



# Recovery and Mitigation

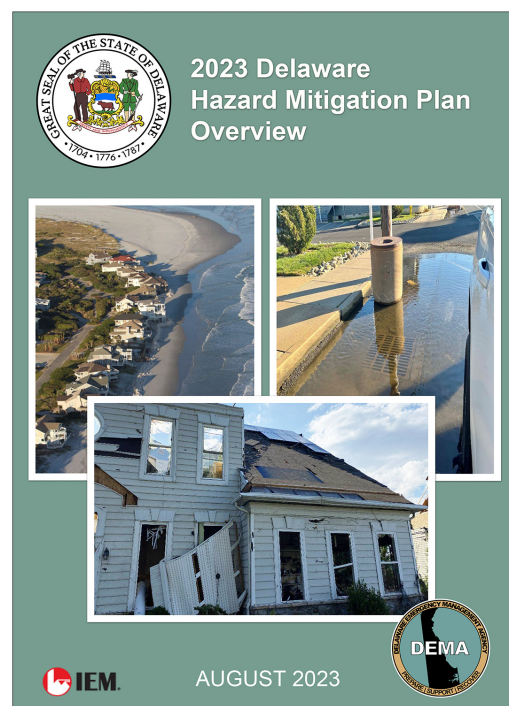


DEMA's **Recovery and Mitigation Section** focuses on planning, mitigating, and recovering from all naturally occurring hazards and events such as floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, and long-term climate events such as coastal erosion. In addition to FEMA Public Assistance funds for declared disasters, it also oversees three major grant programs:

The **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program** (HMGP) assists eligible applicants implement long-term hazard mitigation planning and projects: home elevations, acquiring hazard-prone properties, flood protection, retrofits, and slope stabilizations. HMGP is available after a federal disaster declaration only.

**Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Grants** (BRIC) help eligible applicants implement pre-disaster natural hazard mitigation projects with grants for planning and projects that mitigate future damage before disaster strikes. The primary focus of BRIC is on community-wide projects and green infrastructure.

The **Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program** (FMA) is a competitive program that provides funding for eligible projects that reduce or eliminate repetitive flood damage to buildings insured by the National Flood Insurance Program. For FMA grants, as well as HMGP and BRIC, projects must be submitted through eligible sub-applicants like state and local governments.



## New Hazard Mitigation Plan Approved

FEMA Region III approved Delaware's 2023-2028 Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) in August. The HMP outlines many of the risks and vulnerabilities facing Delawareans, but also offers recommendations for protecting and improving resilience. By adopting the HMP, Delaware communities can now receive certain types of FEMA assistance. The plan was developed by the State Hazard Mitigation Council, comprised of state agencies, the University of Delaware, and county and municipal representatives. One new goal in the plan is to evaluate hazards for impacts to vulnerable populations.



DEMA co-hosted the "2023 NFIP/SHMO Conference" for floodplain managers and state hazard mitigation officers in Rehoboth Beach. Site visits highlighted possible mitigation strategies, such as flood barriers (above) to reduce risk.



## Recovery Highlights

### ■ Projects in Grant Development

In August, 50 attendees from government, University of Delaware, FEMA, DNREC, The Nature Conservancy, and consultants met to work on planning cooperative projects.

### ■ 2023 NFIP/SHMO Conference

DEMA co-hosted the **FEMA Region 3 (MD, PA, VA, WV) NFIP/SHMO Conference** for National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) managers and state hazard mitigation officers (SHMO) in Rehoboth Beach in November. The event featured workshops, presentations, and site visits to explore ways to lower risks and increase resilience.

## Mitigation Roundtable in Sussex County



Local, state, and federal officials held a roundtable on mitigation planning and recovery at the Sussex County EOC on July 31, 2023. Pictured (left to right) are Sussex County Administrator Todd F. Lawson, FEMA Region 3 Administrator MaryAnn Tierney, FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell, U.S. Sen. Thomas Carper, DEMA Director A.J. Schall, and Sussex EOC Director Joseph Thomas.

*(Photo by Chip Guy, Sussex County)*

## Technological Hazards



The Technological Hazards Section oversees the Radiological Emergency Preparedness Program and State Emergency Response Commission.

### State Emergency Response Commission

**Delaware's State Emergency Response Commission (SERC)**, created as a result of the federal Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) of 1986, is comprised of representatives from state and local government organizations and industry. The primary focus of the SERC is to enhance state and local emergency response and preparedness capabilities through better coordination and planning.

### Hazardous Materials Workshop

In May, the 16th Hazardous Materials Workshop was held at the Delaware State Fire School. This training provides knowledge and skills to fire service, EMS, law enforcement, hazmat teams, industrial brigades, hospital DECON personnel, chemical and poultry industry staff, and safety and health workers.



**Hazardous materials training for emergency responders.**

*(Photos courtesy of the Delaware State Fire School)*



# Radiological Preparedness



The Radiological Preparedness Program (REP) held two potassium iodide (KI) events, four quarterly siren tests, four quarterly drills, and a successful medical services exercise.



Director A.J. Schall and Atlantic Apothecary pharmacist Kevin Musto. About 250 people attended the potassium iodide distribution event in Middletown in April 2023.



DEMA completed a FEMA-graded medical exercise with Christiana Care, Port Penn Fire Company, New Castle Co. Paramedics, and N.C. Office of Emergency Management.



PSEG and DEMA honored the annual school calendar art winners at an awards ceremony in Townsend on June 1.

## Radiological Drills

DEMA's REP program conducts four quarterly drills per year to test response and warning procedures for the Salem/Hope Creek Nuclear Stations in New Jersey. Participants included N.J. State Police and Office of Emergency Management, Delaware State Police, DNREC, and state agencies. Drills were conducted on March 8, May 10, August 17, and December 20 to validate the Radiological Emergency Response Plan.

## Emergency Siren Tests

With the Delaware State Police and PSEG, DEMA conducted quarterly siren tests of the Salem/Hope Creek Nuclear Generating Stations Alert and Notification system on January 3, April 4, July 5, and October 3. The 37 sirens within 10 miles of the plants are activated for three to five minutes followed by emergency alert system messages on radio.

## Potassium Iodide Distribution Events

Twice a year, the Delaware Emergency Management Agency and Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) distribute free potassium iodide (KI) tablets to those who live or work within 10 miles of the Salem/Hope Creek Nuclear Generating Stations (also known as the Emergency Planning Zone or EPZ). Events were held in Middletown on April 20 and Townsend on October 5.

## Medical Services Exercise

New Castle County Office of Emergency Management, New Castle County Paramedics, Port Penn Fire Company, Christiana Care Health System, and DEMA conducted a successful FEMA Radiological Medical Service Exercise from October 16 to 18. The goal is to effectively respond to a medical emergency involving radiation while observing decontamination protocols.

## PSEG Calendar Art Contest

DEMA and PSEG sponsor an annual calendar art contest for Delaware schools in the EPZ. The theme was "Our Environment, Our World: Protecting Planet Earth." A total of 12 winners were honored at an awards ceremony in Townsend on June 1.



# Comprehensive School Safety

## Program Overview

The Comprehensive School Safety Program (CSSP) was created by the Omnibus School Safety Act. CSSP enhances safety in all of Delaware's public and charter schools by developing emergency plans, conducting annual tabletop and lockdown drills, and promoting a coordinated approach between emergency responders, educators, and support agencies in a critical incident.

## Standard Response Method and Standard Reunification Training

DEMA partnered with I Love U Guys Foundation to bring four trainings to Delaware with a goal of creating a Statewide Response and Reunification Method for schools, first responders, and supporting agencies. The framework uses a common language of "Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate, and Shelter" to respond to any type of threat, man-made or natural. Delaware is among the first states to adopt both this training and response method statewide. District and charter teams can now support one another in a crisis, with more than 300 train-the-trainers in the state, and participation from all 19 districts and 22 of 24 charter schools.

## New School Safety and Wellness Suite

CSSP began the implementation of a new Comprehensive Safety and Wellness Suite in 2023, with more than 85,000 of the state's 140,000 students now onboarded. The suite incorporates a new integrated three-part approach to alert administrators of serious situations while giving students necessary tools and resources to deter a situation from escalating. The first part is SAFE DE, an anonymous reporting app that includes crisis texting, mental health education, and other resources. The second component of the suite encompasses threat assessment and suicide risk assessment models combined with staff training. The third piece is a case management system that stores and tracks critical information during a student's entire K-12 education to ensure appropriate services are provided.



Delaware's Comprehensive School Safety Team (from left) Nicole Shuler-Geer, Doug Scheer, and Deputy Director Chris Murtha at Middletown High School in August to launch the new Comprehensive School Safety and Wellness Suite.

## School Safety Highlights

### ■ New School Safety Plan Adopted

For the first time since its inception, the Delaware school safety plan was revised through a cooperative process with schools to review and adopt it with clear, concise language. The comprehensive plan includes elements from the FEMA EOP, sections from the previous plan, and updated annexes that include the Reunification Process in which schools have been trained, as well as the Standard Response Protocol for all hazards.

### ■ Digital Map Project Completed

Delaware was the first state to complete high-resolution composite maps of critical infrastructure for all of its 238 schools. Digital floor plans and aerial campus maps were created and shared with state and county emergency officials, Delaware State Police, and local fire and police responders.



HOLD



SECURE



LOCKDOWN



EVACUATE



SHELTER

# Training and Exercise



DEMA trained 2,533 people through 85 classes and 873 personnel participated in 23 exercises.

The Training and Exercise Section prepares the all-hazard response community by providing training, conducting exercises, and coordinating National Incident Management System compliance to save lives and reduce the impact of emergencies.



Staff learned about firefighting at the Fire School.

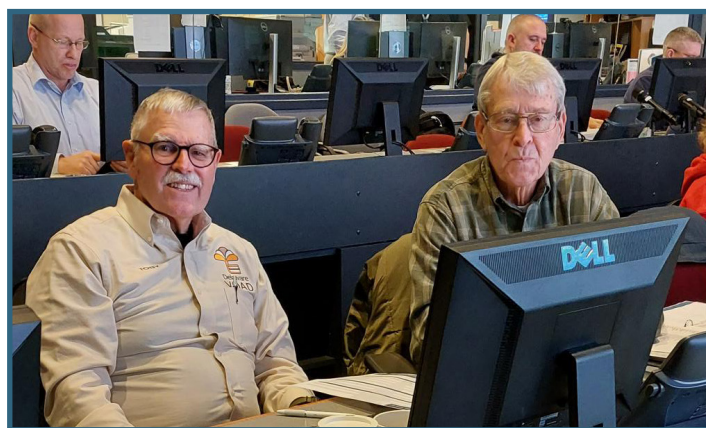


NCC Paramedics at the UD active shooter drill in August.

(Photo by New Castle County Paramedics)

## Full Scale Active Assailant Drill at UD

In August, DEMA conducted a multi-day full-scale active assailant drill at the University of Delaware with state, county, and local agencies, including New Castle County Office of Emergency Management, City of Newark and U.D. Police Departments, Aetna Hose, Hook and Ladder Co., New Castle County Paramedics, Delaware State Fire School, and student and community volunteers.



DE VOAD's Toby French and Marty Brett at the State EOC.

## Full Scale Winter Storm ESC Exercise

In December, DEMA conducted a full-scale winter storm exercise with Emergency Support Coordinators that simulated a severe snow event with low temperatures, power outages, and a statewide driving ban. Participants included DNREC Climate and Energy Group, Delmarva Power, DHSS Office of Preparedness, and the DE VOAD.

## Training Section Highlights

### ■ ICS, WebEOC, Alert Training

DEMA continued Incident Command System (ICS), WebEOC, and RAVE Alert training.

### ■ Integrated Preparedness Workshop

The annual Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop was held in December with county emergency agencies, the Delaware National Guard, and DHSS Office of Preparedness.

### ■ Cybersecurity Training with DTI

DEMA funded statewide cybersecurity training through DTI to protect critical infrastructure.

### ■ Integrated Warning Team Workshop

DEMA, NWS Mt. Holly, and U.D.'s Climate Office hosted an all-day training in September on climate trends, forecast warnings, and alerts.



# Community Outreach

The Community Outreach Section offers disaster preparedness and education to Delaware citizens through community events, news releases, websites, and social media.

## Outreach Program Overview

DEMA's Community Outreach Section continued to support events such as the LIFE Conference, Delaware State Fair, and Blue Rocks Emergency Preparedness Night, partnering with the City of Wilmington, New Castle County Office of Emergency Management, RespondDE, and the DHSS Office of Preparedness. Overall, staff supported 12 events that reached more than 7,900 people, including Hartly Super Science Day, Coast Day, Delaware City Fire Co. Open House, and two KI distribution events for the radiological program.



**7,900** attended  
community events



DEMA supported a weekend CERT Basic Training session held at the Angola Beach Estates community in Lewes.

## Community Emergency Response Team

DEMA continued to support the national Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program, with 93 participants trained statewide. DEMA offered two basic classes and also partnered with the New Castle County Office of Emergency Management for three classes at Appoquinimink and Middletown High Schools, as well as the Delaware Resilience Hub in Wilmington.



Kayla Watson and John Petersen at Coast Day in Lewes.

## New "Know Your Zone" and "DE-PLANS"

DEMA launched its "Know Your Zone" locator in 2023. Delaware's evacuation zones (A, B, C or D) represent low-lying areas prone to flooding and storm surge. In an emergency, officials might issue evacuation orders for these areas and knowing the zone beforehand gives specific routes and guidance to reduce unnecessary travel and congestion for quicker, safer movement. Another resource started in 2023 is the "DE-PLANS" website, developed in partnership with the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Policy and Delaware Sea Grant that provides older adults a one-stop hub for emergency planning and aging in place information.

 **PrepareDE.org**



Deputy Director Paige Fitzgerald hosted visitors from the Delaware Technical Community College's Criminal Justice or Homeland Security/Emergency Management program.



# Logistics

In both daily operations and emergencies, Logistics ensures resources are procured in an efficient, economical manner.



DEMA's Lester Hobbs (at left) attended the State Operations and Logistics Symposium at FEMA Region 3 in Philadelphia.

## Logistics Section Overview

The Logistics Section fulfills a critical role by ensuring overall readiness and response capabilities. In 2023, it supported DEMA's Sussex County tornado response, provided a planner for the Kent County cyber incident, helped review the Debris Management Plan, conducted air and ingestion field team training for the Delaware National Guard, and supported a Smyrna REP Reception Center exercise. Staff conducted weekly, monthly, and quarterly 800 MHz communication tests and vehicle checks, and also supported many programs, including the State Fair and potassium iodide distribution events.

## Logistics Section Highlights

### Continuity of Operations Exercise

Logistics ensured a successful Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) tabletop exercise in May at its alternate facility in New Castle County, which tested its ability to continue critical services if forced to relocate.

### Radiological Program Support

DEMA's Logistics certified all radiological testing equipment at the New Jersey Calibration Lab, inventoried all siren warning signs, and supported quarterly REP drills and siren tests. Staff also input 66 locations and 2,000 equipment items into RadResponder, a tool that records, shares, and aggregates large amounts of data in a cloud system.



Adam Davis is shown checking the status of equipment and supplies in one of the DEMA emergency response trailers.



Nikki Testa of DEMA assisted multiple agencies on a controlled burn for habitat at Delaware Wild Lands in Townsend.



# Information Technology

Many of the essential operational and communication capabilities that support DEMA's mission to provide effective response and recovery services depend to a large extent on the security and functionality of specialized technology systems and software. In 2023, several major initiatives were begun or completed despite the IT Section consisting of one full-time staff member for many months of the year. Noteworthy projects include a new, high-resolution, wide-format screen in the State Emergency Operations Center to allow command, operations, logistics, and planning staff to monitor and display multiple dashboards of critical information, as well as new Crestron switches in conference rooms and other areas to allow staff to switch to multiple inputs from other functional teams.

Cybersecurity remains a critical priority, and a major focus area in 2023 was a comprehensive review and vulnerability assessment of DEMA's current systems and servers. Thanks to the efforts of IT staff, critical vulnerabilities were reduced by 80 percent.

DEMA installed new Crestron boxes in conference rooms and other areas to allow for multiple display feeds during trainings and activations (right). The Emergency Operations Center now features a high-resolution wide screen (below).

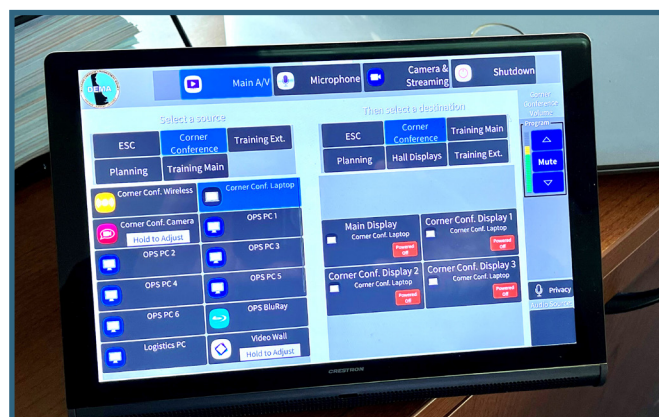
## Information Technology Highlights

### Equipment and Hardware Support

DEMA's IT Section maintained 100 desktops, 40 laptops, and more than 12 servers as a team of one. This ongoing support was provided at the same time that a new large visual display screen was installed in the EOC.

### COOP Site Technology Upgrades

DEMA's IT staff installed new switches at its alternate facility in New Castle County to make COOP more efficient. These upgrades will allow for a smoother transition of operations and provide quicker access to data and files in the event that DEMA needs to relocate to another operational site.



DEMA hosted the 436th Mission Support Group and the 512th MSG from Dover Air Force Base for an immersion event to explore opportunities for partnership.

Director A.J. Schall met with 512th Mission Support Group Commander Col. Crystal Beach and 436th MSG Commander Col. Jason Holcomb.

# Fiscal

DEMA's Fiscal Section (from left):

Accounting Technician William Schaefer, Senior Accountant Shirley Lee, Accountant Nicole Jenkins, Fiscal Manager Frances Cordell, Accountant Stacy Wagner, and Accountant Cindy Carney.



## Calendar Year 2023 Grant Expenditures

Fund Type	Expenditures
General Fund	\$717,596.85
American Rescue Plan (ARPA) Subgrant	\$944,744.28
Emergency Management Preparedness Grant (EMPG)	\$3,191,002.49
EMPG-S / American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)	\$587,673.28
Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP)	\$4,684,041.37
Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP)	\$843,633.31
Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) / Infrastructure (BRIC)	\$310,835.70
Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program (FMA)	\$264,067.90
State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP)	\$3,198.83
Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP)	\$161,772.23
Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) 4526 COVID	\$148,478.11
Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) 4566 Isaias	\$28,423.54
Public Assistance (PA) 4526 COVID	\$9,756,547.90
Public Assistance (PA) 4566 TS Isaias	\$544,946.36
Public Assistance (PA) 4627 TD Ida	\$1,284,528.27
State Contingencies Fund	\$18,750.00
Resilience Fund	\$199,868.96
School Safety	\$915,981.22
Local Emergency Planning Committee (salary only)	\$66,321.99
Strategic Opportunity Fund for Adaptation (SOFA)	\$7,573.34
Radiological Emergency Preparedness (REP)	\$1,275,653.55
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$25,955,639.48</b>

In 2023, DEMA's Fiscal Section managed 28 active federal grants across nine grant programs in addition to the radiological grant, an ARPA subgrant, state funds for school safety, local emergency planning committees, and emergency response funds. With only six full-time staff, the section managed budgets of \$360 million and expenditures of \$25 million. Also in 2023, Finance Manager Frances Cordell earned her accreditation as a Certified Government Financial Manager®.



### Financial Transactions

Total Vouchers Processed	1,551
P-Card Transaction Lines	1,073
Total Subgrant Payments	345

### Subgrant Payment Tracker

State Payments	\$1,513,433.61
Local/PNP Payments	\$11,900,901.71
REP Payments	\$103,885.35
Federal Payments	\$13,310,449.97



# Awards and Acknowledgments



Toby French, chair of the Delaware Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (DE VOAD), met with Director A.J. Schall at the annual DE-MD VOAD meeting held in Ocean City, Maryland.



Appoquinimink School District recognized the Delaware Comprehensive School Safety Program at its June 2023 monthly board meeting. Pictured (from left) are: Lead Constable Jeff Hale, Safety Director Tom Poehlmann, DEMA School Safety Planners Doug Scheer and Nicole Shuler-Geer, Board President Michelle Wall, and Superintendent Dr. Matt Burrows.

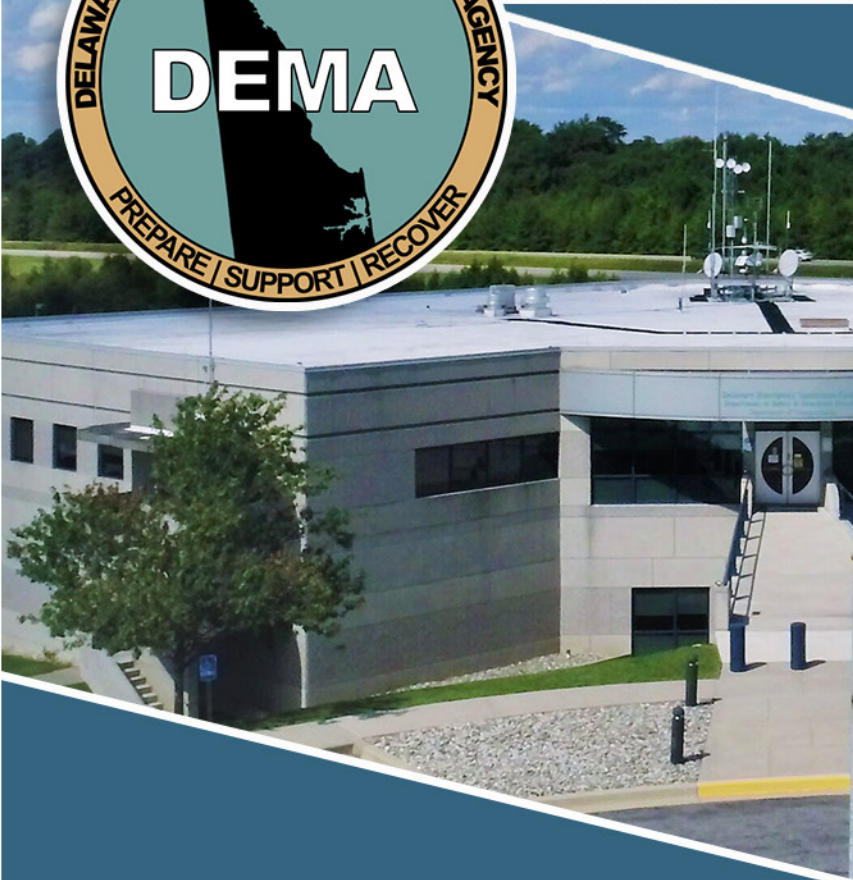


Director A.J. Schall recognized Finance Section Manager Frances Cordell, who achieved the prestigious Certified Government Financial Manager® certification in 2023.



Director A.J. Schall honored accountant Valerie Pryor upon her retirement from DEMA after 20 years of state service.





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