



**Homeland Security  
and Emergency Services**

# 2022 Public Outreach Report

**Prepared by the  
New York State  
Division of Homeland Security  
and Emergency Services**



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## **INTRODUCTION**

New York's threat landscape is one of the most diverse and challenging in the United States. New York City's significant population and its critical role in the nation's economy makes it a target for terrorists both foreign and domestic, and with the impacts of climate change New York has endured more frequent and more severe threats from extreme weather in recent years. In the last year alone, New Yorkers have lived through the effects of hurricanes, tornadoes, historic snowstorms, severe thunderstorms and significant ice storms resulting in widespread power outages.

Since 1953, New York State has received 78 FEMA Major Disaster Declarations. This number is the fourth highest in the nation and far exceeds the national average of 50 per state. New York's most recent Major Disaster Declaration was in September 2021 for Hurricane Ida and in November 2022, the State secured an Emergency Declaration for 11 counties impacted by a historic snowstorm that brought more than six feet of snow over the course of three days to parts to the Buffalo area and more than five feet in areas of the North Country region.

Created in 2010, the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services' is the state agency responsible for leadership, coordination, and support to prevent, protect against, prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate disasters and other emergencies. The Division accomplishes this core mission through its directorates and several cross-cutting support units including Counter Terrorism, Emergency Management, Fire Prevention and Control, Interoperable & Emergency Communications, Disaster Recovery, and Administration & Finance, which coordinate the response of State agencies in support of local government. The women and men of DHSES are dedicated to working closely on a daily basis with all levels of government, the private sector, and volunteer organizations to improve the readiness and response capabilities of communities throughout the Empire State.

The Division recognizes it is vital for state and local governments to put forth effective emergency response plans and operations. However, it is equally important for these entities to educate the general public so they can understand the risks and equip themselves with the information they need to successfully prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

Therefore, in accordance with Executive Law § 709(7), the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services presents this annual report to the Governor and Legislature to detail the Division's outreach efforts to businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and the public for the 2022 calendar year.

## **DISASTER RECOVERY OUTREACH**

In 2022, the Division's Disaster Recovery group worked closely with local governments, counties, State agencies and Tribal Nations within New York on numerous missions. Throughout the year, the Division's Disaster Recovery group operated three Major Disaster Joint Field Offices (JFO) and, following the Emergency Declaration for the Mid-November Snowstorm, immediately began working with local governments in multiple regions to recover. The group also continued its work on the COVID-19 pandemic and presented a considerable amount of public outreach on the matter.

### **Public Assistance (PA)**

#### *Applicant Trainings*

In November 2022, the Public Assistance Section responded to the November snowstorm and conducted public outreach to local governments to educate and assist with their initial damage assessments, as well as to define eligibility criteria for federal support. The Public Assistance team prepared and conducted a briefing for county-level officials to advise on these requirements and conducted a briefing for all potential applicants in the 11 counties included in the Emergency Declaration.

#### *DR 4480 (COVID-19)*

The Declared Disaster for the COVID-19 pandemic on March 20, 2020, is still ongoing. The Public Assistance team conducted 70 virtual Applicants Briefings with over 16,000 attendees. Additional presentations continue to be held in conjunction with FEMA Region 2 to provide information regarding some of the yet undefined requirements and work eligibility included in the Medical Care Interim Policy. In June of 2022, FEMA announced that the 100% Federal Share period would be closed as of July 2, 2022, and that all work beginning in July 2022 would have a 90% Federal Share. FEMA also announced a December 31, 2022, deadline for the submission of all projects containing work completed prior to July 2, 2022. The Public Assistance Section began conducting briefings and outreach efforts to all the applicants to share this news. Outreach efforts also included messaging to all DR 4480 applicants via the DHSES Grants Portal. Disaster Recovery also conducted webinars on June 28 and October 3 for hospitals, a webinar on September 1 for the deadline policy and one on September 21 to cover the change in the small project threshold.

Nearly 2,100 governmental or private not for profit (PNP) applicants have submitted a Request for Public Assistance to FEMA. The PA field unit continues to provide direct outreach to more than 2,000 approved applicants on critical topics as issues and challenges arise. Additionally, Disaster Recovery's Appeals Team continues to perform outreach to assist several hundred applicants who have decided to appeal FEMA decisions.

Seventeen disaster-wide notifications in the grants portal in 2022 advised applicants of the personnel transition in the Disaster Assistance Manager position for DR 4480; President Biden's extension of the 100 percent federal cost share period; the public comment period for proposed COVID-19 deadlines; the transition from the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) to Unique Employer Identity numbers; scheduling of FEMA's

webinars on COVID-19 deadlines; changes in the large project threshold and appeal submission process; the opportunity to participate in FEMA's mitigation survey; the scheduling of FEMA's webinar on small project policy, and multiple reminders to comply with the year-end deadline for submitting 100% federal cost share projects.

*DR 4567 (Tropical Storm Isaias)*

DR-4567 was declared on October 2, 2020. While the FEMA/DHSES Joint Field Office closed, in 2022, Disaster Recovery continued outreach to applicants. Additionally, Disaster Recovery issued disaster-wide notifications in the grants portal in 2022 to advise applicants of several policy changes including the transition from DUNS numbers to Unique Employer Identity numbers; changes in the large project threshold and appeal submission process; the opportunity to participate in FEMA's mitigation survey, and the scheduling of FEMA's webinar on small project policy.

*DR 4615 (Remnants of Hurricane Ida)*

The remnants of Hurricane Ida caused devastating damages in New York State between September 1-3, 2021, in Bronx, Dutchess, Kings, Nassau, New York, Orange, Putnam, Queens, Richmond, Suffolk, Sullivan, and Westchester counties. The JFO for this disaster remained open in 2022. The Public Assistance team continues to reach out and assist applicants with their projects and advocate with FEMA on their behalf. Disaster-wide notifications in the grants portal in 2022 advised applicants of the blanket time extension for Emergency Work granted by DHSES; the transition from DUNS numbers to Unique Employer Identity numbers; changes in the large project threshold and appeal submission process; the opportunity to participate in FEMA's mitigation survey, and the scheduling of FEMA's webinar on small project policy.

*DR 4625 (Remnants of Tropical Storm Fred)*

DR 4625 was declared on October 8, 2021, for Allegany, Cayuga, Cortland, Lewis, Oneida, Onondaga, Steuben, Tioga, and Yates counties. The JFO remains open for this disaster and the Public Assistance Team continues to provide guidance and assistance to applicants in all these counties. Disaster-wide notifications in the grants portal in 2022 advised applicants of the blanket time extension for Emergency Work granted by DHSES; the transition from DUNS numbers to Unique Employer Identity numbers; changes in the large project threshold and appeal submission process; the opportunity to participate in FEMA's mitigation survey, and the scheduling of FEMA's webinar on small project policy.

**Individual Assistance (IA)**

*COVID-19 Response/Recovery Efforts*

Disaster Recovery's Individual Assistance (IA) team continued to collaborate with county officials and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to fulfill requests received in support of COVID-19 response and recovery. Examples of requests include COVID test kits, masks and gloves. Additionally, IA team members partnered with other state agencies in support of the Ad Hoc Feeding Workgroup. This group, led by the Anti-Hunger Policy Coordinator and the Department of Health, brought partners together to collaborate on food insecurity and support across the state. This group continues to meet monthly to discuss ongoing efforts.

### *Small Business Administration Outreach Efforts*

As of December, IA conducted four Preliminary Damage Assessments in 2022. These assessments were completed in conjunction with a representative from the Small Business Administration (SBA) and each respective county in response to an apartment building fire in Ogdensburg (St. Lawrence County); the tornado in Wyoming County; flooding in Jay (Essex County), and the ice storm in Ulster County. The IA team is also working with county emergency managers in response to the record setting lake effect snowstorm that impacted Western N.Y., in November. IA will continue to support all county requests for SBA assessments if needed.

### *Additional Training Outreach Efforts*

After the impacts of Ida in 2021, IA developed an Individual Assistance Overview training. IA has delivered this training to four of the five OEM regions and their County Emergency Managers. This training focuses on what the state IA team does, what is FEMA IA (programs available, how it's requested, Preliminary Damage Assessments), and what the Small Business Administration is (programs available, how it's requested and Preliminary Damage Assessments). The goal for this training in 2023 will focus on providing it to additional county officials, local elected officials including local mayors, and County Emergency Managers.

### **Hazard Mitigation (HM)**

The Division formed a Special Projects team within its Disaster Recovery unit to prioritize outreach and technical assistance to better align outreach efforts and prioritize disadvantaged communities during the subapplication process for the three disaster declarations under FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance programs: DR-4480, DR-4615 and DR-4625 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP).

The Special Projects Outreach Team provided regular and extensive information to the counties, municipalities, and private not-for-profits across New York State in 2022 to build knowledge about the available funding under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. The team remained highly focused on outreach to disadvantaged communities, as defined by the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI).

Below is a summary table of outreach:

<b>Special Project Outreach Activities January – April 2022</b>	
Outreach to Cities, Towns, Villages, Counties and Not for Profits	490
Individual Technical Assistance	134
Webinars: Statewide and Regional	23
Webinar Participants	1100
Email Blasts: Estimated Numbers of Individuals Reached	5100

HM focused its outreach efforts on FEMA's FY2022 Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) programs. HM supported subapplicants and subapplication development by conducting webinars and scheduled weekly Q&A sessions during the open application period. These sessions were well

attended and provided ample opportunity to discuss project eligibility and the subapplication process. The group Q&A format reduced the number of duplicate questions and encouraged further discussions among the attendees. During these meetings, HM outlined the support available and potential alternate acceptable proofs that could be provided to FEMA for their consideration to be classified as a disadvantaged community. Mitigation staff also continued to provide project management outreach and assistance to previous years' HMGP, PDM, BRIC and FMA subrecipients as well as offered additional support relative to cost increases, time extensions and appeals.

Planning staff facilitated and/or participated in virtual meetings that brought together federal, state, local, nonprofit, and academic partners to accomplish risk assessment, mitigation strategy development, hazard mitigation plan development, and other hazard mitigation related planning activities with dozens of counties across the state. Planning staff began a new routine outreach strategy statewide through Annual Plan Letters (APLs). APLs are sent to each county near the anniversary of the plan approval to provide support and guidance in implementing and maintaining their plan throughout the five-year lifecycle.

Planning staff continued their outreach program to support annual local hazard mitigation plan maintenance and eligibility for hazard mitigation grant programs. Additionally, staff continued to distribute guidance, in partnership with NYSDEC, to locals outlining how to incorporate dam risk assessment and dam-related mitigation strategies into their hazard mitigation plans in response to FEMA's new funding opportunity -- the High Hazard Potential Dam (HHPD) grant program. To be eligible, a local government as subrecipient must have in place a FEMA-approved local hazard mitigation plan that includes all dam risks and complies with the Stafford Act.

## **PUBLIC FACING COMMUNICATIONS**

The Division's Public Information Office is responsible for all public-facing communications and media interaction for the agency. This includes responding to inquiries from local, regional and national media outlets and proactively promoting the Division's programs and initiatives, as well as communicating critical safety and preparedness information before, during and after emergencies. The Office promotes these key messages through mediums such as press releases, interviews, media briefings, social media including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, as well as the Division's website. In December 2022, the Division hired a Digital Media and Marketing Manager to boost the agency's messaging capabilities through digital mediums for 2023 and beyond.

### *Media Interactions*

The Division's Public Information office either directly produced or contributed to more than 70 news releases issued by New York State or DHSES in 2022. These news releases covered a variety of topics, including weather-related safety and preparedness warnings; millions of dollars in state grant awards to localities to support law enforcement and emergency response operations; the availability of federal funding for New York residents and communities recovering from various disasters and emergencies. News releases also announced the launch of the New York Joint Security Operations Center; the resumption of Citizen Preparedness training; the development of Threat Assessment Teams to mitigate targeted violence in the wake of the Buffalo attack, and the addition of 11 names to the New York State Fallen Firefighter Memorial.

The Division's executive staff also routine hosted or participated in numerous press conferences and interview opportunities to promote announcements, as well as disseminate real-time response and recovery information before, during and after emergencies.

Topics included actions related to the State's response to the COVID-19 pandemic; preparations, asset deployments and safety information before, during, and after extreme weather events (ex: March's historic Ice Storm in Ulster County and November's historic Snow Storm in Erie County); training exercises for law enforcement, firefighters and first responders at the State Preparedness Training Center and State Academy of Fire Science; the formation of Threat Assessment Teams and the Office of Counter Terrorism's new Domestic Terrorism Prevention Unit; interviews on the importance of fire prevention to reduce likelihood of home fires; the graduation of law enforcement, firefighters and State Fire Protection Specialists from state-offered training and certification courses, and the addition of 11 names to the New York State Fallen Firefighter Memorial.

Additionally, the state's media outlets are often interested in information about programs, operations and initiatives outside of what is proactively announced in press releases. The Public Information Office works with the appropriate subject matter experts within the Division to provide a thorough and timely response to all questions received.



In 2022, routine media inquiries focused on status and results of fire investigations conducted by the State Office Fire Prevention and Control; process questions related to obtaining federal funding following a disaster; questions related to federal and state grants administered by DHSES; status and funding updates connected to past disasters and emergencies, and the State's response to the Buffalo mass shooting incident including Governor Hochul's Executive Order 18 and its creation of the Office of Counter Terrorism's new Domestic Terrorism Prevention Unit.

### *Social Media*

The Division's Twitter account had nearly 15,000 followers at the end of 2022, up four percent compared to 2021. Public Information Officers posted new content or retweeted content from other sources nearly 2,200 times throughout the course of the 2022, up slightly from 2021. The Division's 2022 Twitter activity resulted in over 26,000 engagements with followers (gaining retweets and likes) and more than 3,700 post link clicks where a user clicks on a link embedded in a DHSES tweet.

The Division has 24,000 Facebook followers at the end of 2022, up from 22,000 followers at the end of 2021. The Division's PIO team increased its number of Facebook engagements by 15 percent in 2022 versus 2021. The Division's Instagram account has nearly 2,300 followers at the end of 2022, up 17 percent from 2021. Total impressions and engagements on Instagram increased strongly over 2021.

Looking ahead to 2023, the Division recently hired a Digital Media and Marketing Manager, who reports to the Director of Communications, focused on increasing awareness of the Division's operations and engaging New Yorkers through digital platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, as well as help manage the Division's website and digital platforms.

### *Website*

The Division's website received more than 930,000 page views in 2022, up from 711,000 page views in 2021. The pages most visited in 2022 were related to the Office of Fire Prevention and Control's training; the Academy of Fire Science; the State Preparedness Training Center; DHSES training, and the Office of Emergency Management.

Additionally, the Division launched a Public Service Announcement campaign during the height of hurricane season to connect New Yorkers to critical preparedness information on the Division's website. The campaign, which lasted from August 29 through September 25, included static and digital messages on trains and station platforms throughout the Metro-North and Long Island Rail Road systems.

During this time, unique pageviews on the Division's safety and prevention resource page increased by more than 43 percent from the previous year, while traffic on the Division's homepage increased by more than six percent.

## **TRAINING AND EDUCATIONAL FORUMS**

One of the Division's core missions is to train and prepare New York's emergency responders and local government officials to respond to any type of disaster and ensure the everyday New Yorkers know how to stay prepared and respond to emergencies themselves. From training individuals seeking to become volunteer firefighters, to educating New Yorkers on how to ensure their families are prepared for any disaster, the Division undertook significant public outreach efforts in 2022 to meet these goals.

### **State Preparedness Training Center (SPTC)**

DHSES oversees training activities throughout the year at the State Preparedness Training Center (SPTC), located at the former Oneida County Airport in Oriskany. DHSES is committed to providing cutting-edge, contemporary, and configurable training to a diverse group of public safety stakeholders across New York State. In 2022, through the end of October, the SPTC trained more than 7,000 stakeholders in a wide range of topics tailored to address the current, and evolving, threat environment. The SPTC resumed full in-person operations in early 2022 following a 16-month pause due to the pandemic.

The following major events took place at the SPTC throughout 2022, including two new events: the Advanced Crisis Negotiation Course, and the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Special Event Series, which included night flight courses.

### ***Inaugural SNUG Training, March***

The NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) began offering its SNUG training at the SPTC this year. This training kicked off in March with a Governor's press event in Oriskany. Funded and supported by DCJS, the SNUG program uses a public health approach to prevent and reduce gun violence by identifying its source, interrupting transmission and treating it by engaging communities and connecting individuals to critical services and support.

### ***Canine Week, April***

The SPTC hosted the second annual "Canine Week" in Oriskany in late April. This event brought more than 50 Explosive Detection Canine (EDC) teams from across the State to the SPTC to train in a series of challenging skills lanes. This was the first Canine Week since the inaugural offering in 2019. Feedback from participants was excellent and the next Canine Week is planned for April 2023.

### ***Flood Incident Strike Team (FIST) Mobilization Exercises, April and September***

OFPC conducted two mobilization exercises for the NY State Flood Incident Strike Team in April and September. Team members from the NYS Underwater Recovery Team; DEC Rangers; DEC ENCON Police; NYS Parks Police, and DOCCS participated in a multi-day, hands on scenario that mimicked a large-scale river flood impacting several communities. Working with local first response agencies, team members put their knowledge and skills to use performing rescues of people trapped in moving floodwaters.

*Advanced Crisis Negotiation Course (ACNC), pilots in April, November*

The SPTC developed a new “Advanced Crisis Negotiation Course” in 2022 in coordination with partners from the FBI; the NYSP; the NYS Association of Hostage Negotiators; the Yonkers Police Department, and the Troy Police Department. Pilot deliveries of this course occurred in April and November with more than 70 certified law enforcement crisis negotiators participating in scenario-based training. The feedback on both pilot deliveries was excellent and the next delivery of this course is slated for April 2023.

*UAS Special Event Series – Night Flight Course, pilot in May*

As part of its new UAS Special Event Series, the SPTC launched a new UAS “Night Flight Course” in May in coordination with partners from OFPC, DEC, the NYSP, and NUAIR. The SPTC held this course two additional times in 2022 providing training to over 30 public safety UAS pilots. This course will continue in 2023 and will be supplemented by another new course in the UAS Special Event Series, a course on UAS Indoor Tactics that will be piloted next year.

*OFPC Technical Rescue Conference, June*

In June, OFPC hosted its annual Technical Rescue Conference that brought together over 150 participants from New York State and other states to train and learn about the latest technology and developments in the Rope; Water; Collapse; Vehicle Rescue, and UAS rescue fields.

*Raven’s Challenge, June*

The SPTC was one of four host sites nationally for the 2022 Raven’s Challenge Exercise. This exercise focuses on the integration of public safety Bomb Squads and their peers from Military Explosive Ordnance Device (EOD) units. Over 200 local, state, federal, and international bomb technicians took part in this event. This was the fourth time that New York State has been selected as a host site for the Raven’s Challenge.

*Tactical Week, June*

The SPTC hosted the fourth annual “Tactical Week” in late June at the SPTC. Five advanced Tactical Teams from across the State competed in a series of advanced scenarios during the week to test their capabilities. As a result of team performance, Utica METRO SWAT earned the ‘top’ team award during this event. The SPTC will host Tactical Week in June 2023.

*TIMPosium, July*

Through the implementation of a statewide Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Program and the leadership of the NYS TIM Steering Committee, responders and other stakeholders joined together to improve the management of response and clearance to all types of roadway incidents. The event was attended by representatives from several state, county and local agencies responsible for traffic management in NYS.

*Threat Assessment and Management (TAM) Team Summits, August & December*

In the wake of the tragic event at the Tops Market in Buffalo in May, Governor Hochul issued Executive Order 18 on “*Preventing and Responding to Domestic Terrorism.*” This Executive Order created a new Domestic Terrorism Prevention Unit (DTPU) within OCT and required counties to submit domestic terrorism plans to OCT. In turn, the Division encouraged counties to create Threat Assessment and Management (TAM) teams to support their prevention efforts. The Division hosted the inaugural “TAM Team Summit” at the SPTC in August, and another summit in early December. More than 80 local, state, and federal stakeholders took part in the August event featuring presentations on the Executive Order, what counties could expect as part of the plan requirement, and best practices in terms of TAM team operations.

#### *NYARNG Homeland Response Force Exercise, August*

The Region II Homeland Response Force (HRF) is a National Guard Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Response Enterprise (CRE) asset whose mission set includes search and extraction, fatality search and recovery, decontamination, medical triage and command and control of military forces. The HRF consisted of several hundred personnel as well as others supporting the exercise. The exercise participants trained on the Structural Collapse Venue Site or “Rubble Pile” as well as the Field Operations Building and the Education and Administration Building. Adding realism to the HRF exercise were role players who had makeup and effects applied to simulate wounds likely to occur in an event of this type and magnitude. The role players were “extracted” from the rubble pile and decontaminated, followed by being triaged by the medical element. Near the rubble pile, the decontamination team established their lanes for decontamination of ambulatory and non-ambulatory patients as well as technical decontamination for their own personnel and equipment.

#### *Public Safety UAS Summit, August*

In August, the Division hosted the fourth annual Public Safety UAS Summit. 160 local, state, and federal UAS stakeholders from across New York State participated in this event, which took place at the SPTC on August 16 and at NUAIR on August 17.

#### *New York Hope Exercise, August*

In August, the SPTC hosted the “New York Hope” exercise for third time. The exercise supported nearly 50 college students and prepares students for potential careers in the fields of emergency management and homeland security. The four-day disaster response exercise trained students in leadership; teamwork and confidence building; disaster response and medical operations; incident command system and interoperable communications, and emergency services partner agency training.

#### *Excelsior Challenge, October*

In October, the SPTC hosted its premier training event: the Excelsior Challenge. This event brings Bomb Technicians, EDC Teams, and Tactical Teams together to participate in scenarios based on the current threat environment. Nearly 150 law enforcement officials from more than 50 different agencies participated, making this the largest Excelsior Challenge to date. The next Excelsior Challenge is slated for September 2023.

### *Atomic City Challenge, November*

The Division's Office of Counter Terrorism (OCT) coordinated the second annual "Atomic City Challenge" in Oriskany in November, in conjunction with the SPTC, OFPC, DEC, and the NYSF. This event is designed for law enforcement officials and other first responders that utilize radiological detection equipment to test their skills in a series of different scenarios. This year's event included more than 40 participants and featured a new "Capstone Scenario," which included activity across the CityScape complex in Oriskany.

### *OFPC Firefighter Training*

For the last 60 years, the Division's Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) has provided quality training to firefighters and other emergency responders throughout the state. The scope and complexity of firefighter training has grown in conjunction with the increased responsibilities of New York State's fire service. In 2022, OFPC's fire training program consists of approximately 200 courses. Training and education courses are conducted for both career and volunteer fire departments throughout the state, serving approximately 100,000 firefighters in 1,754 fire departments. This training is essential for safe and effective emergency response aimed at protecting the people, property and environment in the State of New York. For many fire departments, particularly volunteer fire departments, OFPC's firefighter training courses are the only formal training available. OFPC conducted 2,731 of these courses in 2022, with 147 courses conducted at the New York State Academy of Fire Science in Montour Falls. In total, 30,911 firefighters and emergency service personnel received some form of training or education through these courses.

### *Public Fire Safety Education Programs*

OFPC plays a leading role in increasing fire safety skills statewide through its coordination of seminars and events, the dissemination of educational materials and notifications, and the use of its mobile fire safety houses. From pamphlets to large seminars and special events, OFPC works to maximize fire safety awareness and training. Participating in fairs, open houses, and festivals, OFPC strives to educate the public about fire danger. More than 40,000 New Yorkers received information through these public fire safety education programs statewide in 2022.

### *Citizen Preparedness Corps Trainings*

Established in February 2014, the *Citizen Preparedness Corps* provides New Yorkers with tools and resources to prepare for natural and human-caused disasters, to respond accordingly, and to recover as quickly as possible to pre-disaster conditions. Courses are taught by members of the New York National Guard, with support from the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and OFPC, as well as the American Red Cross and local emergency management personnel. During each course, New Yorkers learn a wide range of preparedness strategies ranging from how to develop a family emergency plan to what emergency supplies citizens should keep in reserve, among other critical precautions.

Since its inception, more than 348,500 New Yorkers have completed Citizen Preparedness Corps training. A key component of the in-person training is the distribution

of free NYS Disaster Preparedness Kits at public regional events that are open to the public for registration. The kits are limited to one per family and contain key items to assist individuals and demonstrate the types of items that one should have in advance of an emergency. To date, nearly 86,000 kits have been distributed across the state. 2022 saw the return of in-person CPC trainings held across the state after a several-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Trainings & Exercises

The Training and Exercise Program facilitates, coordinates, and provides training and exercise to emergency management professionals so they will be better able to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural and human caused incidents while protecting lives, property, and the environment. Today's first response community finds itself challenged with a wide range of continually evolving threats, and natural or human caused incidents requiring continued emphasis on preparedness training. In 2022 the Training and Exercise Section coordinated the delivery of 330 trainings to more than 6,000 people. These trainings included 128 different courses in topics such as the Incident Command System, Emergency Operations Centers, Exercise Design, Incident Response and Coordination, Planning, FEMA's Basic Academy, the Emergency Management Certification and Training, Cyber, Winter Weather Hazards, and Coastal Storms. Training and Exercise also provided planning, conduct, evaluation, and/or equipment support for 41 exercises across the state, including the USAR exercise on Fire Island with the Suffolk County USAR and FDNY teams and five state EOC exercises culminating in a full-scale EOC functional exercise in October.

#### *TSEP*

"The Transportation Security and Emergency Preparedness (TSEP) Program was created in 2018 as a part of the NYS Office of Emergency Management to provide direct training to employees working in transportation hubs to increase their security awareness and active shooter preparedness. The program was put on pause during the pandemic but resumed training in spring 2022. From May through end of November, TSEP has engaged with 25 different transportation partners and conducted 13 briefings with a total of 322 attendees."

#### *Communications Unit (COMU)*

The Office of Interoperable and Emergency Communications (OIEC) conducts training courses on emergency communications for first responders, public safety answering point staff and agency management. These courses include curriculum for field personnel (Communications Unit Leader, Communications Technician, Radio Operator, and Auxiliary Communications) and 911 and emergency dispatch (Incident Communications Center Manager, Incident Tactical Dispatcher). Upon completion of the required prerequisites, training, and field practical experience (position task books), individuals can become state credentialed in NY State Communications Unit (COMU). In 2022, the Division trained over 200 individuals in the COMU program. In addition to the formal COMU training program, in 2022 OIEC held four on-site familiarization and training sessions around the state, using OIEC's communications equipment, with a total attendance of over 100 participants.

## **FUNDING-RELATED OUTREACH**

The Grant Program Administration (GPA) Unit is currently responsible for the management and administration of more than \$1.4 billion in federal homeland security grant funding covering 10 separate programs over five federal fiscal years (FY2018-FY2022). The Unit also manages over \$461 million in state funding that includes the Statewide Interoperable Communications; the Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes; the Recruitment and Retention, and the new Domestic Terrorism Prevention grant programs. GPA has more than 3,100 active contracts with State, local and non-profit stakeholders. GPA regularly conducts monitoring activities, including on-site visits. As of October 2022, GPA completed more than 300 monitoring visits and reviewed more than 900 contracts for programmatic and fiscal compliance. GPA staff communicates with local, state agency, and non-profit stakeholders daily to effectively manage these grant programs. In addition to this routine outreach, additional stakeholder engagement efforts include:

### *Grant Program Administration (GPA) Regional Workshops*

In late October and early November of 2022, GPA staff conducted the DHSES Grants Regional Workshops in five separate locations across the state. These workshops provide technical assistance and to support subrecipient monitoring as required by DHS/FEMA. More than 230 local, state, and federal partners attended these critical Workshops and obtained information on grant-related issues and other state homeland security initiatives. Representatives from other DHSES offices attend to provide updates on their critical programs and these workshops serve as a one-stop-shop for our homeland security stakeholders.

### *Bomb Squad Outreach and Partnerships*

GPA works extensively with bomb squads across the state and manages the Bomb Squad Initiative grant program to build the capabilities of local, FBI-accredited bomb squads in New York State. GPA coordinates extensively and routinely with internal Division offices (OCT, SPTC) as well as various local, state, and federal subject-matter experts on the development and implementation of this critical grant program. GPA attended Raven's Challenge at the State Preparedness Training Center on June 16, 2022, to provide technical support to the bomb squads that required assistance. GPA's attendance at the exercise also provided a monitoring opportunity for grant funded equipment and to provide an overview of equipment standards and technology advancements. GPA staff are coordinating the next funding cycle of the Bomb Squad Initiative.

### *Explosive Detection Canine Team Outreach and Partnerships*

Awards for the FY2020 Explosive Detection Canine Team grant program were issued totaling \$661,788. This program enhances and sustains the explosive detection canine team capabilities across the state and utilizes federal and state explosive detection canine subject-matter experts. GPA has provided program briefs on the Explosive Detection Canine Team Grant Program to canine handlers across the state at the March 2022 Law Enforcement Conferences hosted by the State Preparedness Training Center. The purpose of the brief is to educate the stakeholders on the grant programs,

including discussing the administrative requirements and objectives, highlighting best practices, and collecting feedback to ensure that our programs are meeting the needs of this important law enforcement community. GPA staff, along with the Office of Counter Terrorism, Public Safety Unit, are coordinating the development of the Explosive Detection Canine Team (EDCT) targeted grant program for the next funding cycle.

#### *Tactical Team Outreach and Partnerships*

Awards for the FY2020 Tactical Team Targeted grant program were issued totaling \$1,088,212. The focus of this program is to improve a tactical team's capabilities and help to develop new response capabilities as it relates to high-risk incidents including active shooter events and other counter terrorism missions. GPA provided program briefs on the Tactical Team Grant Program to team leaders across the state at the March 2022 Law Enforcement Conferences hosted by the State Preparedness Training Center. The purpose of the brief is to educate the stakeholders on the grant programs, including administrative requirements and objectives, highlighting best practices, and collecting feedback to ensure our programs are meeting the needs of this important law enforcement community. GPA staff, along with the Office of Counter Terrorism, Public Safety Unit, are coordinating the development of the Tactical Team targeted grant program for the next funding cycle.

#### *Law Enforcement Conferences*

Approximately 345 local, state and federal bomb squads, explosive detection canine handlers, and tactical teams participated in the 2022 Law Enforcement Conferences held in Saratoga Springs February 28 - March 4. GPA participated in all three events providing updates on the grant programs, discussing programmatic requirements, sharing some of the successes of the programs and the resources that DHSES has to offer all these communities as well as discussing next steps. As an effort to ensure information was shared with these critical law enforcement specialty teams, GPA participated in State Preparedness Training Center sponsored Canine Week (April 25-29, 2022), and Excelsior Challenge (October 3-7, 2022) and provided an overview of the grant funding available to support these specialized law enforcement communities.

#### *Technical Rescue and USAR Outreach and Partnerships*

Awards for the FY2020 Technical Rescue/USAR grant program were issued totaling \$750,000. The focus of this program is to enhance statewide technical rescue and urban search and rescue partnerships and capabilities across the state. GPA staff, along with OFPC are coordinating the development of the Technical Rescue/USAR grant program for the next funding cycle.

#### *Hazardous Materials Regional Partnerships*

GPA continued to work with OFPC to enhance statewide hazardous materials (HazMat) regional partnerships in the state through the funding of the 18 regional HazMat partnerships across the state. Additionally, through the FY2021-22 Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) Grant Program, funded by U.S. DOT, counties were required to coordinate through their HazMat regional partnerships to apply for projects to support regional HazMat preparedness activities.



### *Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Services Organizations Outreach*

GPA staff continue to work OFPC on the 2022-2023 round of the Recruitment and Retention Grant Program. The focus of this program is to support local eligible applicants with the recruitment and retainment of critical volunteer firefighters and emergency services personnel. New York State currently has more than 1,700 volunteer fire and emergency services organizations. Volunteer firefighters play a pivotal role in fire response operations and providing life-saving aid in emergencies to New York State citizens.

### *Cyber Security Grant Program Outreach and Partnerships*

Awards for the FY2020 Cyber Security grant program were issued totaling \$2,000,000. The focus of this program is to provide local jurisdictions with the resources and equipment necessary to prevent disruption of the confidentiality, integrity and availability of their information systems. GPA staff, along with the Office of Counter Terrorism's Cyber Incident Response Team (OCT-CIRT), are coordinating the development of the Cyber Security grant program for the next funding cycle.

### *Critical Infrastructure Grant Program Outreach and Partnerships*

Awards for the FY2020 Critical Infrastructure Protection grant program were issued totaling \$500,000. This program provides local jurisdictions with the resources and equipment necessary to mitigate vulnerabilities identified at government owned critical infrastructure, special events, and mass gathering sites. GPA staff, along with the Office of Counter Terrorism's Critical Infrastructure Unit (OCT-CIU) are coordinating the development of the Critical Infrastructure Protection grant program for the next funding cycle.

### *Nonprofit Security Grant Program Outreach*

GPA staff continuously conduct monitoring visits with nonprofit organizations that have been awarded Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. In the fall of 2022, a "New Grantee Orientation Webinar" was conducted for the subrecipients of FY2022 NSGP funds to provide technical assistance regarding grant contract compliance requirements.

### *Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes Program Outreach*

GPA staff continuously conduct monitoring visits with nonprofit organizations that were awarded funds under the SFY2018-19 and SFY2019-20 Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes (SCAHC) program. More than 1,000 projects were funded to boost safety and security at New York's nonprofit nonpublic schools, day care centers and cultural museums at risk of hate crimes or attacks because of their ideology, beliefs, or mission. Current and future funding opportunities of the Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes Program will be administered by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).

### *Support for the Domestic Terrorism Preventing Grant Program and Related Outreach*

GPA in coordination with various other Division offices serve on the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Workgroup. This group focuses on the implementation of Governor

Hochul's Executive Order 18 issued on May 18, 2022, following the Buffalo mass shooting. Through these efforts a new Domestic Terrorism Unit was developed along with a grant program designed to aid counties with the development and implementation of their domestic terrorism prevention plans and Threat Assessment Management teams. On August 9-10, 2022, GPA staff conducted a program brief of the FY2022 Domestic Terrorism Prevention Grant Program at the TAM Team Summit held at the State Preparedness Training Center. The audience included 90 local, state and federal partners from across the state including law enforcement, emergency management, school officials, and mental health professionals.

*National Homeland Security Conference – Cleveland, OH – National Outreach*

GPA Director Eric Abramson and GPA Program and Planning Unit Manager Nicole Erickson presented at the National Homeland Security Conference in Cleveland, Ohio, in July. Director Abramson provided an overview of the federal Nonprofit Security Grant Program and the administrative challenges it has posed and what New York State has been doing to help contend with the growing program and its complexities. Additionally, Nicole Erickson provided an overview of how New York State has leveraged grant to help fill in capabilities gaps through the SHSP Targeted Grant Programs. The conference was attended by over 1,500 homeland security professionals across the nation to include many of the state administrative agencies that are responsible for the management of the various DHS/FEMA preparedness grant programs.

*Support for the NYS Emergency Management Certification Training – Refresher*

GPA staff participated in the New York State Emergency Management Certification training hosted virtually on August 10. An overview of the various grant programs and associated requirements were provided to over 50 county officials and emergency managers from across the state. This critical training event is a requirement of receiving DHS/FEMA preparedness funding and served as an opportunity to educate new county officials on the grants process and available program funding to help support their various needs.

*Support for DHSES Strategic Policy Initiatives and Related Outreach*

GPA works closely with DHSES' senior policy advisors on major agency initiatives including the County Emergency Preparedness Assessment and federal requirements such as the Threat/Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment and the Stakeholder Preparedness Report. These efforts require outreach with state and local stakeholders. Coordination with these groups occurred regularly in 2022 and completion of both the THIRA and SPR remain requirements to receive federal funding.

*Urban Area Working Groups*

GPA participated in Urban Area Working Group meetings held by area homeland security and emergency responder partners in the New York City and Buffalo regions. GPA participation provides outreach regarding available grant opportunities as well as providing valuable technical assistance to grantees.

### *NYSEMA Local District Meetings*

GPA staff routinely attends regularly scheduled local district meetings of the New York State Emergency Management Association. This included attending meetings in the Western, Lake, Central, Northern, Eastern, and Southern Districts of NYSEMA. The purpose of this outreach is to enhance communication and information sharing with local stakeholders, including information on available grant opportunities and technical assistance on open contracts.

### *Law Enforcement Conferences*

DHSES hosted its annual “Law Enforcement Conferences” in Saratoga Springs in March. These events, which are co-sponsored by the SPTC and OCT, included the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Bomb Squad Symposium, the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Explosive Detection Canine Handlers Conference, and the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Tactical Team Leadership Forum. Over three hundred local, state, federal, and international law enforcement officials took part in these events.

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND SECURITY-BASED ENGAGEMENT**

Preparing for, and subsequently responding to disasters, both natural and man-made is at the core of the Division's mission. These efforts take many forms and involve ensuring local law enforcement, emergency managers, first responders and the public have the training and resources necessary for addressing and recovering from any type of hazard they may encounter. It is also critical businesses and not-for-profits that operate publicly accessible facilities, such as offices and storefronts, have the proper security measures in place and understand how to spot and report suspicious activity.

### *Cyber Incident Response Team (CIRT)*

The risk of cyber compromises continues to increase rapidly as technology evolves and cyber actors find creative ways to exploit the vulnerabilities of these technologies. For state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) governments, these threats pose unique challenges for a variety of reasons. The DHSES cyber incident response team (CIRT) assists state and local government organizations to prepare for and prevent cyber incidents by providing cyber training and targeted exercise programs.

In 2022, CIRT performed phishing and follow up training for 6,556 users of the SLTT community. CIRT also launched its cyber tabletop exercise program in January and facilitated nine exercises with entities throughout the state, including a community tabletop with the New York State Local Government Information Technology Directors Association. This program walks entities through a mock cyber incident, testing response plans, identifying/documenting gaps, identifying areas of strength, and revealing areas for improvement. CIRT executed five cybersecurity risk assessments for SLTT entities which evaluates all aspects of an entity's cyber program and provides prioritized, actionable recommendations to improve its cybersecurity posture.

CIRT responded to 54 cyber incidents assisting entities in identification, containment, eradication, and a return to normal operations in a secure manor. All related cyber intel gathered during incidents is deidentified and disseminated to state entities for proactive and preventative actions. CIRT team members participated in and provided threat briefings at over 15 cyber events that delivered critical information to hundreds of participants such as the members of the NYS Local IT Directors Association conferences, and dozens of school districts throughout the state, and supported the development of and participation in the FY2020 SHSP Cyber Grant funding program that resulted in \$2,000,000 in awards for 45 entities.

### *Critical Infrastructure Site Visits*

The Division's Critical Infrastructure Unit within the Office of Counter Terrorism conducted 70 risk and vulnerability assessments in 2022. The Office's service offerings are provided in support of the Department of Homeland Security's National Infrastructure Protection Plan to help ensure security and resiliency across New York State. The unit takes a collaborative approach with its services by working with federal, state, local, and private sector partners to enhance the overall security of the state's most critical assets. These assessments included assessments in the chemical, energy,

pipeline and public drinking water industries as part of New York State Executive Law that requires DHSES to review and enhance critical infrastructure security. In addition, six of the risk and vulnerability assessments were conducted in partnership with New York State Police; the Olympic Regional Development Authority; DHS and the Lake Placid 23 Organizing Committee to provide risk assessment support in preparation for the 2023 World University Winter Games. Five assessments focused on local government cybersecurity and were conducted in partnership with the OCT Cyber Incident Response Team. Two visits were conducted in partnership with Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Nine site visits were conducted in partnership with the State Police and Department of Agriculture and Markets to review industry practices for securing ammonium nitrate. Seven security projects were completed at the request of local government partners and were focused on industries such as commercial facilities and healthcare and public health. Lastly, in addition to assessment services, the unit manages a hostile vehicle mitigation system program. This program provides a cost saving, temporary movable vehicle barrier system to protect pedestrians and large crowds from accidental or intentional vehicle injury during special events and this OCT resource was deployed throughout 2022 at events such as the State Fair and the United Nations General Assembly.

#### *Red Team Exercises*

Each year, the Division's Office of Counter Terrorism partners with law enforcement from more than 80 agencies throughout the state to conduct 'Red Team' exercises. These exercises, which involve state and local counter terrorism personnel, assess the effectiveness of the state's "See Something, Say Something" training program on businesses. During each exercise, personnel from state and local agencies conceal their identities and assess the ability of businesses to recognize and report suspicious activity. Following each exercise, officials provide training on identifying and reporting suspicious activity.

In 2022, OCT conducted 'Red Team' exercises at more than 1,000 locations across New York in each of the state's 16 counter terrorism zones. As part of this process, teams assessed 232 hardware and agricultural stores, 51 vehicle rental locations, 17 drone retailers, 86 big box retailers, 12 self-storage facilities, 25 private shipping facilities, 172 hotels, and 14 gun and sporting goods stores, among others. This year also saw the addition of testing for suspicious activity related to 3D printing, with 11 locations tested statewide. Additionally, teams assessed more than 180 infrastructure locations that were selected because of the vulnerable population, materials, and or technology residing there, or because of proximity to a mass gathering location. These included locations such as stadiums and arenas, malls and shopping centers, colleges and universities, airports, transit hubs and other mass-gathering locations. The Division has now completed more than 5,200 Red Team exercises since 2016.

#### *Briefings and Information Sharing with Private Sector Partners*

As part of an ongoing effort to disseminate relevant and timely information, the Office of Counter Terrorism provides and facilitates briefings for public and private-sector partners as needed. The Office participates in quarterly meetings with the Energy

industry and held a briefing for our energy sector partners following the December 3<sup>rd</sup> event in North Carolina. OCT routinely works closely with our partners in the public drinking water, chemical and pipeline industries to share information on physical and cyber security threats as well as best practices in physical and cyber security. Additionally, OCT engages with associations and groups such as the FBI's Infraguard chapters as well as public safety stakeholders to enhance awareness. Throughout the year, OCT continuously engages the 120 Intelligence Liaison Officers across the state, and makes presentations at the annual ILO, Emergency Medical Services and New York State Association of Fire Chief's Conferences. OCT programs and services promote suspicious activity reporting through presentations to targeted audiences to include the healthcare and commercial facilities sectors, and outreach to security personnel and targeted public messaging in conjunction with public gathering events such as the State Fair.

#### *Communications Consortiums and 911 Outreach*

The Office of Interoperable and Emergency Communications participates in regular meetings of the nine interoperable communications consortiums across the State. These consortiums are regional formations of adjacent counties with common needs or operations related to emergency communications including 911. The consortiums exist to enhance information sharing and communications interoperability. OIEC brings the chairs of those nine consortiums together several times each year to discuss strategy for any issues of united concern and clarify or level set messaging if needed. Additionally, each spring the Division hosts a symposium for public safety radio and 911 representatives at the county, state and federal level. This multiday education and idea sharing event gives representatives an opportunity to learn from their peers.

The Office also conducts regular outreach to our 911 stakeholder community regarding issues of concern, such as emerging technologies, staffing concerns, cybersecurity, and information sharing. During times of increased activity, statewide coordination calls are held to keep all parties informed.

The OIEC Director, in his role as the Statewide Wireless Interoperability Coordinator, or his designee attended semi-annual meetings of the national NCSWIC/SAFECOM group. Attendance is a mandatory stipulation of some federal grant funding, which DHSES is responsible for as part of New York certifying its participation in the National Emergency Communications Plan. The Director also serves as the chair of the Statewide Interoperable and Emergency Communications Board.

The Assistant Director, whose assigned duties include State 911 Coordinator, regularly attends in person and virtual meetings of the National Association of State 911 Administrators to receive information from other state 911 programs, discuss common issues of concern including Next Generation 911 transitional progress; FCC actions; National 911 Program Office initiatives, and potential federal grant opportunities. He also serves as NASNA's representative to the NFPA 3000 Technical Committee responsible for the standard for active shooter/hostile event response. The State 911

Coordinator responded to calls and emails from the public requesting information on how to make 911 test calls (usually associated with multi-line telephone system compliance to state and federal versions of Kari's Law and the RAY BAUM Act), verification of 911 addresses, and how to obtain copies of recordings of 911 calls. In nearly every case, the person making the inquiry is referred to the County 911 Coordinator (in NYC, a NYPD office serves this role) to direct the request to the proper authority having jurisdiction over 911 records.

## **PUBLIC EVENTS**

Outside of the Division's formal training and education courses, Division experts have attended, presented, and helped organize a wide range of events geared toward disseminating vital security and preparedness information to members of the public. These events range from conferences and symposiums to setting up informational booths at various fairs and public events.

### **New York State Fair**

The Great New York State Fair had approximately 878,000 visitors in 2022, and although the number of attendees did not reach the record-breaking year of 2019 (1.3 million patrons), there certainly was a large enough crowd that contributed to the busy traffic at the DHSES and OFPC exhibits. During the fair's 13-day run, tens of thousands of fairgoers visited the exhibits to learn more about DHSES' activities and programs, and talk with employees.

During the fair, many volunteers from DHSES staffed the exhibits to answer questions, encourage fairgoers to attend a Citizens Preparedness Corp training at the fair, and inform the public of other upcoming training opportunities. Fairgoers who visited the DHSES exhibit had their choice of giveaways such as 'See Something, Say Something' magnets, first aid kits, phone charger cables, emergency blankets, rescue keychains and other items.

Just across the way from the Division's exhibit, OFPC staff joined with their local partners to staff the House of Horrors where more than 30,500 fairgoers learned to identify common fire hazards that could be found in their homes. Staff also assisted with a widely attended, recurring children's puppet show that taught fire safety. In addition, many people visited OFPC's exhibit where they were able to witness first-hand just how quickly a fire can destroy a home and learned about the critical role OFPC plays in the NYS's emergency response operations.

OFPC's work was not limited to their exhibits at the State Fair. In addition to maintaining a presence at the Fair's Joint Operations Center, the Fire and Life Safety Branch inspected all temporary and permanent buildings, as well as concert venues at the fair multiple times throughout the course of the fair. In total, 660 inspections were conducted, with 30 violations issued.

### **Additional Events**

Throughout the year, staff from throughout the Division's offices helped plan, coordinate, or represent the Division at a wide range of public events, meetings and other gatherings. Whether a booth or a display was set up, a presentation was given, or staff simply interacted with New Yorkers during their normal duties, Division representatives worked to educate New Yorkers and others on the Division's operations or assist in another way.

Some of these events include, but are not limited to:



- Bethpage Air Show
- Belmont Stakes Horserace
- Boilermaker Road Race
- Baseball Hall of Fame Induction
- Cyber Impact 2022
- Excelsior Challenge
- Fleet Week New York
- Formula E Race in Brooklyn
- Great New York State Fair
- Macy's 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade
- Macy's Thanksgiving Parade
- NYC 9/11 Memorial Ceremony
- NYC Pride Parade
- New York Auto Show
- New York Comic Con
- New York Governor's Debate
- Pearl River St. Patrick's Day Parade
- Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree Lighting
- Suffolk County Marathon
- Syracuse Nationals
- Times Square New Year's Eve Ball Drop Celebration
- Travers Stakes Horserace
- United Nations General Assembly
- U.S. Open Tennis Championships
- Veteran's Day Parade
- Watkins Glen NASCAR