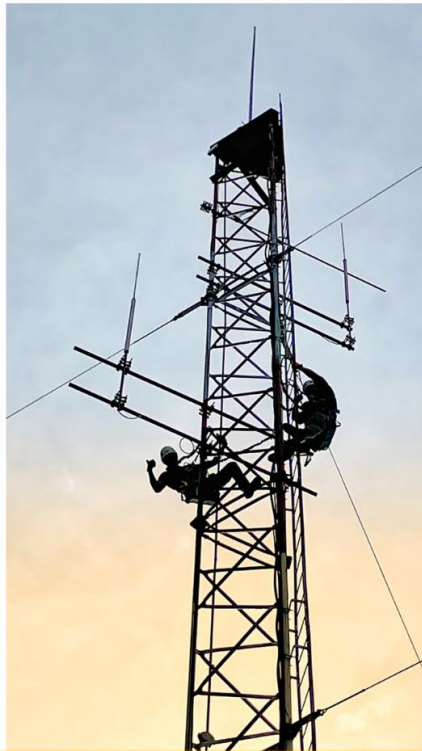




Homeland Security
Emergency Services

2023 Outreach Report

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



Kathy Hochul
Governor

Jackie Bray
Commissioner

Contents

Introduction	1
Disaster Recovery Outreach	2
Public Facing Communications	5
Training and Educational Forums	7
Funding-Related Outreach	12
Emergency Response & Security-Based Engagement	17
Public Events	21

Introduction

Created in 2010, the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) 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. DHSES accomplishes this core mission through its directorates and several cross-cutting support units including Counter Terrorism (OCT), Emergency Management (OEM), Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC), Interoperable & Emergency Communications (OIEC), Disaster Recovery, and Administration and Finance, which coordinate the response of State agencies in support of local government.

The team at DHSES is dedicated to working closely daily with all levels of government, the private sector, and volunteer organizations to improve the readiness and response capabilities of communities throughout the Empire State.

DHSES recognizes it is vital for State and local governments to put forth effective emergency response plans and operations. It is equally important for these entities to educate the public so they 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), DHSES presents this annual report to the Governor and Legislature to detail its outreach efforts to businesses, not-for-profit organizations, partners, and the public for the 2023 calendar year.

Disaster Recovery Outreach

DHSES's Disaster Recovery group worked closely with local governments, counties, State agencies and Tribal Nations within New York on numerous events. Throughout the year, the group coordinated with applicants and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security – Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on all Major Disaster Declarations and operated active Joint Field Offices (JFO). Following the July 23, 2023 declaration for severe storms and flooding, DHSES immediately worked with FEMA and local governments in multiple regions to facilitate their recovery. The group continued work on the COVID-19 pandemic to facilitate the exchange of and interpretation of FEMA policies and deadlines with applicants. Following the severe rainstorm of September 2023, the Public Assistance (PA) team coordinated damage assessments and a joint Preliminary Damage Assessment with FEMA that validated damages exceeding the State threshold resulting in the Governor's submission of a request for a Major Disaster Declaration to the U.S. President.

Public Assistance

In September 2023, the remnants of Tropical Storm Ophelia impacted the lower Hudson Valley, New York City and Long Island. In October and November, DHSES staff provided extensive outreach to Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester counties, and the boroughs of New York City, to identify and validate damages to obtain a Major Disaster Declaration. DHSES staff deployed to various sites in New York City to assess damages and provide technical assistance to potential applicants. DHSES staff conducted more than 20 conference calls with impacted counties to obtain information, explain the damage validation process and answer questions.

PA staff worked on the following disasters in 2023:

- DR-4480 (COVID-19)
- DR-4615 (Remnants of Hurricane Ida)
- DR-4625 (Remnants of Tropical Storm Fred)
- EM-3589 (Severe Winter Storm and Snowstorm)
- EM-3590 and DR-4694 (Winter Storm and Snowstorm)
- DR-4723 (Severe Storms and Flooding)

DHSES PA staff provided trainings and technical assistance upon the request of county emergency managers. PA staff provided individual sessions to Albany, Clinton, and Ulster counties, and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

DHSES Recovery staff attended annual DHSES-sponsored Grants Regional Sessions to provide an overview of PA, the disaster declaration process, and significant policy and procedural changes.

Individual Assistance

DR-4694 (Winter Storm and Snowstorm)

In March 2023, State Recovery Individual Assistance (IA) staff worked with FEMA on outreach and payment to eligible individuals regarding IA Funeral Assistance, which was authorized for the Severe Winter Storm and Snowstorm Major Disaster Declaration (DR-4694) for Erie and Niagara counties. New York was the first state in the nation to receive the new Funeral Assistance as a subset of the full FEMA IA program, which opened direct reimbursement to eligible applicants who suffered a loss due to the blizzard. IA section staff facilitated discussions between the qualifying counties and FEMA to coordinate on both the gathering of information on impacted individuals eligible for the program, as well as outreach to those individuals informing them of the opportunity for potential reimbursement for funeral costs.

DR-4723 (Severe Storms and Flooding)

In response to the severe storms and flooding in July, the IA section coordinated joint FEMA/State/Small Business Administration (SBA) Preliminary Damage Assessments for Orange and Ontario counties. These assessments were conducted over a two-week period ensuring all major and destroyed residential damages were viewed. FEMA denied IA for both counties; however, the State appealed and is awaiting a decision.

Small Business Administration Outreach Efforts

IA conducted seven Preliminary Damage Assessments in 2023 in conjunction with SBA and each respective county in response to the December 27, 2022 snowstorm (Erie County); July flooding (Orange and Ontario); and September flooding (Kings, Queens, and Nassau counties).

In June, the SBA announced the new Rural Agency Declaration loan program that allows counties who received a FEMA PA Declaration, but not an IA Declaration, and have only one home or business with 40 percent uninsured loss, to apply for the program. The program was socialized with counties potentially eligible to apply. In response to the July storms, Clinton County received a FEMA PA declaration and was able to identify one home that suffered 40 percent uninsured loss. After coordinating with the county and virtual review by SBA, the county was successful in meeting the program requirements.

The IA team worked with the New York City Office of Emergency Management in response to a five-alarm fire which impacted nine businesses in Williamsburg, Brooklyn for a potential SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan declaration.

Additional Training Outreach Efforts

After the impacts of Ida in 2021, IA developed an overview training that focuses on State IA team activities, FEMA IA programs, Preliminary Damage Assessments, and SBA programs. In 2023, the IA section conducted this training for all counties at the regional level.

Hazard Mitigation

Hazard Mitigation project staff focused outreach efforts on FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program DR-4694. Staff supported subapplicants and subapplication development by conducting webinars to discuss project eligibility and the subapplication process. The group Q&A format reduced the number of duplicate questions and encouraged further discussions among attendees. During these meetings, staff outlined the support available and potential alternate acceptable proofs that could be provided to FEMA for consideration to be classified as a disadvantaged community. Staff provided project management outreach and assistance to previous years' Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Pre-Disaster Mitigation, Legislative Pre-Disaster Mitigation, Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities, and Flood Mitigation Assistance subrecipients, as well as offered additional support relative to cost increases, time extensions and appeals.

Hazard Mitigation participated in the 2023 DHSES Grants Regional Workshops in five locations across the State. During these workshops, staff presented on hazard mitigation programs, outlined available grant opportunities, and reviewed the revisions to FEMA's program guidance. Staff presented on hazard mitigation programs and available grant opportunities at two New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) workshops for State agency staff in fall 2023. Hazard Mitigation planning staff also presented information related to hazard mitigation planning and integration with climate adaptation planning at the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council's Spring Local Government training.

Planning staff facilitated and/or participated in virtual and in-person 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.

Staff continued outreach to support annual local hazard mitigation plan maintenance and eligibility for hazard mitigation grant programs, including by sending Annual Plan Letters to assist locals in maintaining their plans throughout the five-year cycle. In partnership with DEC, staff distributed guidance to locals on how to incorporate dam risk assessment and dam-related mitigation strategies into hazard mitigation plans in response to FEMA's new funding opportunity, the High Hazard Potential Dam grant program. To be eligible, a local government as a subrecipient must have a FEMA-approved local hazard mitigation plan in place that includes all dam risks and complies with the Stafford Act.

Public Facing Communications

DHSES's Public Information Office was responsible for all public-facing communication and media interaction by the agency, including responding to inquiries from media outlets in regions across the State, promoting DHSES's programs and initiatives, as well as communicating critical safety and preparedness information before, during and after emergencies. The Office fulfills these goals through several different mediums, including press releases, interviews, media briefings, social channels, and DHSES's website.

Media Interactions

The Office either directly produced or contributed to more than 80 news releases issued by New York State or DHSES covering 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 a statewide education program to protect firefighters and their families from the threat of cancer; the availability of N95 masks to help New Yorkers combat harmful wildfire smoke; New York's first-ever statewide cybersecurity strategy; and the addition of 29 names to the New York State Fallen Firefighter Memorial.

On many occasions, DHSES held and participated in numerous press conferences, media availabilities, and interviews to disseminate real-time response and recovery information during times of emergency. Topics included State emergency preparations; asset deployments; safety information before, during, and after severe weather; training exercises for law enforcement, firefighters and first responders at the State Preparedness Training Center (SPTC) and State Academy of Fire Science; graduation of law enforcement, firefighters, and State Fire Protection Specialists from State-offered training and certification courses, and the State Fallen Firefighter Memorial.

The office was responsible for responding to inquiries from the news media. In 2023, most media inquiries focused on the status and results of fire investigations conducted by OFPC; 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 current and past disasters and emergencies, and the State's new Threat Assessment Teams and OCT's new Domestic Terrorism Prevention Unit.

Social Media

By the end of 2023, DHSES's X (Twitter) account had 16,366 followers, which was a 7 percent increase compared to 2022. DHSES's new Digital Media and Marketing Manager posted new content, retweeted, and quote-tweeted content from other sources 2,233 times in 2023, which was a slight decrease from 2022. However, DHSES was able to increase its total engagement by 42 percent (likes, comments, shares, saves, etc.) and impressions by 107 percent (the number of times content was displayed) compared to 2022.

At the end of 2023, DHSES's Facebook page had 28,464 followers, which represents a 14 percent increase compared to 2022. The new Digital Media and Marketing Manager of DHSES posted new content 1,077 times throughout 2023, which was a 42 percent increase compared to 2022. Additionally, DHSES's Facebook engagements increased by 73 percent and impressions by 43 percent in 2023, as compared to 2022.

At the end of 2023, DHSES's Instagram account had 3,193 followers, which was a 37 percent increase compared to 2022. The new Digital Media and Marketing Manager posted new content (posts and stories) 1,999 times throughout 2023, which was 488 percent more than in 2022. Additionally, DHSES witnessed a 216 percent increase in Instagram engagements, and a 280 percent increase in impressions in 2023, compared to 2022.

In 2023, DHSES started using LinkedIn. There was an organic following of 3,323 followers which grew to 5,448 followers by the end of the year, which was a 64 percent increase overall. The new Digital Media and Marketing Manager posted new content 500 times throughout 2023, which increased overall engagement and impressions.

Website

DHSES's website had 323,758 total users in 2023, with 318,091 of them being new users. DHSES's website also had a total of 519,178 sessions (the number of times a user interacted on the website) with an average of 1.60 sessions per user. The overall engagement rate for 2023 was 59.19 percent and the five most visited pages were related to OFPC training, DHSES general training, Citizen Preparedness Corps Training, OEM, and OFPC.

Training and Educational Forums

One of DHSES'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. DHSES undertook significant public outreach efforts in 2023 to meet these goals from training individuals seeking to become volunteer firefighters, to educating New Yorkers on how to ensure their families are prepared for any disaster.

State Preparedness Training Center

DHSES oversees training activities at the SPTC, located at the former Oneida County Airport in Oriskany. DHSES provided cutting-edge, contemporary, and configurable training to a diverse group of public safety stakeholders across New York State. In 2023, the SPTC trained nearly 8,000 stakeholders in a wide range of topics tailored to address the current, and evolving, threat environment. The following major events took place at or were directly supported by the SPTC:

Law Enforcement Conferences, March

DHSES hosted its annual Law Enforcement Conferences in Saratoga Springs in March. These events, which were co-sponsored by the SPTC and OCT, included the 17th Annual Bomb Squad Symposium, the 12th Annual Explosive Detection Canine Handlers Conference, and the 8th Annual Tactical Team Leadership Forum. More than 300 local, State, federal, and international law enforcement officials took part in these events.

Canine Week, April

The SPTC hosted the 3rd Annual Canine Week in Oriskany in late April. This event brought more than 50 Explosive Detection Canine teams from across the State to the SPTC to train in a series of challenging skills lanes. Feedback from participants was excellent.

Moynihan Train Hall Full Scale Exercise, May

DHSES, through the SPTC and OCT, coordinated the Moynihan Train Hall Exercise Series. This effort, funded through the FY2019 Transit Security Grant Program, supported five exercises at the new Moynihan Train Hall in New York City, dating back to August 2020. This exercise series culminated with a full-scale exercise on May 11, 2023 while the Train Hall was closed overnight.

OFPC Technical Rescue Conference, June

In June, OFPC hosted its annual Technical Rescue Conference that brought together nearly 100 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 Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) rescue fields.

Tactical Week, June

The SPTC hosted the fifth annual "Tactical Week" in mid-June at the SPTC. Six 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, the

Syracuse Police Department SWAT Team earned the ‘top’ team award during this event. The SPTC will host Tactical Week in June 2024.

Public Safety Unmanned Aircraft Systems Summit, August

In August, DHSES hosted the fifth annual Public Safety UAS Summit. More than 350 local, State, and federal UAS stakeholders from across New York State participated in this event, which took place at Whitesboro High School on August 8 and at NUAIR on August 9. This was the largest Summit to date.

New York Hope Exercise, August

In August, the SPTC hosted the New York Hope exercise for the fourth time. The exercise supported 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.

U.S. Bomb Squad Association Training Technology Exercise, August

The SPTC hosted the U.S. Bomb Squad Association Training Technology Exercise in August of 2023. This event was focused on the evaluation and assessment of current and emerging bomb disposal technologies. Nearly 150 bomb technicians and military Explosive Ordnance Disposal participants from across the nation attended the event.

Crisis Negotiations - Kidnapping for Ransom cases, September

The SPTC expanded on its efforts to support crisis negotiators with a Kidnapping for Ransom course, which was delivered in September with partners from the New York State Association of Hostage Negotiators and experts from Scotland. This delivery was a “train-the-trainer” version to help form a small cadre of crisis negotiators in the State trained to handle low-frequency, high-risk cases.

Excelsior Challenge, October

In October, the SPTC hosted its premier training event: the Excelsior Challenge. This event brought Bomb Technicians, Explosive Detection Canine Teams, and Tactical Teams together to participate in scenarios based on the current threat environment. 150 law enforcement officials from more than 50 different agencies participated, making this the largest Excelsior Challenge to date.

Atomic City Challenge, October

OCT, in conjunction with the SPTC and partners from New York State Police, DEC, and New York State Department of Transportation, hosted the third Atomic City Challenge in Oriskany in October. The event was designed for law enforcement officials and other first responders who utilize radiological detection equipment to test their skills in a series of training lanes. This year’s event included more than 40 participants and the feedback was extremely positive.

Grand Central Madison Active Shooter Tabletop Exercise, November

DHSES, through the SPTC and OCT, coordinated the East Side Access Exercise Series, which was funded through the FY2021 Transit Security Grant Program. This exercise series began in July 2022 with a tabletop exercise on evacuation prior to the opening of Grand Central Madison, which opened in January 2023. In November, DHSES hosted a subsequent tabletop exercise for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority Police Department that focused on an active shooter response scenario.

Unmanned Aircraft System Indoor Flight Skills Course, December

The SPTC developed a robust UAS training program with a suite of four specialty public safety UAS courses. Through October 2023, 241* public safety professionals were trained through this program (not including 2023 New York State Public Safety UAS Summit participants). In December 2023, the SPTC launched a new UAS Indoor Flight Skills Course with partners from OFPC, DEC, State Police, and NUAIR.

Office of Fire Prevention and Control

For the last 60 years, 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 2023, OFPC's fire training program consisted of approximately 200 courses. Training and education courses were conducted for both career and volunteer fire departments throughout the State, serving approximately 100,000 firefighters in 1,754 fire departments. This training was 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.

In 2023, OFPC conducted 2,960 of these courses with 278 courses conducted and more than 4,500 students trained at the New York State Academy of Fire Science in Montour Falls. In total, 42,889 firefighters and emergency service personnel received some form of training or education through these courses, an increase of more than 10,000 personnel from last year.

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 41,000 New Yorkers received information through these public fire safety education programs statewide in 2022.

Office of Emergency Management

Training and 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 2023 the Training and Exercise Section coordinated the delivery of 250 trainings to more than 5,800 people. These trainings included 135 different courses in topics such as Incident Command System, emergency operations centers, exercise design, incident response and coordination, planning, FEMA's Basic Academy, Emergency Management Certification and Training, cyber, winter weather hazards, and coastal storms.

Training and Exercise provided planning, conduct, evaluation, and/or equipment support for 45 exercises across the State, including the Saratoga Performing Arts full-scale exercise, Ogdensburg Airport full-scale exercise, and several Emergency Support Function discussion-based exercises culminating in a functional State Emergency Operations Center exercise in December.

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 OEM and local emergency management personnel or by the American Red Cross. 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 370,000 New Yorkers have completed Citizen Preparedness Corps training. A key component of the in-person training was the distribution of free New York State 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, more than 90,500 kits have been distributed across the State.

Transportation Security and Emergency Preparedness Program

The Transportation Security and Emergency Preparedness Program was created in 2018 as a part of OEM to provide training to employees working in transportation hubs to increase their security awareness and active shooter preparedness. In 2023 through the end of November, the program engaged with 22 airports/terminals and conducted 68 briefings with a total of 1,137 attendees.

Winter Weather Tabletop Exercise – Field Staff

Members of the OEM Field Response team created and facilitated five winter weather tabletop exercises in five OEM zones across the State in 2023. The exercises were piloted in October and November of 2023 and will continue in 2024 in zones not covered initially. The exercises enhance coordination between levels of government and allow regional stakeholders to test out roles, responsibilities, and capabilities during a winter weather event.

Communications Unit

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 New York State Communications Unit (COMU). In 2023, DHSES trained 172 individuals in the COMU program. In addition to the formal COMU training program, in 2023 OIEC held three on-site familiarization and training sessions around the State, using OIEC's communications equipment, with a total attendance of 45 participants.

Policy Education Forums

Managing Chaos Workshops

These executive level workshops seek to share practical and academic insights related to crisis leadership, crisis decision making, and crisis communications. The workshops are developed based on the latest insights from academia and discussions with jurisdictions that have dealt with major mass casualty events. The workshops serve as a forum for sharing best practices and lessons learned. In 2023, DHSES conducted four workshops for nearly 100 participants.

Managing Stress and Promoting Workforce Resilience Workshops

Developed in collaboration with the Institute for Disaster Mental Health at the State University of New York at New Paltz, these workshops are intended for public sector personnel, including first responders. The workshops help participants to identify and understand operational and traumatic stress and promote workforce resilience through Psychological First Aid and related strategies. DHSES conducted three workshops for more than 200 participants in 2023.

Funding-Related Outreach

The Grant Program Administration (GPA) Unit was 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 (FY2019-2023). The Unit also managed more than \$458 million in state funding, which includes the Statewide Interoperable Communications, the Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes, and the new Domestic Terrorism Prevention grant programs. GPA has more than 3,000 active contracts with State, local and nonprofit stakeholders. GPA regularly conducted monitoring activities, including on-site visits. As of October 2023, GPA completed more than 250 monitoring visits and reviewed more than 600 contracts for programmatic and fiscal compliance. GPA staff communicates with local, State agency, and nonprofit stakeholders daily to effectively manage these grant programs. Additional stakeholder engagement efforts included:

Grants Program Administration Regional Workshops

In late September and early October 2023, GPA staff conducted Grants Regional Workshops in five separate locations across the State. These workshops are designed to provide technical assistance and to support subrecipient monitoring as required by FEMA. More than 250 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 were in attendance to provide updates on their critical programs and these workshops serve as a one-stop-shop for homeland security stakeholders.

Bomb Squad Outreach and Partnerships

GPA worked extensively with bomb squads across New York State and managed the Bomb Squad Initiative Grant Program to build the capabilities of local, FBI-accredited bomb squads in New York State. GPA coordinated extensively and routinely with OCT, SPTC, and local, State, and federal subject-matter experts on the development and implementation of this grant program. GPA provided program briefs at the March 2023 Law Enforcement Conferences and attended the Excelsior Challenge at the SPTC on October 2-6, 2023, to provide technical support to the Bomb Squads that required assistance. This was also a monitoring opportunity for grant-funded equipment and to provide an overview of equipment standards and technology advancements.

Applications for the FY2021 and FY2022 Bomb Squad Initiative were due November 1, 2023.

Explosive Detection Canine Team Outreach and Partnerships

The focus of this program was to enhance and sustain the explosive detection canine team capabilities across the State and has been developed in consult with federal and State explosive detection canine subject-matter experts. GPA provided program briefs on the Explosive Detection Canine Team Grant Program to canine handlers across the State at the March 2023 Law Enforcement Conferences, 2023 Canine Week, and Excelsior Challenge at the SPTC. The purpose of the brief was to educate stakeholders on grant programs including administrative requirements and objectives, highlighting

best practices, and collecting feedback to ensure programs are meeting the needs of the law enforcement community.

Applications for the FY2021 Explosive Detection Canine Team Grant Program were due November 1, 2023.

Tactical Team Outreach and Partnerships

The focus of this program was 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 2023 Law Enforcement Conferences and at the August Tac Week hosted by SPTC. The purpose of the brief was to educate the stakeholders on the grant programs to include administrative requirements and objectives, highlighting best practices, and collecting feedback to ensure programs are meeting the needs of this important law enforcement community.

Applications for the FY2021 Tactical Team Targeted Grant Program were due November 1, 2023.

Law Enforcement Conferences

Approximately 326 local, State, and federal Bomb Squads, Explosive Detection Canine Handlers, and Tactical Teams participated in the 2023 Law Enforcement Conferences held in Saratoga Springs from February 27 - March 3, 2023. 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 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 Canine Week (April 24-28, 2023), Tac Week (June 12-16), and Excelsior Challenge (October 2-6, 2023) at the SPTC, and provided an overview of grant funding available to support specialized law enforcement communities.

Technical Rescue and Urban Search and Rescue Outreach and Partnerships

The focus of this program was to enhance statewide partnerships and capabilities across the State. GPA staff and OFPC coordinated the development of the Technical Rescue/USAR Grant Program for the next funding cycle. GPA staff conducted a presentation on the grant program for approximately 15 representatives of Technical Rescue and USAR Teams at the inaugural Technical Rescue Leadership Forum hosted by OFPC as part of the annual Technical Rescue Conference held on June 1-4, 2023 at the SPTC.

Applications for the FY2021 Technical Rescue and Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) grant program were due November 1, 2023.

Hazardous Materials Regional Partnerships

GPA worked with OFPC to enhance statewide Hazardous Materials Regional Partnerships in the State through the funding of the 18 Regional Hazardous Materials Partnerships across the State. Additionally, through the FY2022-23 Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Grant Program, funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation, counties were required to coordinate through their regional partnerships to apply for projects to support preparedness activities. GPA staff also attended a Capital District Regional Hazardous Materials Team regional meeting on April 17 and attended the group's regional exercise on May 17 where staff observed training evolutions and monitored equipment purchased with grant funds.

Applications for the FY2021 and FY2022 Hazardous Materials Targeted Grant Program were due November 1, 2023.

Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Services Organizations Outreach

GPA staff worked with OFPC to develop a new \$25 million grant program appropriated in the 2023-2024 State budget. The Volunteer Fire Infrastructure and Response Equipment Grant Program seeks to provide funding support to New York State volunteer fire districts in renewing their aging infrastructure via construction, renovation, or purchase costs, as well as funding support of allowable fire service equipment to improve response capabilities. Fire districts that are comprised of 100 percent volunteer firefighters are eligible, and municipalities are also eligible to apply on behalf of their local volunteer fire departments. The application deadline for the Volunteer Fire Infrastructure and Response Equipment Grant Program is April 30, 2024.

Cybersecurity Grant Program Outreach and Partnerships

The focus of this program was 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, OCT's Cyber Incident Response Team, and the New York State Office of Information Technology Services worked to manage and execute this grant program, which was available via a competitive application process to State counties and units of local government, including cities, towns, and villages. Through the Cybersecurity Grant Program, GPA also partnered with the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center in promoting cybersecurity networks and resources that were free of charge to local government organizations.

Applications for the FY2021 Cybersecurity grant program were due November 1, 2023.

Critical Infrastructure Grant Program Outreach and Partnerships

The focus of this program was to provide 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 and OCT's Critical Infrastructure Unit coordinated the development of the Critical Infrastructure Protection grant program for the next funding cycle.

Applications for the FY2021 Critical Infrastructure Grant Program were due November 1, 2023.

Nonprofit Security Grant Program Outreach

GPA staff conducted monitoring visits with nonprofit organizations that have been awarded Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) funds from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security – FEMA. In November 2023, DHSES conducted new grantee orientation workshops for the subrecipients of FY2023 NSGP funds to provide technical assistance regarding grant contract compliance requirements.

Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes Program Outreach

GPA staff conducted 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.

NOTE: Current and future funding opportunities of the Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes Program are now administered by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services.

Support for the Domestic Terrorism Preventing Grant Program and Related Outreach

GPA, in coordination with various other DHSES offices, served on the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Workgroup. This group focus was on the implementation of Governor Hochul's Executive Order 18 that was issued on May 18, 2022, following the Buffalo Mass Shooting incident. GPA participated in several technical assistance webinars hosted through the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Unit to help educate the jurisdictions on the grant program funding available, identify best practices and provide guidance on the requirements. This brief was also provided at all five Regional Workshops that occurred in September and October 2023.

National Homeland Security Conference – Chicago, IL – National Outreach

The GPA Director and Contracts Unit Manager attended the National Homeland Security Conference that was held in Chicago, IL on July 24-27. The conference was attended by more than 1,500 homeland security professionals across the nation to include many of the State Administrative Agencies responsible for the management of various FEMA preparedness grant programs.

FEMA State Administrative Agency Summit – Washington D.C.

The GPA Director and Program and Planning Unit staff participated in a two-day summit coordinated by FEMA and several key State Administrative Agencies. The event was hosted at the Washington D.C. Emergency Operations Facility on October 24-25, 2023 and brought together 80 participants from various states and territories across the nation, including a large contingency of FEMA personnel from various program areas, focusing on preparedness funding. DHSES provided key feedback on important issues that could affect grant funding management and key changes that could improve

efficiencies for the State and local subrecipients. This event connected New York State with fellow State Administrative Agencies, grant managers, and FEMA staff to discuss common concerns, share best practices, and help to guide future grant programs.

Support for Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop

DHSES OEM's Training and Exercise Branch annually conducts an Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop to meet requirements set forth by FEMA's grant programs. This year's Workshop was held on February 1, 2023. The purpose of the Workshop was to identify preparedness priorities specific to training and exercise needs, which guide the development of the State's multi-year Integrated Preparedness Plan. GPA staff provided an overview of grant programs to approximately 65 attendees and participated in several breakout sessions.

Support for DHSES Strategic Policy Initiatives and Related Outreach

GPA worked closely with DHSES's Senior Policy Advisor on major agency initiatives including the County Emergency Preparedness Assessment, federal requirements such as the Threat/Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA), and the Stakeholder Preparedness Report (SPR). These efforts required outreach with State and local stakeholders to be successful. Coordination with these groups regularly occurred in 2023.

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 provided outreach regarding available grant opportunities, important updates as well as providing valuable technical assistance to grantees.

New York State Emergency Management Association Local District Meetings

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

Emergency Response & Security-Based Engagement

Preparing for, and subsequently responding to disasters, both natural and man-made is at the core of DHSES'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

The DHSES Cyber Incident Response Team (CIRT) assisted State and local government organizations to prepare for, prevent, and respond to cyber incidents by providing cyber training, targeted exercise programs, and cyber incident response.

CIRT responded to 70 cyber incidents in the State, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) government community, assisting entities in identification, containment, eradication, and a return to normal operations in a secure manor. All related cyber intel gathered during incidents was de-identified and disseminated to State entities for proactive and preventative actions. CIRT team members participated in and provided threat briefings at more than 25 cyber events that delivered critical information to hundreds of participants such as the members of the New York State Local Information Technology Directors Association conferences, and dozens of school districts throughout the State.

CIRT performed phishing campaigns and follow up training for 3,153 users of the SLTT community. The CIRT conducted seven tabletop exercises with follow-on reports to guide organizations' efforts. This program walks entities through a mock cyber incident, testing response plans, identifying/documenting gaps, identifying areas of strength, and highlighting areas for improvement.

CIRT executed seven cybersecurity risk assessments to evaluate all aspects of an entity's cyber program and provide a report with prioritized, actionable recommendations to improve its cybersecurity posture. Each assessment report provided steps for decreasing cyber risk with a two-year roadmap.

CIRT stood up a Cyber Capability Workshop Program for Local Government Leaders and held workshops for more than 150 local leaders. The workshops produced an activity report for participants to guide discussions in their government's cyber governance and decision-making, procurement, risk management, data management and training.

Engagements with Critical Infrastructure

DHSES's OCT Critical Infrastructure Unit (OCT-CIU) worked with public and private sector partners to identify and assess critical infrastructure across New York State. OCT-CIU regularly conducted targeted outreach and provides services to assess the security and vulnerability of critical infrastructure. Since January 1, 2023, OCT-CIU

completed 67 site visits and assessments at critical infrastructure sites throughout New York State.

The Unit collaborated with federal, State, local, and private sector partners to enhance the overall security of the State's most critical assets. The Critical Infrastructure Unit conducted 48 assessments of infrastructure in the chemical, energy, pipeline, and public drinking water industries as required by New York State Executive Law, which requires DHSES to review and enhance critical infrastructure security.

In addition:

- Six 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.
- Eight site visits were conducted in partnership with the State Police and Department of Agriculture and Markets to review industry practices for securing ammonium nitrate.
- Eight security projects were completed at the request of local government partners to focus on schools and publicly accessible government buildings.

OCT-CIU strived to improve and promote the sharing of threat related information, including maintaining processes to develop and distribute threat advisory information for public and private critical infrastructure stakeholders. In 2023, the Unit, in partnership with team members from the Public Safety Unit, developed a new initiative designed to educate owners and staff on signs and indicators of terrorism and reporting suspicious activity. Five trainings were provided since the initiative was launched.

Red Team Exercises and Terrorism Awareness Outreach

OCT partnered with law enforcement from more than 80 agencies throughout the State to conduct 'Red Team' exercises. These exercises, which involved federal, State, local and tribal counter terrorism personnel, assessed the effectiveness of the State's "See Something, Say Something" training program on businesses. During each exercise, personnel from State and local agencies concealed their identities and assessed the ability of businesses to recognize and report suspicious activity. Following each exercise, officials provided training on identifying and reporting suspicious activity.

In 2023, OCT conducted Red Team exercises at more than 1,000 locations in each of the State's 16 Counter Terrorism Zones. Teams assessed suspicious activity reporting and recognition at more than 860 retailers and businesses that sell chemicals, compounds, components, services, or rent space or resources that could be exploited by bad actors. Teams also assessed more than 200 infrastructure locations across the State, including stadiums and arenas, malls and shopping centers, colleges and universities, airports, transit hubs and other mass-gathering locations. Since 2016, DHSES has completed more than 6,400 Red Team exercises.

In 2023, more than 2,000 business and infrastructure personnel were educated on indicators and warning signs of terrorism through Red Team engagements. Separately, OCT trained more than 1,200 stakeholders through approximately 44 terrorism awareness presentations including the Critical Infrastructure initiative.

Domestic Terrorism Prevention Unit

The Domestic Terrorism Prevention Unit (DTPU) was created on May 18, 2022, when Governor Hochul signed Executive Order 18 after the racially motivated domestic terrorist attack in Buffalo that killed ten New Yorkers. Executive Order 18 also mandated that each county and New York City create and maintain Domestic Terrorism Prevention Plans and submit to OCT by December 31, 2022. Ten million dollars in grant funding was allocated to assist counties in creating or further developing multidisciplinary Threat Assessment and Management (TAM) teams comprised of local organizations such as law enforcement, schools, mental health agencies, and others to confront domestic terrorism and domestic violent extremism.

Since the DTPU was fully staffed in December 2022, it has:

- Delivered National Threat Evaluation and Reporting training to more than 250 stakeholders since June 2023 and in each of the five OEM Regions;
- Grew from three to 36 TAM teams which have reviewed more than 250 cases since inception;
- Developed New York State TAM team network that has more than 600 multidisciplinary stakeholders involved in targeted violence and terrorism prevention efforts;
- Held first TAM team webinars to showcase different counties' TAM team success stories with more than 90 participants;
- Provided funding and logistical support to a TAM conference in Rochester, New York that had more than 350 attendees;
- Made \$10 million in grant funding available to counties to assist in developing Domestic Terrorism Prevention Plan and TAM teams;
- Reviewed and provided feedback on all 58 Domestic Terrorism Prevention Plans;
- Created and distributed several hate crime and domestic violent extremism briefs to stakeholders focused on key targeted groups (race/ethnicity/national origin, LGBTQIA+, religion); and
- Presented on the DTPU and targeted violence and terrorism prevention efforts to approximately 400 Counter Terrorism Zone professionals across New York State.

Briefings and Information Sharing with Private Sector Partners

As part of an ongoing effort to disseminate relevant and timely information, OCT provided and facilitated briefings for public and private-sector partners as needed, including quarterly meetings with the Energy industry and a briefing for energy sector partners following the December 3, 2022 attack on critical infrastructure in North Carolina. OCT worked with 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.

OCT engaged with associations and groups such as the FBI's Infraguard chapters as well as public safety stakeholders to enhance awareness. Throughout the year, OCT engaged 120 Intelligence Liaison Officers across the State and made presentations at the annual Intelligence Liaison Officers', Emergency Medical Services', and New York State Association of Fire Chiefs' conferences. OCT programs and services promote suspicious activity reporting through presentations to targeted audiences, including healthcare and commercial facilities sectors, outreach to security personnel, and targeted public messaging in conjunction with public gathering events such as the New York State Fair.

Communications Consortiums and 911 Outreach

OIEC participated in regular meetings of the eight interoperable communications consortiums across the State, which are regional formations of adjacent counties with common needs or operations related to emergency communications including 911. The consortiums enhanced information-sharing and communications interoperability. OIEC brought the chairs of those eight consortiums together several times this year to discuss strategies.

DHSES held a symposium this spring for public safety radio and 911 representatives at the county, State, and federal level. The multi-day education and idea-sharing event provided representatives with an opportunity to learn from their peers.

OIEC conducted regular outreach to the 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 were held to keep all parties informed.

The OIEC Director served as the chair of the Statewide Interoperable and Emergency Communication Board. The Board met four times in 2023 to review structures and guidelines to maintain interoperable communications planning and coordination at the statewide level. The Board reviewed standards for the operations of public safety answering points, and reviewed guidelines regarding regionally based radio communications systems.

OIEC supported DHSES's statewide communications network and a fleet of deployable communications assets supported all levels of government in the event of large-scale planned or unplanned incidents.

Public Events

Throughout the year, staff from throughout DHSES's offices helped plan, coordinate, or represent DHSES 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 normal duties, DHSES representatives worked to educate New Yorkers and others on DHSES's operations or assist in another way.

Some of these events included, but was not limited to:

- Bethpage Air Show
- Belmont Stakes Horserace
- Boilermaker Road Race
- Baseball Hall of Fame Induction
- Cyber Impact
- Excelsior Challenge
- Fleet Week New York
- Formula E Race in Brooklyn
- Great New York State Fair
- Macy's Fourth of July Parade
- Macy's Thanksgiving Parade
- New York City 9/11 Memorial Ceremony
- New York City Pride Parade
- New York Auto Show
- New York Comic Con
- New York Governor's Debate
- New York State Fair
- 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