

Annual Report 2025



Franklin County Emergency
Management & Homeland Security

Message from the Chairman

01



William F. Verdra, Jr. Chairman

FCEM&HS Annual Report: 2025 accomplishments

I am honored to present the 2025 Annual Report for Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security (FCEM&HS), highlighting the agency's commitment to building disaster-resilient communities and prioritizing resident safety.

Why it matters: FCEM&HS's strategic planning and innovation are essential to adapting to evolving community challenges and ensuring safety and preparedness.

- Initiatives like the Everbridge Mass Notification System empower local jurisdictions to manage communications independently, strengthening both emergency and non-emergency messaging.

Key initiatives:

- The county-wide Family and Victim Assistance Centers Plan (FAC/VAC) to establish a centralized, coordinated, and compassionate resource for survivors, families, and loved ones in the event of a mass casualty or mass violence incident.
- Additionally, the Franklin County Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA), along with the Stakeholder Preparedness Review, was completed to identify the threats and hazards most likely to impact Franklin County and to determine the capabilities needed to address them.

What's next for 2026:

- FCEM&HS is updating the Franklin County Commodity Flow Study.
- Grove City will host a South West Area Joint Functional Exercise of coordinated; FAC/VAC, Joint Information Centers (JIC), and Intelligence and Investigation plans during a mass casualty event.
- 2026 plans include upgrading the Agency's Emergency Operations Center to coordinate response and recovery efforts across jurisdictions.

Gratitude: The success of FCEM&HS relies on the support and commitment of its staff, partner agencies, volunteers, and residents, fostering a protected and resilient community. I am very proud of the Agency and the Executive Board's leadership.

William F. Vedra, Jr.
FCEM&HS Executive Committee Chairman

Director's Message

02



Jeffrey J. Young Director

Welcome to the 2025 Franklin County Emergency Management & Homeland Security (FCEM&HS) Annual Report. This report highlights some of the work undertaken by the FCEM&HS staff, our jurisdictions, and our partners, all focused upon creating more prepared and resilient communities.

As we look forward to 2026, Franklin County will need to adapt to evolving changes at the federal level. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) continues to be scrutinized and may undergo dramatic changes through the President's Review Council or potential legislation in Congress.

These federal changes are expected to have direct local impacts, including reduced reliance on federal programs. Local jurisdictions may experience increased pressure to leverage state and local resources as disaster planning and recovery responsibilities continue to shift down to the local level. This will create greater expectations for local elected and appointed officials to be more visibly accountable for disaster preparedness, impacts, and recovery.

As an Agency, FCEM&HS will continue to lead our communities in navigating the opportunities these federal changes may present by advocating for more streamlined processes, simplified systems, and clearly defined responsibilities for resiliency.

The staff at FCEM&HS take great pride and ownership in the preparedness and resilience of every one of our communities. As you review the 2025 report, it should be with the understanding that these successes were a collective effort, and that we all share responsibility for continuing this progress into 2026 and beyond.

Jeffrey J. Young
FCEM&HS Director

Executive Committee

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The Franklin County Emergency Management & Homeland Security Executive Committee consists of 14 representatives from municipalities, townships, and villages across Franklin County. The committee provides oversight of the agency's operations and policies.

CHAIR

William F. Vedra, Jr.
Deputy City Administrator
City of Grove City

Kevin Boyce
Franklin County Commissioner
Alternate: Ken Wilson

Erica C. Crawley
Franklin County Commissioner
Alternate: Cheryl Penn

John O'Grady
Franklin County Commissioner
Alternate: Kris Long

Dallas Baldwin
Franklin County Sheriff
Alternate: Chief Deputy Jim Gilbert

Megan O'Callaghan
City Manager - City of Dublin
Alternate: Police Chief Justin Paez

Michael Bivens
Mayor - City of Whitehall
Alternate: Fire Chief Preston Moore

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City Manager - City of Westerville
Alternate: Fire Chief Brian Miller

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Mayor - City of Columbus
Alternate: Elon Simms

Kate McSweeney-Pishotti
Safety Director - City of Columbus
Alternate: Mike Halloran

Christian Selch
IT/Planning - City of Columbus
Alertnate: Vacant

Dr. Mysheika Williams Roberts
Health Commissioner - City of Columbus
Alternate: Tiffany Krauss

Ike Stage
Mayor - City of Grove City
Alternate: William F. Vedra, Jr.

Steve Schoeny
City Manager - City of Upper Arlington
Alternate: Fire Chief Chris Zimmer

Dion Grener
Jefferson Township Trustee
Alternate: Vacant

Mission & Authority

04

Mission

Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security (FCEM&HS) coordinates and prepares for all-hazards disaster planning, community education, warning, training, grant funding, response, and recovery efforts in order to prepare and protect the citizens of Franklin County before, during, and after natural and man-made disasters.

Authority

FCEM&HS, in accordance with Chapter 5502 of the Ohio Revised Code is organized as a regional agency under the 1988 Countywide Agreement, coordinates all-hazards emergency management and disaster preparedness functions for the 42 local government jurisdictions of Franklin County.

Jurisdictions Supported

City of Bexley	Village of Harrisburg	Pleasant Township
Blendon Township	City of Hilliard	Prairie Township
Village of Brice	Jackson Township	City of Reynoldsburg
Brown Township	Jefferson Township	Village of Riverlea
City of Canal Winchester	Village of Lockbourne	Sharon Township
Clinton Township	Madison Township	Truro Township
City of Columbus	Village of Marble Cliff	City of Upper Arlington
City of Dublin	Mifflin Township	Village of Urbancrest
Franklin Township	Village of Minerva Park	Village of Valleyview
City of Gahanna	City of New Albany	Washington Township
City of Grandview Heights	Norwich Township	City of Westerville
City of Grove City	City of Obetz	City of Whitehall
City of Groveport	Perry Township	City of Worthington
Hamilton Township	Plain Township	Franklin County

Franklin County Hazards

05

The Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) provides a comprehensive analysis of the hazards most likely to impact Franklin County. This assessment informs funding decisions and helps guide planning, training, and exercise priorities. Below are the hazards identified as posing the greatest risk to Franklin County.

Natural



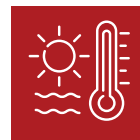
Drought



Earthquake



Extreme Cold



Extreme Heat



Flooding



Pandemic Public Health Emergency



Severe Summer Weather



Severe Winter Weather



Tornado

Technological



Cyber Incident



Dam Failure



Environmental Emergency



Radiological Incident



Hazardous Materials Incident Fixed Facility



Hazardous Materials Incident Transportation



Infrastructure Failure



Major Transportation Accident

Human-Caused



Active Shooter



Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear or Explosive (CBRNE)



Civil Unrest



Cyber Threat



Terrorism Mass Violence



Urban Fire

Alerting & Warning

06

As an all-hazards agency, FCEM&HS continuously assesses natural, human-caused, and technological threats that may impact public safety. When a situation arises or has the potential to escalate into a critical life safety concern, FCEM&HS employs multiple alert and warning methods to notify local jurisdictions and the public, ensuring timely awareness and appropriate protective action.

Franklin County Outdoor Warning Siren System

The Franklin County Outdoor Warning Siren System consists of 197 outdoor warning sirens located throughout more than 40 jurisdictions in Franklin County. The system is divided by four warning zones (NW, NE, SW, and SE) to more closely align siren activations with warning polygons issued by the National Weather Service (NWS) or the actual location of tornadic activity in Franklin County.

FCEM&HS tests the system each Wednesday at noon (weather permitting) to ensure the system is functioning properly. Weekly testing results indicated that the siren system maintained an average of 99% full operational status throughout 2025.

99%

Franklin County
Warning Sirens
Fully Operational

2025



FCEM&HS is responsible for maintaining the outdoor warning siren system, implementing technological enhancements, ensuring compliance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations, and strategically planning the relocation or expansion of sirens to strengthen coverage throughout the county.

Throughout 2025, FCEM&HS collaborated with multiple local jurisdictions to strategically plan the relocation, enhancement, replacement, and installation of additional sirens to improve coverage.

Five local jurisdictions including Jefferson Township, Columbus, New Albany, Gahanna, and Franklin Township replaced, relocated and upgraded sirens to include solar charging kits in 2025. Solar sirens allow for location flexibility and energy efficiency. FCEM&HS replaced the siren repeater at the Franklin County Courthouse downtown.

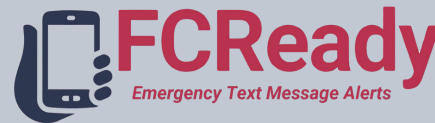
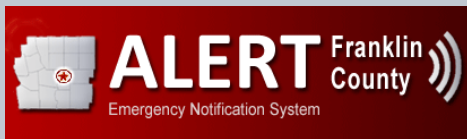
Alerting & Warning

07

Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security uses Everbridge as the mass notification platform to notify county residents of planned and unplanned events. As the Everbridge account holder, FCEM&HS manages and maintains the Everbridge system and offers access to the platform to all Franklin County jurisdictions.

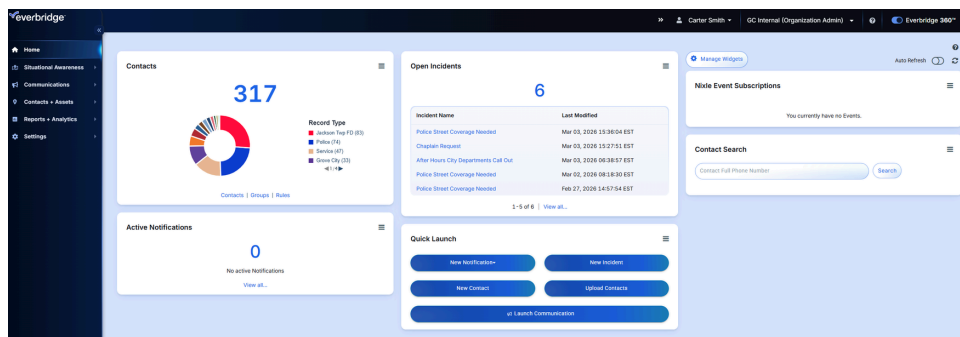


FCEM&HS provides alerting through ALERT Franklin County and FCReady. The platform also supports the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS), enabling the Agency to send Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs) in the event of a community emergency.



ALERT Franklin County, a mass notification system, to provide timely alerts and critical information to residents during potential emergency situations across Franklin County. The system enables rapid communication through multiple channels—including phone calls, text messages, and email—to ensure the public receives important safety instructions when it matters most.

FCReady is a text only message alert system that provides a quick and easy way for residents and visitors in Franklin County to receive emergency information. Severe weather alerts are not sent through FCReady since the system does not require a profile or personal information. Registration is done by texting FCReady to 888777.

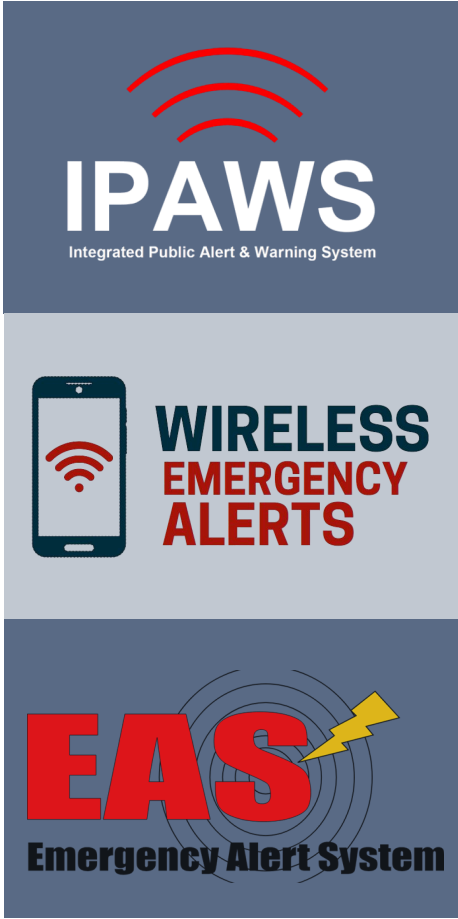


FCEM&HS continues to work with local jurisdictions to independently develop and manage their own organizational platform within the mass notification system.

By leveraging Everbridge's capabilities, jurisdictions can communicate directly with their residents, ensuring more direct and timely outreach.

Alerting & Warning

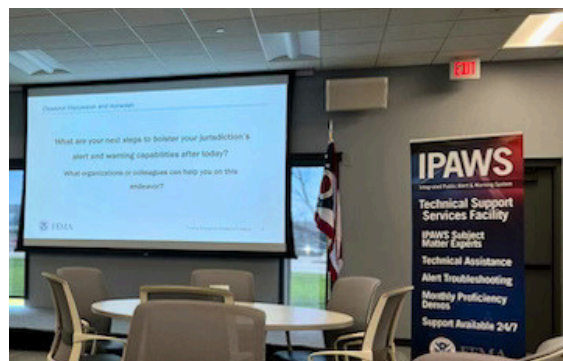
08



FCEM&HS, in collaboration with county jurisdictions, is an authorized public alerting authority that can send electronic alerts through the IPAWS system. IPAWS is FEMA's national system that provides authenticated emergency and life-saving information to the public through mobile phones using Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) and through the media via the Emergency Alert System (EAS).

In early 2025, Deputy Director Thomas Page, Jr. and Technology Manager Alex Chan traveled to Hamilton County to participate in Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) training.

This training focused on strengthening the county's ability to communicate emergency information quickly and effectively to the public through alerting systems such as Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) and the Emergency Alert System (EAS).



Everbridge User Group Meetings

FCEM&HS coordinates opportunities for public and private Everbridge users to stay informed about new system features while providing valuable feedback to Everbridge representatives. To support accessibility and flexibility, FCEM&HS hosted two user group meetings focused on sharing updates and best practices.

Both events drew participants from a wide range of sectors across Central Ohio, including healthcare, primary and higher education, banking and finance, public and private transportation, science and technology organizations, and public safety agencies representing city, county, and state levels of government.



Operations

09

The Operations Program plays a critical role in supporting operational activities spanning multiple jurisdictions, aimed at mitigating immediate hazards, safeguarding lives and property, establishing situational awareness, and restoring normal operations in the aftermath of natural or human-caused disasters.

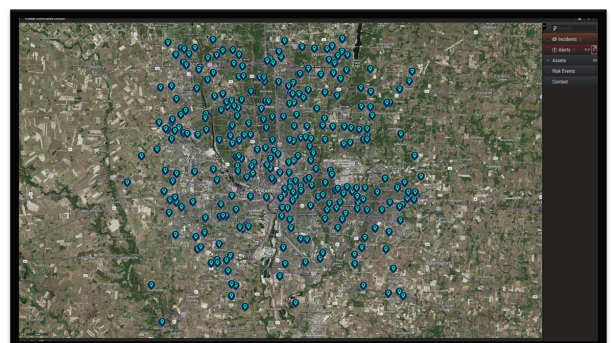
The program is tasked with implementing plans and procedures, overseeing warning systems and resource allocation, leveraging information technology to enhance the common operational picture, and managing the activities of both the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the Multi-Agency Coordination Center (MACC). Additionally, the program is tasked with ensuring a response to all-hazard events around the clock, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To meet this requirement, FCEM&HS employs an On-Call System, assigning two staff members to monitor telephone and email communications outside of regular working hours.

2025 Event Assessment

FCEM&HS operates the Agency Assessment Center to maintain situational awareness of incidents and events impacting Franklin County. The Center monitors and coordinates responses to both planned and unplanned events, ranging from severe weather incidents and large public gatherings such as Red, White & Boom to critical civic activities including primary and Election Day voting. Through real-time monitoring, information sharing, and coordination, the Agency Assessment Center enhances countywide preparedness, strengthens response capabilities, and supports overall community resilience.

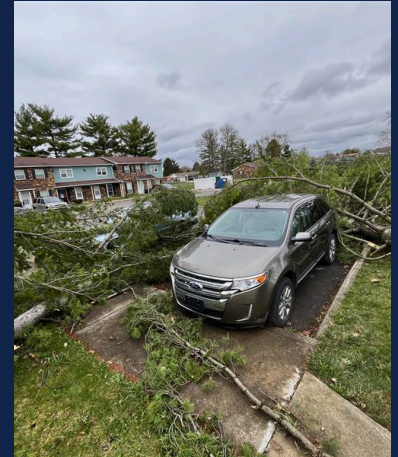
2025 Weather Incidents

 Air Quality Alert - 7	 Tornado Warning - 1
 Flood Warning - 5	 Winter Storm Watch - 1
 Heat Advisory - 2	 Winter Weather Advisory - 9
 Tornado Watch - 2	 Severe Thunderstorm Warning - 14



Franklin County Spring Tornado

During the evening hours on March 20, 2025, a tornado briefly touched down in southern Franklin County, impacting the City of Obetz. The tornado, with winds up to 85 mph, caused minor damage to homes, carports, and trees along a 2.58-mile path. No injuries or fatalities were reported.



GFL Refinery Petroleum Spill

On May 20, 2025, residents reported a strong “foreign odor” near 4001 East 5th Avenue in Columbus. A railroad tanker car being refilled released gallons of petroleum. The spill entered nearby creeks, moving south from the Turkey Run–Mason Run area southwest toward Etna Street. Fire crews monitored Mason Run as far as Refugee Road to support cleanup efforts.



I-270 Tanker Fire

On June 22, 2025, a pickup on the ramp from southbound Interstate 270 to eastbound State Route 161, struck a tanker carrying 8,500 gallons of fuel. The impact pushed the tanker into a guardrail, causing it to overturn and ignite, sending black plumes of smoke visible for miles.



Homeland Security

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Ohio Counter Terrorism Conference

January 2025 began with Franklin County hosting the second Ohio Counter Terrorism & Homeland Security Conference. The event brought together more than 250 public safety professionals from across the state to share knowledge, lessons learned, and emerging technologies aimed at strengthening preparedness and response. Presentations covered a range of timely topics, including Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Threat Recognition, 911 hoax and swatting case studies, and national active shooter incidents.



Unified Command Begins in Planning

Establishing a Unified Command

- Forms a joint leadership structure across agencies
- Creates an Integrated Emergency Action Plan (EAP)
- Aligns strategies and objectives across all stakeholders
- Establishes clear decision-making authority

Operationalizing Unified Command

- Single Command Post (CP) with representation from all agencies
- Centralized decision-making process
- Coordinated tactical deployment
- Integrated information sharing
- Joint public information releases

Remember: "Check your ego at the door. There is no room for a dinosaur's mindset in the planning phase." – successful unified command requires open communication, mutual respect and collaborative leadership.



Unified Command is most effective when established during pre-event planning and improved during an incident.



National Homeland Security Conference

The second half of 2025 included local Homeland Security staff and partners attending the National Homeland Security Conference in Washington, D.C.

In addition to hearing from national speakers and networking with peers from across the country, the conference serves as the annual business meeting for Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant recipient points of contact. Attendees received updates on federal funding programs, policy changes, and emerging challenges facing homeland security partners.

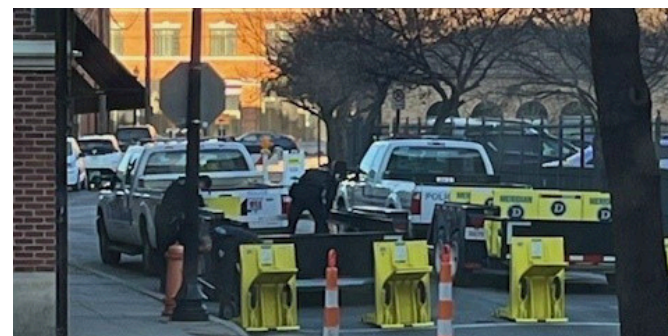
Homeland Security

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Large Crowd Situational Awareness and Event Support

A primary focus of FCEM&HS and the Homeland Security Coordinator is supporting planning and security operations for large-crowd and soft-target events throughout Franklin County. This includes assisting with the planning and operation of the Arnold Sports Festival Unified Command, the City of Columbus Red, White & BOOM! celebration, and the Columbus Marathon.

Support also includes the use of federal grant funding to assist with Ohio State University football game day security operations, including Joint Hazard Assessment Teams (JHAT) and under-vehicle bomb detection sweeps.



Training & Exercises

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Training and exercises are vital to strengthening community preparedness. FCEM&HS is committed to facilitating essential training opportunities throughout the region for emergency management professionals, first responders, public health officials, volunteer organizations, and other key partners who help keep Franklin County safe.

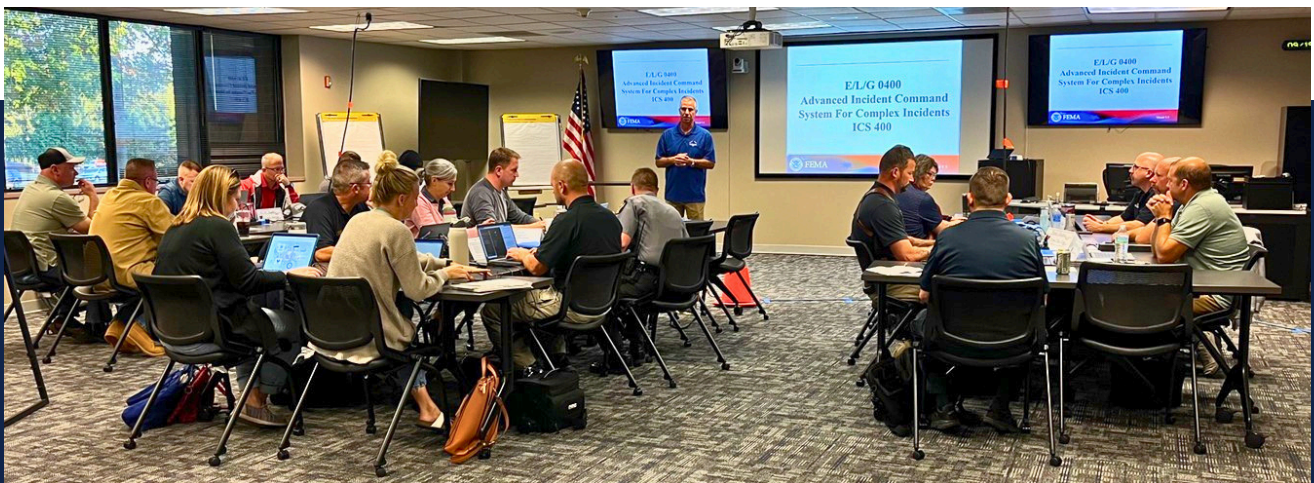


2025
By the
Numbers

Classes
33

Participants
658

Hours
9,040



Training & Exercises

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In 2025, Agency staff conducted and participated in multiple exercises with public and private partners to validate community preparedness and response capabilities. These activities assessed the effectiveness of existing plans, policies, and procedures across a full range of threats and hazards, and strengthened coordination across public health, safety, infrastructure, and private-sector partners.

2025 Exercises

These included the Columbus Regional Airport Authority (CRAA) Annual FAA Exercise and the Columbus BioWatch Full Scale Exercises, Franklin and Delaware County Annual LEPC Exercises as well as nine tabletop exercises including ChemPak, Bexley Police and Schools, Catholic Charities, Columbus Scioto Watershed, Anheuser-Busch, Grove City/South Western City Schools, Scioto River Oil Spill, and the National Weather Service (NWS) Integrated Warning Team Workshop. Together, these efforts enhanced regional preparedness and multi-jurisdictional response capabilities.



Planning

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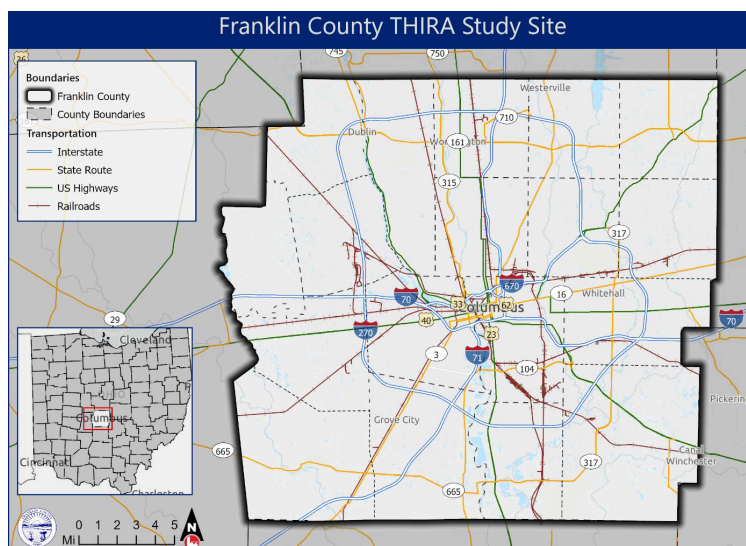
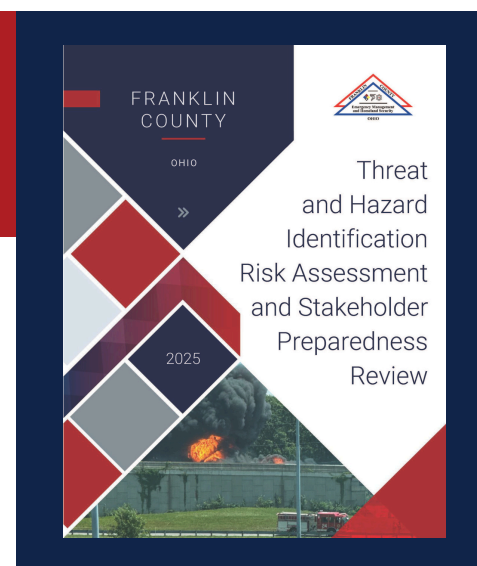
Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security is responsible for the development, coordination, and maintenance of over 60 local plans, including the Franklin County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and associated Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) and Annexes. In times of crisis, staff members are tasked with creating specific plans tailored to the situation, generating Situation Reports to convey critical information, and utilizing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to enhance decision-making.

They also provide expertise to county partners and review emergency plans for all schools in Franklin County, ensuring comprehensive preparedness and response measures are in place. FCEM&HS reviewed over 200 School Emergency Operation Plans in 2025.

Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR)

The Threat and Hazard Identification Risk Assessment (THIRA) and Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR) are tools used to assess a community's preparedness and resilience. While both aim to gauge readiness, they do so differently.

The THIRA, updated every three years, is a three-step risk assessment process that brings stakeholders together to identify threats and hazards, understand the risks they pose, and determine the capabilities needed to address them. The SPR, updated annually, is a three-step self-assessment that complements THIRA by allowing communities to evaluate current capabilities, identify gaps, and assess the impact of funding on preparedness.



In 2025, FCEM&HS worked with local stakeholders to update Franklin County's THIRA and SPR plans. Using existing threat and hazard data, the team developed disaster scenarios based on the county's most significant threats.

Focus Groups were also established, drawing on representatives from various Essential Support Functions (ESFs), to further evaluate and refine preparedness strategies

Family Assistance Center/Victim Assistance Center Plan FAC/VAC

A Family Assistance Center (FAC) and Victim Assistance Center (VAC) are often established following a mass casualty, mass fatality, or mass violence incident to provide a centralized, compassionate location for survivors, families, and loved ones. These centers deliver timely and accurate information regarding missing, injured, or deceased individuals; connect individuals with critical support services; and assist with victim identification and reunification efforts.

In December, FCEM&HS finalized the Franklin County FAC/VAC Plan, outlining a coordinated, countywide framework for supporting families and victims impacted by mass casualty or mass fatality incidents arising from any hazard or disaster. The plan formalizes roles, responsibilities, and operational procedures to ensure a structured, compassionate, and efficient response during times of crisis.

The Franklin County Annual Snow Emergency Briefing was held alongside the 2nd Annual Central Ohio Snow Plow Roadeo in November. Hosted by the Central Ohio Chapter of the American Public Works Association in partnership with the Columbus Department of Public Service, the event provided a platform for public works agencies to network, exchange best practices, and demonstrate their skills on a challenging snow plow course.

The snow emergency briefing covered the three snow emergency levels—Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3—outlining how each designation affects businesses, government operations, and schools, guiding critical decision-making during winter weather events. The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) highlighted how they monitor the interstates and discussed their new wireless driver alert capabilities. Representatives from various agencies, including the National Weather Service, shared valuable insights and answered questions regarding the upcoming winter season.

Snow Emergency Briefing



Chemical Emergency Preparedness Advisory Council (CEPAC)

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Chemical Emergency Preparedness Advisory Council

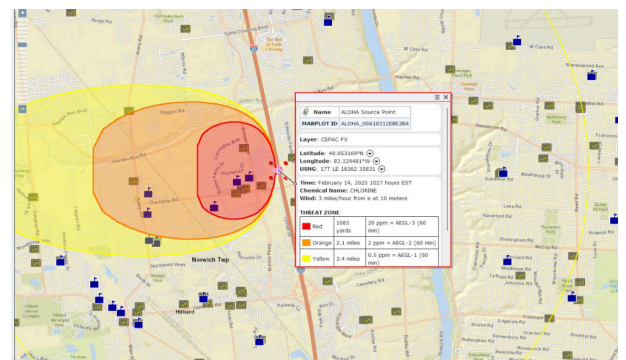
In Ohio, each county is required by the State Emergency Response Commission to maintain a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). In Franklin County, this role is fulfilled by the Chemical Emergency Preparedness Advisory Council (CEPAC), which oversees hazardous materials planning in accordance with the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act, Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, and Ohio Revised Code Chapter 3750. The organization is responsible for maintaining the county's emergency response plan, ensuring public access, managing information requests, providing public notification, and responding to community input.

2025 LEPC Annual Exercise

On May 29, 2025, Franklin County Emergency Management & Homeland Security (FCEM&HS), in coordination with CEPAC, conducted the annual Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)-required functional exercise. This exercise assessed hazardous materials (HAZMAT) response capabilities throughout Franklin County, including the City of Hilliard and Norwich Township.

This exercise validated responder capabilities in hazard identification, Incident Command System (ICS) implementation, shelter activation and notification, victim triage and transport, responder and community safety planning, medical coordination related to HAZMAT exposure and decontamination, and the dissemination of coordinated emergency public information.

Participating emergency partners included the City of Hilliard, Hilliard Police, Norwich Township Fire, Franklin County and Columbus Public Health, City of Grove City, Washington Township Fire, Northwest Regional Emergency Communications Center (NRECC), Worthington Fire, Northwest Area Strike Team (NAS-T), Mount Carmel Hospital, Ohio Health, COTS, American Red Cross, Ohio Emergency Management Agency (OEMA), and the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC).



Regional Communications

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Effective communication systems are vital for Franklin County's first responders, enabling the fast exchange of critical information for coordinated, informed action during emergencies. Modern wireless networks must support a wide range of incidents from severe weather to terrorism while ensuring interoperability so responders can communicate seamlessly across agencies and jurisdictions.

The Franklin County Regional Communications Program strengthens regional coordination, enhances operational readiness, and improves overall emergency response capabilities, helping build a safer and more resilient community.

Next Generation 911

To enhance caller location accuracy and ensure emergency calls are routed to the appropriate dispatch center, Franklin County continued its preparedness for Next Generation 911 (NG911) in 2025. To support this initiative, the County engaged Datamark to assist with the data cleanup necessary for system readiness.

In collaboration with Datamark, the Auditor, and the Engineer, FCEM&HS is developing and implementing a standardized addressing format to support seamless integration of the new technology. FCEM&HS is also working with GIS professionals from throughout Franklin County to align jurisdictional boundary lines, with all 911 answering points actively participating in data readiness and boundary facilitation efforts.



In conjunction with the Ohio Statewide Interoperable Emergency Communications (SIEC) Committee and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), FCEM&HS revised and completed the Tactical Interoperable Communications (TIC) Plan in 2025.

Through this collaborative effort, all 15 counties in the Homeland Security Region 4 worked to compile their communications information, resources, and assets into a comprehensive document that can be readily accessed in the event of a large-scale incident.



Tactical Interoperable Communications

Agency Resources

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FCEM&HS acquired additional resources designed to strengthen preparedness not only within Franklin County, but throughout the surrounding region. By investing in advanced equipment, specialized technology, and critical response assets, the agency equipped first responders and partner agencies with additional tools to enhance coordination, efficiency, as well as response and recovery capabilities.

Last year, Mobile Security Camera Trailers were deployed to enhance safety and situational awareness at several public events, including the Arnold Sports Festival, early voting at the Board of Elections, Sonic Temple Music Festival, the Memorial Tournament, Fourth of July celebrations, the Columbus Marathon, Circleville Pumpkin Show, and more. The FirstNet Mini CRD/SLC was also used during a training exercise in Holmes County.

Matterport 3D Imaging Camera System

This 3D camera can be utilized to capture detailed, immersive 3D images of structures and environments, supporting damage assessments, insurance documentation, pre-incident planning, training exercises, community outreach, and post-disaster recovery documentation.



FirstNet Rapid Deployable Systems

FirstNet Rapid Deployable Systems (Mini CRD/SLC) enhance emergency response by providing portable cellular and Wi-Fi connectivity when existing infrastructure is unavailable, damaged, or overloaded. These systems ensure secure, prioritized communications so first responders can maintain coordination and situational awareness.



Mobile Security Camera Trailers

Two mobile security camera trailers enhance security and situational awareness during emergencies and public events. The trailers provide real-time monitoring to support threat detection, incident response, and overall public safety across Franklin County.



Volunteer Resources

Volunteers are the backbone of FCEM&HS, supporting disaster management efforts at every stage including response and recovery. When emergencies occur, they are often among the first to step forward, providing critical support in the hours and days that follow. Their ongoing dedication strengthens our response capabilities and makes a lasting impact on the safety and resilience of the Franklin County community. The Franklin County & Columbus Medical Reserve Corps (FC&C MRC), Franklin County Community Emergency Response Team (FC CERT), and Franklin County Auxiliary Communication Program (FC AUXCOMM) are essential volunteer programs that help strengthen community resilience.

The FC&C MRC coordinates medical and non-medical volunteers to support public health preparedness and response efforts, including hands-on exercises such as moulage training. FC CERT empowers residents through training to prepare for hazards in their communities. The Franklin County Auxiliary Communication Program (AUXCOMM) provides emergency communications support when primary systems are disrupted. Together, these programs strengthen public safety and emergency response capabilities.

Franklin County & Columbus Medical Reserve Corps (FC&C MRC)

Franklin County Community Emergency Response Team (FC CERT)

Franklin County Auxiliary Communication Program (FC AUXCOMM)



Public Information

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The Public Information Program ensures the delivery of accurate, timely, and coordinated information to residents before, during, and after emergencies. Year-round, FCEM&HS promotes disaster preparedness through speaking engagements, news releases, social media, and participation in community events.



In 2025, FCEM&HS continued to use social media to keep residents informed about severe weather and share important safety information. From announcing siren test cancellations to providing seasonal safety tips, our platforms play a key role in delivering timely updates to Franklin County residents.



Throughout the year, FCEM&HS launched several public information campaigns promoting preparedness, including our mass notification system, Alert Franklin County and FCReady, as well as Severe Weather Awareness Week, Flood Safety, Ohio Statewide Tornado Drill, Lightning and Fireworks Safety, National Preparedness Month, ShakeOut Earthquake Drill, Cybersecurity Awareness, and others.



**DISASTERS CAN OCCUR ANYTIME, ANYWHERE.
GETTING THE RIGHT INFORMATION TO THE
RIGHT PEOPLE AT THE RIGHT TIME IS CRITICAL**

Lithuanian Dignitaries Visit

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In May, Franklin County Emergency Management & Homeland Security (FCEM&HS) welcomed emergency management professionals from Lithuania for an engaging exchange on emergency preparedness and response. The visit was coordinated through the Grove City Rotary Club's sponsorship of the Open World Program with the U.S. Congressional Office of International Leadership (COIL), which brings emerging leaders from Eurasia to the United States to collaborate with their American professional counterparts and share knowledge and best practices.

FCEM&HS staff, alongside members of the Columbus Division of Fire Bomb Squad and HazMat Team participated in a discussion focused on emergency preparedness strategies, response coordination, and operational best practices. The exchange provided an opportunity not only to share expertise, but also to gain valuable insights and perspectives from our Lithuanian colleagues.



Community Outreach

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In 2025, FCEM&HS began engaging the community through outreach initiatives designed to raise awareness and share preparedness information. Staff delivered presentations to students at Gems Middle School, KIPP Elementary School, and Alpine Elementary Latchkey, educating youth on emergency readiness, available resources, and actions they can take to reduce risk. Staff participated in the Northland 4th of July parade as well as National Night Out. These efforts helped build early awareness and support long-term community resilience.



Community Outreach

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Each year, the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness (OCSWA), in collaboration with the National Weather Service and the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, sponsors the annual Severe Weather Awareness Poster Contest. The contest is open to Ohio students in kindergarten through eighth grade and serves as an engaging way to teach children about severe weather safety and preparedness. Through their artwork, students illustrate Ohio weather hazards such as tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, and flooding, reinforcing important safety messages.

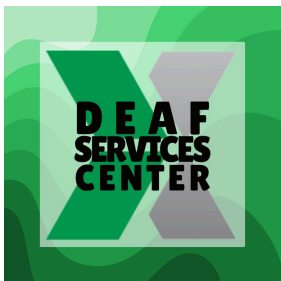
In 2025, Audra Cheney, a first grader from Saint Cecilia School in Franklin County, earned first-place honors in her grade level, demonstrating both creativity and a strong understanding of weather preparedness.

In February, FCEM&HS participated in the Franklin County Treasurer's Office annual Black History Month Celebration, themed "African Americans and Labor," to raise awareness, share preparedness information, and educate the public about emergency readiness, available resources, and actions to reduce risk.



In honor of Deaf Awareness Month, FCEM&HS took part in the Deaf Services Center's inaugural "In the Loop" Path to Health, Safety and Wellness Summit in September. Recognizing the barriers Deaf individuals often face in accessing vital emergency information, FCEM&HS used the event to connect with the community and share key resources.

Staff helped participants sign up for emergency alerts through ALERT Franklin County, provided guidance on disaster preparedness, and offered tips on staying safe before, during, and after emergencies, including what to include in an emergency supply kit in case of a disaster.



Grant Funding

25

FCEM&HS oversees the allocation and dispersal of grant funding to Franklin County. These grants, distinct from disaster-related funding, are provided to enhance the capabilities of local governments in preventing, protecting against, responding to, and recovering from both natural and man-made disasters. The funding originates from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and is distributed through the Ohio Emergency Management Agency (OEMA).

In 2025, grant funding supported updating the county's Threat and Hazard Identification Risk Assessment (THIRA), developing the Family Assistance/Victim Assistance Center Plan, sending staff to the National Homeland Security Conference, and covering overtime for security at the Ohio State University home football games. FCEM&HS improved building security with fencing and the installation of shatterproof window film while developing specifications for technology upgrades in the Emergency Operations Center.



Grant funding supported Citizen Preparedness by providing essential sustainment items, including lanterns, tent weights, wheel locks, tables, supply containers, batteries, radios, GMRS repeaters, tourniquets, and AED supplies, helping maintain readiness across the county.

Grants Administered Through FCEM&HS

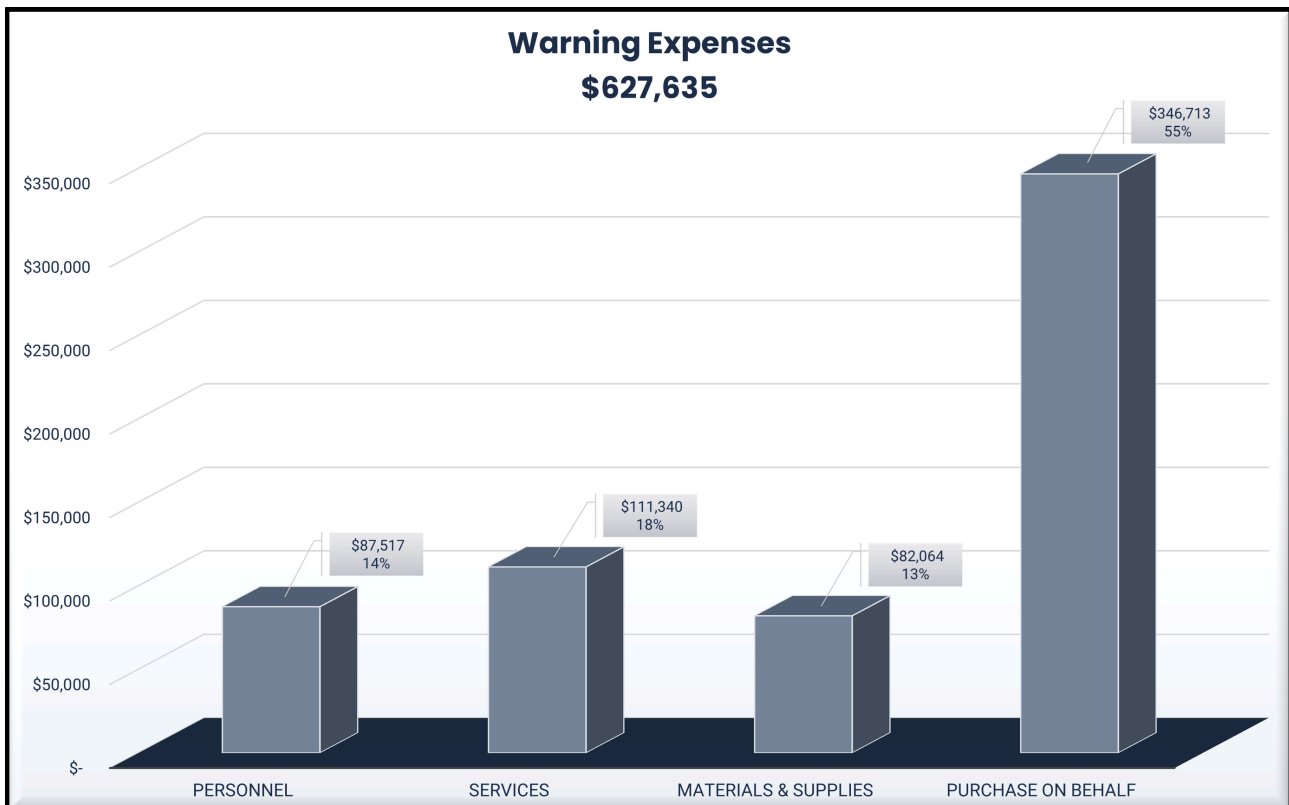
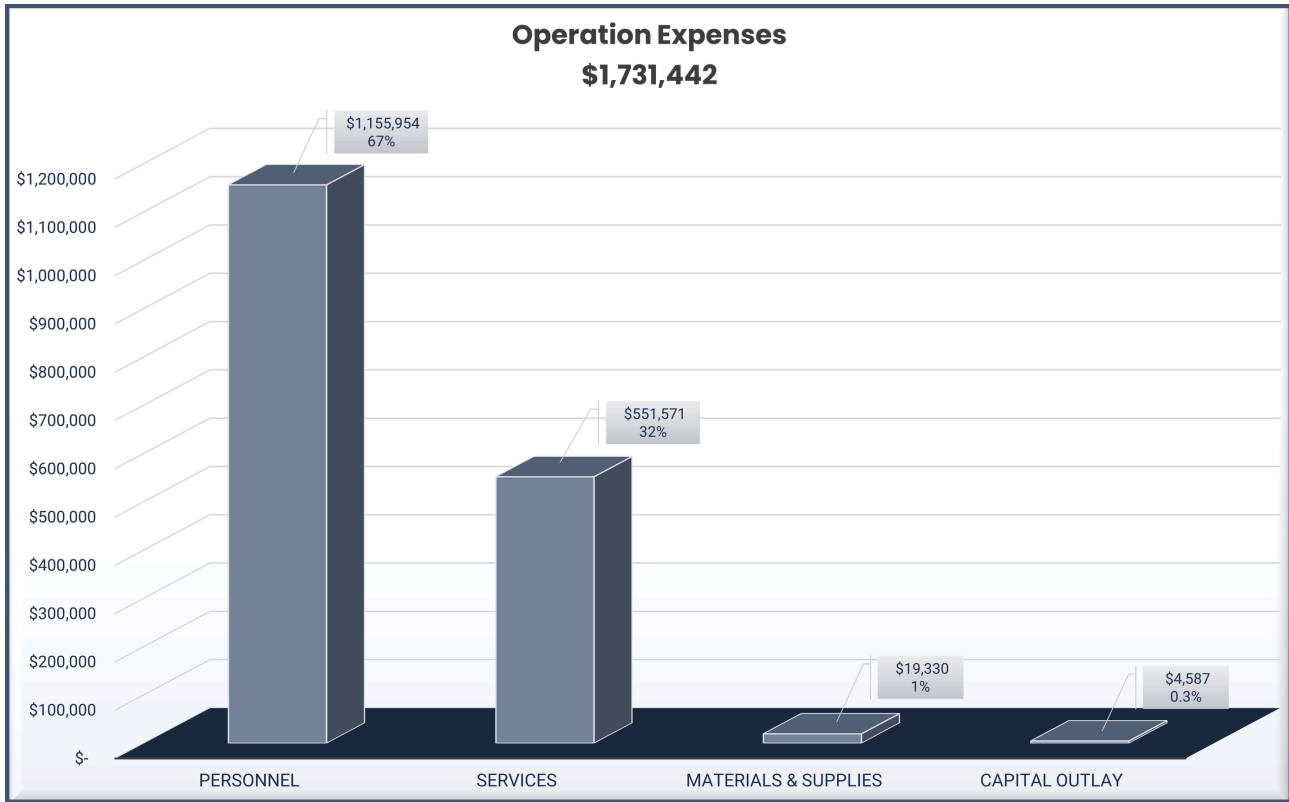
Emergency Management Performance Grant

State Homeland Security Grant

Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Grant

Public Utilities Commission of Ohio Grant

Urban Area Security Initiative Grant





Franklin County Emergency Management & Homeland Security



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