

EMPG Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 11, 2011
1000-1500

State Operations Center, Governor's Conference Room, Austin

In Attendance

- Members: Joe Ferro (Chairman/City of Webster); Pat McMacken (Co-Chair City of Irving); Tim Ocnaschek (Secretary/City of Beaumont), Larry Trevino (City of San Antonio); Sarah Somers (Grayson County); Chuck Frazier (Brazos County); Frank Patterson (City of Waco); Dale Little (Midland County); Judge Joe English (Nacogdoches County); David Coatney (City of Round Rock); Michelle Carrahan (Harris County); Kevin Starbuck (City of Amarillo); Ricardo Gonzalez (City of El Paso); Jose Ortiz (City of Fort Worth); Jeff Kelley (Orange County); Danielle Hale (Nueces County); David Coatney (City of Round Rock); Patrice Reisen (Travis County);
- Visitors: Sharon Nalls (City of Houston);
- Liaisons: Shari Ramirez-MacKay (TDEM); Lisa Resendez (TDEM); Doris Grisham (TDEM); James Kelley (TDEM); George Mike (SAA); Alex Landesco (TDEM)

Meeting Recap

Overview of discussion topics:

- Shari Ramirez-MacKay discussed the funding formula used by TDEM to calculate jurisdictional allocations for 2011 EMPG awards. The formula incorporated a 15% limit to funding changes from the previous year to prevent huge changes all at once. The formula assessed population based on 2010 census information and plan coverage, threat based on the hazard index from jurisdictional Basic Plans, and progress score based on the subrecipient risk assessment worksheet submitted by TDEM reflecting basic jurisdictional performance standards/requirements.
- Chairman provided background of past meeting formulas and facilitated discussion of a spreadsheet that allowed multiple factors to be assessed regarding impact on local jurisdictions.
- TDEM staff addressed the impending EMPG guidance changes and some training and exercise changes, as well as some state initiatives to assist local jurisdictions with compliance and collaboration. TDEM received feedback and several recommendations from the committee members.

Key concerns included:

- Goal to avoid subjective inputs as much as possible. The threat hazard analysis was a key area discussed since it has no current standards and is totally subjective and determinations arbitrary.
- The formula needs to be equitable and not show disparate impact on small or medium size jurisdictions.
- The establishment of an agreeable formula is being drawn out too long and impacting planning for the next fiscal year as well as potentially creating additional requirements affecting the past fiscal year.

Decisions made: (Recommendations)

- Deadlines for financial reports will be extended to 30 days instead of the current 15 mandated to allow for end of the months reports to be completed.
- Members reaffirmed the need to include budget in the formula and wanted to have an opportunity to assess the formula spreadsheet on an individual basis where each person would have time to truly assess impacts across the EMPG jurisdictions and assess the big picture.
- Members reaffirmed support noted in previous minutes of enforcing standards already in place which essentially serves as eligibility for EMPG funding. The committee believes these are basic compliance standards and should be treated as pass/fail rather than a factor in the funding formula. Guidance was previously recommended as to latitude TDEM should provide jurisdictions. Thus, everyone should be on even footing since this is a performance grant.
- The Committee believes the threat hazard summary reflected by jurisdictional Basic Plans, should have some standards to improve standardization and objectivity. Danielle Hale submitted a recommendation for review, but discussion will need to occur in subsequent meetings.
- Potential factors for the funding formula should be those currently under review, and future discussion should be restricted to the weighting of those factors.

Issues requiring further discussion/next meeting:

- Review the outcome and impacts of the recommended formula factors.
- Possible review of federal EMPG guidance with a recommendation for changes.

Assignments

Item	Assigned to:	Date due:
Provide and disseminate a TDEM interim explanation regarding the grant award period versus the reporting guidance	Lisa	10-21-2011
Provide and disseminate a TDEM directive regarding submission of training certificates to document all required training courses for EVERY EMPG member	Lisa	10-21-2011
Send EMPG members the TDEM Subrecipient	Lisa	When

Risk Assessment Worksheet, rules for compliance and categories where allowances are available.	(in conjunction with minutes below)	possible

Next Meeting

Date/time:

- November 10, 2011/ 1000-1500

Location:

- State Operations Center (SOC)

Past meeting Decisions:

June 27

- Committee rules and guidance approved
- New Applicants will be required to demonstrate full eligible program compliance for one full year with no funding, after which the eligible jurisdiction will be considered on an equitable basis with every other previously approved jurisdiction
- Committee support for jurisdictional EMPG audits have been recorded in previous minutes. Application and budget review process as well as periodic audits and currently published standards should encourage strict adherence to program eligibility requirements.
- Redemption process if removed from award eligibility:
 - If the reason is intentional misconduct (particularly Fraudulent), the jurisdiction is not eligible for five years at which time they will have to reapply as a new applicant (See “new applicant request guidelines)
 - If the reason is non-compliance (forced), or inability to comply (voluntary), then not eligible to apply for one year and then start as a new applicant.

May 31

- TDEM/EMPG program management should be supported in enforcing current EMPG guidance regarding compliance. Additionally, at the 30 day past due mark, a formal letter will be submitted to the Chief Elected Official, CEO (i.e. City Manager), EMC, and relevant RLO
- Committee recommends adjusting guidance wording regarding eligibility to remove “generally”. Jurisdictions in non-compliance should automatically lose funding for the non-compliant periods as well as lose funding the following year.
- Hardship waivers may be relevant for extraordinary circumstances (i.e. disaster) and will require a written extension request from the chief elected official. TDEM staff will review and assess the waivers on a case-by-case basis.
- Available funding will be allocated only to compliant jurisdictions once approved