Doing Business with FEMA Webinar
Tuesday, April 24th, 2012
2:00 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. EDT

Good afternoon, everybody, and welcome to FEMA's community preparedness series. Today's topic is Doing Business with FEMA. A few technical considerations before we get started. Please make sure that the volume on your computer speakers is turned up so you can hear the audio sufficiently. All audio will be playing through your speakers. This webinar of course is free and open to the public. After our presenters conclude, we will be opening a brief question-and-answer session, where we will ask you to submit any questions you have, and we will answer them to the best of our ability. After that, we will also be reopening the poll that we previously had on our screen if you haven't had a chance to answer that poll, you'll have another opportunity to do so. After our webinar concludes today, you can visit www.citizencorps.gov, and you will be able to view the audio recording and the slide presentation of our webinar. With that, I would like to turn the call over to Mr. Marcus Coleman from FEMA’s Individual and Community Preparedness Division. Marcus?

Thank you very much, Stephen. Good afternoon my name is Marcus Coleman, faith-based and community partnerships specialist, with FEMA's individual and community preparedness division. We would like to welcome you all to our Webinar today that is going to talk about doing business with FEMA. As you see, we have a very robust agenda today. The purpose for this webinar is two-fold, we often meet faith-based, community based sector, for profit and nonprofit organizations that are interested in engaging with FEMA, and we wanted to provide an opportunity to share information not just from FEMA’s private sector division, but also from the other divisions in FEMA that deal with private sector organizations and answer questions specifically on what it takes to do business with FEMA. Part of this effort is gearing up for the National Preparedness Month Coalition. Many of you may have heard about the HOLA community philosophy. One of the things that we share and we emphasize is that HOLA community is a true community effort as government cannot do it alone, and it's going to take the private sector, for profit, nonprofit, faith based, voluntary organizations, local MRCs, local church and local citizen corps to really address the challenges that we all face to build a more resilient nation. We strongly encourage all organizations and all people to sign up as part of our national preparedness coalition today at www.community.fema.gov. You see the link here. We will provide more information about local partners and additional resources now to not only to help your organization, but to be able to expand the network of your organization with other local partners in preparedness. With that, I will pass it over to our FEMA industry liaison, Kimberly Brown who will talk about doing business with FEMA. Kim?

Hello, everyone. As Mr. Coleman just mentioned, my name is Kimberly Brown. I serve as the deputy branch chief. I work within the office of the chief procurement officer, and a level down from that we have the acquisition program and planning branch, and this is where I reside. What I'm going to go through today is basically a one-on-one session of how to do business with FEMA. Some of you guys may or may not know, but the office of federal procurement policy has really pushed for vendor engagement and to basically solve those myth busters about talking to vendors, and it's not as taboo as some government agencies think, but it actually helps the procurement process when we engage vendors early in the acquisition process. Can we go to the next slide, please? Okay. If you don't know FEMA's mission, there it is. And the presentation I will give today is basically designed to guide vendors interested in doing business with FEMA, and we do understand that we can't do it alone. That's why we do award contracts to our vendors, and also we're trying to respond swiftly to disasters and disaster requirements by providing a frame work for vendors to be able to respond to solicitations. Next slide, please. Okay. So in order to better communicate with our vendors, we do have a relations program, and that's called industry liaison. What we're trying to do with the industry liaison program is build strategic relationships, information provider, connects vendors with the appropriate program office that matches their capabilities. With that, my program, we definitely coordinate vendor presentation meetings with program offices and do coordinate the industry days. And the difference between the two is that with the vendor presentation meeting, a contractor can come in and speak with one of the programs and match their capabilities. That session is about 45 minutes long. Our industry days are based off a requirement from our program office, so if a program, for example, logistics, they may say, hey; we're looking for vendors because we need baby kits. We may put out on FBO, Federal Business Opportunities, fbo.gov our industry days and vendors interested in that particular requirement will come in, and its basic open dialogue should be between the program and also vendors, to be able to really see what best practices are out there, and how we can better write our requirements. Okay, next slide. We do have a deployable side of our industry liaison program, it is called the local business transition team, and the purpose of this team is basically what we do. When there's a disaster, we deploy out to a specific region or area, and we're out there in response to section 307 of the Stafford act, which basically is the disaster relief and emergency assistance act, and with that section 307 basically states is that when feasible, we will transition contracts over to local businesses, to be able to reenergize that economic stability within that particular disaster area. So, for example, you know, if you're a vendor out in Florida, you may be in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, we're looking for vendors within that particular area that can provide the capabilities for a requirement for FEMA. We're not looking to go to, say, North Dakota and find a vendor. We're looking for local vendors in response to section 307. With this LBCT team also does is facilitate the transition of disaster requirements. We're out there at a disaster, providing outreach services, working in conjunction with the chamber of commerce, working in conjunction with a small business office, or a local procurement technical assistance center, which I'll talk a little bit more about what those services do, especially the procurement technical assistance centers. Also, our small business person is on the call or actually the Webinar today, as well, so she'll get into more about small business goals and what the small business office can do for you. Next slide, please. As I was mentioning before, industry days is sponsored by the program office and determined by the program office in that particular contract when we do have a requirement forthcoming. We invite industry into those events. We have a vendor outreach session; basically the vendor outreach session lasts maybe 15 to 45 minutes, depending. And what we do with that vendor outreach session, we will have you come in, we also used to call this speed dating, what you will do is speak with those programs that match your capability, and basically talk about what you can do to meet FEMA's mission. Last -- we have one every quarter, and last quarter, I think we had about 45 vendors come in, and it's an all-day event. You're actually given a scheduled time to come in and speak with a program office, but it definitely opens up the door for industry to come into FEMA and speak with those program leads. Also, it provides a networking opportunity, as well. I mean, you meet other vendors that will come in for the VOS session. Also, we, with that, it's networking, and then also it's an opportunity for maybe some type of partnering opportunities there, because you will have -- there they be a large vendor, small businesses there, as well. So I will definitely tell you how to get in contact with us in order to get scheduled for a vendor outreach session. Next slide, please. We also have a way that we locate our local vendors when we are in a disaster arena. There are several ways that one could find out if there are requirements and so forth. So if you will look at method A, sometimes what a contracting officer can do is directly go to federalbusinessopportunities.gov, and they will post a requirement on this website, and then it’s up to the vendor to submit a proposal or quotation back to the CO for contract award. There is also a system called CCR, method b, and that is the contact credential registry and all vendors should be registered with their own CCR. This is the way we can go in and do market research to locate vendors based on the North American industry code. So we'll go in CCR, put in the net code, and then vendors will populate that way. So we can find our vendors through that system or Dunn and Brad Street, which can get us directly down to the local area. Method C, the CO seeks assistance from the small business persons on the line, we can go directly to Ms. McClam and say we understand you guys talk to vendors, do you have any that meet this particular requirement, and this is normally done in a disaster realm when we can reach out to those folks. Method D, CO may seek assistance directly from the liaison program. Anyone who is entering through our industry liaison process, you fill out a vendor profile form. Basically, registration is another repository for a market research channel that we do have with FEMA. That does not constitute any type of contract, but what it does is it gets you an invitation to vendor outreach sessions, industry days and things like that, so it's definitely worth coming into the program and understanding what we do so we can get your information and your capabilities, as well. And method E, disaster CO may seek assistance from the ILB/LBTT to provide supplemental market research. That could be going into CCR, that's our small business person. We could also contact local stake holders that know where those small businesses are, so that we can provide them with an opportunity for work. Next slide. These are just some tips and steps of doing business with FEMA, and just some ways of going about this. And this is quick and dirty, but we will be more than happy to walk you through this process that we do have, but again, it is opening up the lines of communication with our vendors. So as I said before, the first step that you're going to want to do is definitely register with CCR.gov. It's the primary registration database for the federal government, and this is our first step. We normally go to CCR and find out what vendors are available. Contact the industry liaison support center. Our actual website address is there. We can send you a vendor profile form, send it back, and we’ll get you into our repository. If you are interested in meeting with a FEMA program, let us know that as well and we'll try our best to coordinate that meeting. You have your small business office. We get a lot of calls regarding debris removal, and there is actually a registration for debris removal, and that's done through the corps of engineers. Also, we have folks that call in for housing solutions in order to meet with the housing folks here within FEMA there is a preliminary step to register with those guys to see if you can even meet the necessary requirements to respond to a solicitation. So those websites are there for your use, as well. Next slide, please. As always, you have FBO.gov, federalbusinessopportunities.gov. This is the place where a single point of entry where you can search, monitor, and retrieve federal procurement opportunities over 25K, and basically this is where the federal government goes and actually places the solicitation and for the contractor to respond back to. Okay. Next slide. Some additional tips. You have your CCR, watching the web, FBO. You can actually go into FBO.gov, create a search for you to receive notifications based on your NACS code when requirements come up, and also making contact with that small business person, and again, Ms. McClam is on the line for that, and then the FPDS, federal procurement data system. What we do try to do to promote business with businesses that have never done business with the government, we try teaming efforts and partnering with, say, a prime contractor. FPDS.gov, you can learn who actually received those contracts and reach out to them to see if you can possibly maybe some subcontracting opportunities out there for you. And that's a way to get your foot in the door and build up your past performance, if you don't have any. Next slide. Some of you guys may know about GSA, the general service administration. They have something called the GSA catalog, and basically with the GSA catalog, the rates are already negotiated with the contractor, and what the federal government can do, they'll go to this website and they can select a vendor based on the NAC's code, based on their capability, prices already negotiated with GSA, and we can award a contract. So that's another opportunity that I would recommend. I say catalog, but it is also called the GSA schedule. Accepting the government credit card is another good way of doing business with the government, especially in a disaster realm. A number of transactions can be handled over the phone if you do accept the government credit card. And then I spoke about the teaming and partnering, and I think it is also a good way to meet the contractors is not only with FPDS, but also the events that we do host are another networking opportunity. Next slide. Okay. Seeking additional FEMA opportunities, public assistance program provides supplemental financial assistance to state, local, and tribal governments, and certain private and nonprofit organizations for response and recovery activities. So that's another way with our PA programs, when you're seeking financial assistance, seeking additional federal opportunities, other federal agencies, providing disaster assistance under their authorities of funding, provided that is independent of the Stafford act. Some folks think that FEMA is the agency that's doing everything in a disaster. And that's not correct, because we do coordinate with other agencies to assist in a disaster. For example, you have the corps of engineers, the Health and Human Services department. Red Cross. Those are other agencies that assist FEMA in a disaster. So reach out to those folks, as well. Each state has an emergency management agency. That might be an arena to get into working with the federal government in state and local government. Stay connected through social media sites and outlets, and keeping abreast of opportunities. Next slide. And this is our telephone number and e-mail address. We would be more than happy, because, again, this is quick and dirty how do business with FEMA, but if you give us a call, you're interested in coming in and speak about your capabilities, we will send you a vendor profile form, complete the form, return it back. We can get you scheduled for vendor presentation meetings, or one of our vendor outreach sessions. So if you have any questions or concerns, again, please give us a call, we'll walk you through that process and provide you with some additional resources, depending on what you're trying to do. Okay?

Thank you very much, Ms. Brown. This Webinar will be recorded. We understand that you may have networks that may find this information useful, as well. In addition to our next presentation, we will provide some information from our FEMA private sector division that talks about other ways to engage with FEMA in terms of being a private sector partner. But continuing on with our primary focus of doing business with FEMA, I would like to introduce Ms. Pamela McClam who will speak about small business resources.

Good afternoon, everybody, my name is Pamela McClam. I am going to talk to you about small business resources that are applicable before, during, and after disasters. Next slide, please. Talking about how to market your business to the federal government. Most federal agencies have websites wherein you can check to see what they are buying. That information is usually located as their procurement forecast. Every federal agency has a small business office. The small business office is the focal point and contact for all small businesses looking to do federal procurement with the federal government. Conferences and seminars. I'm sure most of you are familiar with conferences and seminars. There was just a big conference the other day, last week, as a matter of fact, the number one conference for the federal government, wherein you have small and large businesses, and industry coming together, networking, and looking for potential federal contract opportunities. One-on-one small business meetings. Most small business specialists, if you call them and can get in contact with them, we'll meet with you on a one-on-one basis, and generally it's an introductory meeting to find out what that federal agency is buying, what kind of procurement opportunities are available, and if you, as a small business, have the products and services that the agency is looking for. Next slide, please. Just like marketing your business to the federal government, you can also market your business to the private sector. They operate similar to the federal government. Their networking sessions sometimes have a price tag attached to them, and usually the fee is nominal, and you can find out by doing some research on their websites to find out when they're having networking sessions, when they're going to be inviting small businesses and to talk with them and see about subcontracting opportunities. Each large prime contractor that has a federal contract with the federal government is required to have a subcontracting plan. A subcontracting plan is required for all contracts over $650,000, or construction of a public facility. Each large prime contractor has a small business office and a small business liaison officer who is the focal point or the point of contact for small businesses looking to do business with the private sector. Next slide, please. Other small business resources, as Kim indicated, include the PTAC, the procurement technical assistance center. You are a small business and you have submitted a contract and need help, or have questions about what's required for information, or what's in a source's sought notification, then you can contact your PTAC office, and they have personnel there that are available to assist you with any information that you might need regarding any proposal that is on the street for the federal government. Small business development centers, are housed within the small business administration, and are located all over the United States. They can help you with everything from developing a business plan to obtaining financing for your small business. They also host networking sessions and training sessions on how to do business with the federal government. The small business administration also has a program that's very interesting. It's called the surety bond guarantee program. What that program does is it will guarantee if you are a construction contractor, it guarantees payment and performance bonds by working with participating surety companies. Surety companies that will issue bonds to small businesses, sometimes they want to guarantee that if the contractor defaults, that they can collect on the bonds and have money to help insure that the project is completed in full, and that's where the small business administration comes in and that's where the surety bond guarantee program comes into play. The SBA guarantees the bonds that surety companies lend to construction contractors. The small business admission office of advocacy actually operates as an independent office. It's an office where if you're a small business and you have a complaint, or you have issues or questions about doing business with the federal government, about contracts, about any particular solicitation, you can solicit help from the office of advocacy, and they will help you as far as they can. Next slide, please. Access to capital. Next slide, please. We have what's called an acquisition planning and forecast system. This is what I was talking about earlier in my slides. Now, this particular system will lift all of the acquisition planning and forecast for DHS and its components. If you go to the website, go to the Department of Homeland Security's website, look under small business, and you will see a link where you can click and it's totally viewable by the public, and you can find out what FEMA is buying, what immigration customs and enforcement is buying. Any DHS component agency will be listed in the acquisition planning and forecast system, and you'll be able to find out what we're buying, what we think we want to buy. Next slide please. We also hold monthly vendor outreach sessions. These sessions are separate from the sessions that Kim spoke about in her presentation. These sessions are monitored and held by the Department of Homeland Security, and you can go online and register for them. They are listed on a monthly basis. The next one we're going to have is on May the 10th, and it's going to be specific to HUB zone companies. When we do these vendor outreach sessions, we have them on a monthly basis, and sometimes we might have them for a specific socioeconomic group like veteran services owned small businesses. But whatever the occasion it's open to the public. Usually the registration period is a week before the conference. You go online, register to attend the vendor outreach session, and you also register to have an appointment, make a 10 or 15-minute appointment with one of DHS's components, or several of DHS's components. Just depends on what you want to talk about, and what procurements you're seeking. Also at these vendor outreach sessions, we do invite private industries. Next slide, please. DHS has a number of contracting vehicles by which we do business. It is a way to sort of limit contracting a lot easier. You'll find that DHS has contracting vehicles and some other agencies, large agencies have contracting vehicles as well, like the general services admission, and other large agencies. Next slide, please. Here is a listing of some of the contracting vehicles that we have, but all of our contracting vehicles for strategic sourcing are on the Department of Homeland Security's website. Some of the strategically resourced contracts are specific to DHS, and some are DHS-wide, which means that DHS will use them, and DHS components will also use them. As you can see here, I've sourced some of you as a small business. You are probably familiar with the Eagle IF solutions contracts, Eagle 1 and Eagle 2. Eagle 1 has ended, and first source has ended, and I believe that Eagle 2 has been advertised on the federal business opportunities website, as well as first source, too. Next slide, please. These are decisions made by the house small business committee. Next slide, please. The small business jobs act of 2010 has a major impact on small businesses and changes that are happening within the federal regulations acquisition, acquisition regulations that affect small businesses. One in particular is the parity issue, and the women-owned small business contracting program, which was first approved in February of last year, has now been added for parity so everybody is equal. They don't have to choose one over the other. So the news of the women-owned small business program being added for parity was very exciting for most women-owned small businesses, accelerated payment to small businesses. This has to do with an OMB mandate that came down to make sure that there is a policy in place to pay small businesses, and I believe within 15 days, provided that all forms have been committed to the federal agencies and they are correct. Under this mandate, federal agencies have to have a tracking process to make sure small businesses are paid in a timely manner for federal procurement that they have worked on. Under FAR part 8, required sources of supply. This gives contracting officers the ability to set aside contracts under GSA schedules and under federal supply schedules. Before this regulation was finalized, we had to be kind of creative in order to set aside those contracts, but now since the regulation has been approved, contracting officers can automatically go into GSA and set aside some of those contracts for socioeconomic groups like hub zone, ask service disabled vets, and women-owned. The small business size and status integrity act. What that is going to do is require small businesses to insure that when they register on ORCA, or on the CCR, the order is the online representations and certifications of system, and CCR is the central contacting registry. What that does is it says small businesses must be truthful and very much their statious, if they are registering as a hub zone, it means that they have to be hub zone, and if they are not hub zone, then there is some way for the government to levee, I guess, a penalty against the hub zone firm or the service disabled veteran-owned firm that stop being completely honest about their status, within a particular socioeconomic group. Okay. Next slide, please. The small business jobs act. As we continue, certain industry codes have been increased within the size standards. Under sector 54, several of the codes have been increased from $7 million to $14 million, and actually the small business administration is the agency that has been charged with reviewing all size standards and determining whether or not those size standards should be increased for small businesses or should they stay the same. And what they have found is that the small business size standards have not been keeping up with the economy, so they have gone through some of the size standards and increased them so that small businesses are able to keep pace. We now have small businesses that are small, and then we have some that are not quite large, but not quite small, so they're somewhere in the middle. And for that reason, an increase in the size standards was determined to be necessary. And the SBA point of contact, if you have any questions about those increases, is Dr. SHARMA, and that's his contact information there on the slide. Next slide, please. Under sectors 48 and 49, transportation and warehousing, those were the most recent size standard increases, and those were effective on March 26, 2012 of this year, so if you're a small business, you want to make sure that you pay close attention to the increase in the size standards. Because that's going to be important. We should see more coming within the following years. Next slide, please. A couple of new bills. Some of these bills have passed the house small business committee. The first bill, which is a small business opportunity act, that one I haven't seen any information whether that particular bill has passed yet, but under the small business opportunity act, it's going to require federal agencies to make sure that their small business liaison person is a part of their acquisition process from the very beginning, meaning that the small business advocate or small business specialist will have to be involved in acquisition planning. Here at FEMA, I'm very much involved in the acquisition planning, so we're already ahead of the game. I’m not sure about other federal agencies, but when this particular bill is passed, it's going to be a requirement for all federal agencies. The small business protection act, what that does is it makes sure that the size standards, the small business size standards match the codes that are attached to the contract. So as the small business administration is reviewing small business size standards, they're going to have to make sure that any increases that they make also match up with the NACS code. The better business manner partnerships acts that have passed, requires that the small business administration being the focal point or the lead on all mentor-protégé agreements. Those are agreements wherein you have a large prime contractor that agrees to mentor a small business. Our federal agency has a mentor-protégé agreement, but those agreements differ from agency to agency, depending on which agency it is. Some agencies will actually give a benefit or a fee to a large prime contractor to mentor a small business. So this particular act shows the goals that FEMA negotiated with the Department of Homeland Security. So these numbers here will be FEMA's goals for the next two years. Next slide, please. Here is a snapshot of FEMA's subcontracting goals for the last fiscal year. The reason why you see To Be Determined there is because we don't have those totals yet, so we don't know how well we did for fiscal year 2011. We have to wait until the small business administration sends a report to Congress. Once it sends its report to Congress, they will release the subcontracting goals for all federal agencies, and that information is collected through the electronic reporting subcontracting system. So of you, as small businesses, may have heard of ESRS. That stands for the electronic subcontract reporting system, and that is a system where small business subcontracting accomplishments are collected. Next slide, please. Okay. Here are our goals for 2012 and 2013. These are small business subcontracting goals. As you can see, we increased 5% for total small business from 40% to 45%, and the small disadvantaged business, the women-owned goals, hub zone and service disabled goals, those never change. 5% for women, 3% for hub zone, and 3% for service owned, so those won't change unless Congress changes them. But the total small business subcontracting goal is negotiable, and agencies have the flexibility to increase or decrease that goal. Next slide, please. Okay, I think that's it for me. Thank you so much.

Thank you, Pamela. That was a lot of information, and we do want to let everyone know again that the Webinar is being recorded, in case you missed anything. So we've talked a lot about how to do business with FEMA, but we want to emphasize and stress that there is more than one way to interact with FEMA, and I am very pleased to introduce Tracey Batacan.

Good afternoon. I am located in the office of external affairs. Next slide, please. We are engaging the private sector in a number of ways here at FEMA, and I will just focus on a few of those resources. Next slide, please. The first one is our FEMA private sector representative, and this is a 90-day rotation that allows a private sector to come in as a special government employee and they will represent the broad private sector, working side by side with us during normal operations, as well as during disasters. Next slide, please. In addition, we also offer the opportunity for people to review and share information regarding disasters through our data and data feeds. The data feeds include things such as the status of evacuation routes and shelters, and they come in a variety of formats. You can view this information regarding the data feeds at FEMA.gov/help/is/RSStoday. Next slide, please. In addition, we have free downloadable tabletop exercises, and these exercises allow the private sector partners to develop, evaluate, and strengthen their emergency response plans, as well as to identify their seat at the larger emergency management table. Next slide, please. In addition, we also offer one-stop shopping through our FEMA private sector web portal. This provides a host of information regarding policy, programs, exercises, training, and education for the private sector to engage in emergency management issues, as well as collaborate with us. Next slide, please. Recently, we just developed two web-based courses to share information with you regarding public-private partnerships. The first class is an independent study course that is available through our emergency management institute, and it is IS660, Introduction to Public-Private Partnerships. And the second course is IS662, Improving Preparedness and Resilience through Public-Private Partnerships. The first course allows you to review the information on how to create a public-private partnership in your local area. The second one offers you information on how to maintain that public-private partnership, as well. Next slide, please. There are a few on-line resources that you can review on our website, and they are listed in this presentation, and it includes everything from the data feeds, the application process for the private sector program. We recently launched our small businesses big initiative website, as well as information regarding our public-private partnerships, tools and resources. Next slide, please. Again, if you have any questions or comments regarding FEMA private sector, please give us an e-mail, and our e-mail address is listed on the last slide. Thank you.

Thank you very much, Tracey. I will finish up with some additional resources that are available, not just to large businesses or small business, but organizations across the board. But before we get into that, it is my distinguished honor and pleasure to introduce Ms. Breden.

Good afternoon, everyone. I'm with the national integration center. I am the program manager for the volunteer private sector accreditation and mercifully shortened to PS-prep. You may have heard of PS-prep. It is a federally mandated, congressionally mandated program. It was mandated after the 9-11 incidents, by the 9-11 act. I will introduce the program. First, I want to give you a few things to think about. Imagine walking into an organization to find you have been affected by a flood, a tornado, a terrorist attack, or something as simple as a power outage. No agency is invincible to the effects of any kind of unforeseen event, so it's crucial to take advantage of programs that will allow you to take the necessary steps to get prepared and stay prepared. And you're going to hear the word “preparedness” over and over again, because the previous speakers have given you wonderful resources on how to take advantage of business opportunities. But you can't take advantage of those business opportunities if your business isn't up and running. The PS-prep is designed to help private sector entities, and not just small businesses, but large businesses, small businesses, hospitals, communities, and schools and municipal governments. It's designed to help them prepare and recover from the effects of any type of disaster, natural or man-made. PS-prep provides a systematic presentation to business continuity and recovery that will allow organizations to unify their preparedness activities under a DHS-adopted standard. When the program is implemented, these standards provide policy, processes, procedures, performance measures, and quality improvement practices that are updated regularly to insure ongoing relevance. Building resiliency against the consequences of a full range of possible catastrophes is becoming the norm for many Americans. We have advanced the slides. Thank you very much. I got so involved in giving information that I wasn't paying attention to my slides. Look at the statistics you have in front of you; they are staggering. There are so many businesses that are in areas that are prone to disasters, and while some areas are more punctuated by disasters, mostly natural disasters, no place is immune, and being located in D.C., we were reminded of that last year when we had an earthquake. Now, most of us think, okay, D.C., not too bad on tornadoes or hurricanes, and tectonic plate activity, never happened, but businesses ground to a halt when we had an earthquake last year. So it's not a matter of thinking if your business is going to be affected by an event, it's when. You have to think of when. So moving on to the next slide, you look at the preparedness continuum that we've provided. Again, PS-prep has tools, contacts, connections, no matter the size of the business. The overarching intent of the program is not simply to get you to prepare using our program, but to prepare, to foster a culture of preparedness and to think preparedness. To think when and not if. You probably heard your grandparents say “hope for the best, plan for the worst.” That's what this is. You insure your survivability by planning. And I tend to use the analogy of PS-prep as sort of like state planning for your business. You prepare for the inevitable, and you hope it never happens. But you have a plan in place that insures your survivability, which insures that if something unforeseen should happen, you can recover in a minimum amount of time. And the standards that have been adopted, under this program, there are three currently, where the policy is not limited to three, where the program is not limited to three, but we have three to start. They are the most comprehensive standards that we could find in terms of continuity of operation, risk assessment, and preparedness. They are the British standard, BS25999. ASIS1, and the NFPA1600. And that is the 25010 edition. They provide management systems by which entities can focus on planning, doing, checking, and acting. It's important to understand, being prepared is an ongoing process of improvements. The journey to preparedness is not a one size fits all approach. Businesses are like people, everyone is an individual, and every need for every business is an individual. It's different for small, large, medium, non-profit entities. So the approach for preparedness has to be on an individual basis. You know best what you need to prepare for the survivability of your business. The PS-prep program can address the preparedness needs of, as I said, small, medium, large organizations, municipal governments, hospitals, schools. The continuum that you see -- I'm sorry, back a slide, please. The continuum goes from small to large businesses to individually-owned businesses. Normally they use best practices to back up their data, or to prepare and provide alternative sources for power. Those are examples. As a business grows, the needs become more complex, and this is where the use of the standards as management systems is, and ultimately third party certification comes into play, especially as the preparedness becomes a market imperative. Now, please go ahead with the next slide. The previous speaker mentioned the courses, so I'll not dwell on these, but I would encourage you to take advantage of these courses. They are out there. A lot of thought went into them. They are very enlightening in terms of getting you to think about what you need in order to engage in business with the government, but also just in terms of preparedness. And one of the things that preparing your business does, is it allows you to look inwardly on your business, to find out where your tipping points are, where your critical areas are, what you need, and what are the most critical elements of your business in order to survive. You may think you know them, and you may very well have a very good handle on what you have, but there may be other areas where with a little bit of information, you find out you have someone who has been there forever, their corporate memory goes way back, and if you lose that person, you have lost a repository of knowledge, and that's just an example. Next slide, please. Okay, we have a PS-prep which has a web page. It has a lot of the resources on it. Again, we are not emotionally wedded to our own program. We are a standards-based program; however, there are other programs out there that you will find, under the tabs, which are best-practice based. I give you an example, Red Cross Ready Rating. The SBA has a program. I see we're drawing short on time, and I don't want to take up too much time, because I'm sure people have questions out there, but what I would encourage you to do is to go to the PS-prep web page, look at the different tabs, and look at the resources. We're very proud to announce that earlier this year, we actually had our first third party certification under any program to one of the standards, and that organization was AT&T. So if they put that much emphasis on the criticality of preparedness as a large organization, as small organizations, sometimes with less than a hundred employees, it's an imperative to be prepared and stay prepared so you can stay in business. Because a lot of people depend on you. Thank you.

Thank you very much. So we would like to finish up, we talked a lot about many ways to engage. For those who don't know, this week we're actually acknowledging the national severe weather awareness week, and we're encouraging everybody to commit to being a force of nature by being better prepared. One of the ways you can take that next step is to pledge to prepare by going through community.FEMA.gov and joining the national preparedness coalition. We talked a lot about prepared conditions and engagement, and while there are many ways to engage, we also want to let you know that there are many partners that you can engage with. What's in front of you right now is what we call the community preparedness model, and we essentially look to private sector organizations and faith-based organizations. All of the organizations coming around together at the table that we consider citizen corps to help not just with community building and planning, but also outreach, education, and providing free training opportunities to private sector organizations. Another thing that we are doing is working with our partners at Ready is to create Ready Business, a one-stop shop to help small businesses, large businesses, businesses that kind of get into where it is best to begin when preparing their organization. Think about the small business ready campaign, it takes steps to prepare for an emergency plan to stay in business, and protect your investment. We'll talk about some partners that can give you a free tool that you can use in talking about certain elements of preparedness, as well as protecting your investment. On ready.gov/business, you can find a template, as well as other free on-line business resources. Now, in addition, on the citizen corps website, we actually have two pages that are of interest to the private sector, we think. The first is the money matters page. For those of you who were able to join us on April 10th, we had Operation Hope and the U.S. extension network talk about their kits to help plan for disasters. We have an investment preparedness resource web page, which outlines a lot of the known resources that are available to businesses, which includes webinars on specific areas of how to be prepared for businesses. We also have had two past webinars that are available for ready.gov. One is a general webinar on resources for business preparedness, and the second one is done in conjunction with our partners at the American Red Cross about the ready rating program, how prepared is your business or school. And we strongly encourage you to visit our website and take advantage of these free resources, at your earliest convenience. Now, when we talked about talking to your employees about preparedness, we understand that preparedness means a lot of different things to a lot of people, and you wanted to be able to talk practically, and also in a concise manner about that. So we have created a set of deals that are called for communities everywhere, or pace tools, to be able to do that. There is a free interactive web-based course, the site of 161 emergency modules, and these modules are available in English and Spanish. We have corps topics which talk about making a kit and developing a personal support network. Each activity comes with a facilitator's guide, and information on which local emergency management partner would be best to work with to help discuss these topics, or to invite, or to bring in, to talk about these particular issues. In terms of which pace is being used by, we have private sittinger organizations. More than 500 have taken the course already, and we strongly encourage other folks to go ahead and take the opportunity as part of your commitment as a national preparedness coalition member to use maybe one or two of these activities during a lunch hour, or during a 30-minute lunch period or lunch break to just think about some of the essentials of preparedness that you deem important, especially as it comes to making a kit and having a plan. For more information, please feel free to visit citizencorps.gov. Any particular topic that you would like to see in the future, please let us know. We also want to encourage you to go to our webinar. We have more than 20 webinars already on particular areas and topics of interest, so please go on our website and take a look at them there. With that, we will transition over to Stephen, who will introduce the question-and-answer period, and, again, we will be on for the full 15 to 20 minutes to answer any questions you may have for any of the speakers. Stephen?

Thank you very much, Marcus. As Marcus said, we're now in our question-and-answer period. All participants should see in front of them a blank chat box. You are able to type in your question, before you're able to place your curser in that chat box and submit. We will then take some questions to be published and we will ask our presenters to answer. As Marcus said, for about probably the next 10 or 15 minutes, we will be answering these questions. I want to remind you of our next Webinar next Tuesday that we do in conjunction with the Ready campaign.

Looks like we have one question from Karen Sanborn. What is the site for downloading tabletop exercises?

I'll take that question. This is Tracey Batacan. That web link is www.FEMA.gov/privatesector/exercises.shtn, and I'm actually going to add that here so I can share that information with everyone.

Tracey went ahead and posted that link up there for everyone to see.

Thank you.

Sure. Looks like another question from Raymond Hall. Are mandated levels mentioned in the presentation set as hard numbers or as minimum required? And those number examples of a 3% women-owned, 5% some other category. Who would like to take that question?

That sounds like a small business question, but the women-owned mandated small business goal is 5%. It's 3% for service disabled vets, and 3% for hub zone, and those are mandated by Congress. Those goals never change. Our next question is from Paula. I'm not going to try to pronounce your last name. I don't want to mangle it. But Paula asks are their tools to assist with business impact analysis plans for disaster recovery? Who feels comfortable with that question? I will say in terms of beginning to address that question, one of the places to start may be the 24th site. Also on our web page, we do have links to other business preparedness websites that may be able to better address that question. I will post both the direct link to our web page and also the Ready Business web page link in just a moment. Thank you, Steve.

We also have one other question, looks like from Mr. Jim Stein. Could someone please discuss invitational travel arrangements? Who can talk about how invitational travel is conducted with small businesses?

This is Kim Brown. If I understand the question correctly, based on how it's written, invitational travel, I guess when we invite vendors in for meetings, I hope that's what the question is, but, you know, it's on the vendor, basically, to have their travel arrangements to actually show up for a meeting, and what we try to do with the vendor outreach sessions, we may have a conference call just in place vendors cannot come to Washington D.C. for a meet. We do try to have a backup plan, especially for small businesses, because it does cost resources to come out here and stay a couple of days. So we do try to mitigate that with conference calls, but the federal government does not provide any type of resource for our invitational events.

Great. Thank you. And I would like to remind folks, as well, if you do think of other questions after the Webinar ends, or if you have additional questions based upon the answers that you've heard, please feel free to e-mail citizen corps at citizencorps@DHS.gov, and we will forward your question to the correct point of contacts to answer that. It looks like we have another question from Malika Bennett. Who is a good person to contact regarding mobile app development? Who might be able to take on that question for Malika?

This is Marcus again. If you can send us an e-mail to citizencorps@DHS.gov, we'll tell you who to send that to.

What we do with the industry liaison, we serve as the mediator, that conduit between the program office and the vendor. So if you're interested in a meeting with IT or so forth, you would contact the industry liaison program. Fill out the vendor profile form, and then we would coordinate that meeting. We wouldn't directly give the company the point of contact information. Thank you.

And I just want to make sure it's the FEMA-industry people with a good e-mail address to send to?

Yes, and then we'll get her the proper form.

All right. Thank you. Another question and this is more so from me to both Polanco and Kim, from Paula and Kim. You did emphasize that having that relationship beforehand is key. But about how much time do you think organizations should prepare before coming to a vendor outreach? I can imagine a month out is helpful, but I don't know if you have any recommended time frames for folks in terms of what you think they should consider before coming out here for a vendor outreach meeting to maximize their time here.

Well, I can speak to from the perspective of industry liaison. Our vendor outreach sessions are not our response to a requirement, so really it's basically that vendor talking to a representative from FEMA about how they can best help with our mission. So, you know, most companies, they have this type of stuff already prepared, because it's what they do. So normally we do notify vendors, at least a month out, regarding our upcoming vendor outreach session, so we do get that time in advance, but, again, it's how they can help us. So, you know, just based on who is giving the presentation and what type of content. We do have to have some time to look at the vendor presentation before it's actually given to a FEMA representative, because we have to insure there is no crossing of information and procuring sensitive information within their presentation. So it's on the company to make that decision when it comes down to preparing for a meeting and presenting their capabilities.

Thank you very much, Kim. The next question we have --

I'm sorry, Marcus, before we get to the next question, just wanted to remind folks if they do have to jump off the Webinar, or they're not able to understand things via the audio that we're play right now, a recording will be made available on the citizen corps website under the resources tab in the Webinar library within 48 hours.

Thank you. The next question comes from Nicolas, from a state local EM perspective, what are the most effective methods for encouraging the private sector to think and act regarding preparedness. Tracey, didn't know if you had some thoughts on that, and I can share some thoughts as well.

Nicolas, thank you so much for that question. Also on the FEMA private sittinger website, we have a list of some tools, some other resources and some models that can be used to share in your local community, as far as effective ways to encourage private sector engagement with their state and local emergency management managers. That link will also be made available on this Webinar. Marcus, what else would you like to add?

I would just say and encourage the gentleman, using the private and partnerships web page as a potential model?

Yes.

Okay. So we're going to post that link right now. But in addition, sir, I would also make it a point to invite, you know, either extend an invitation to present some information about preparedness, and invite small businesses to whatever outreach effort that you have going on. One of the things that we're really hoping that people collaborate on is that connection between the citizenship partner programs, volunteers and police service and community emergency response teams, take the opportunity to extend an outreach to small businesses, to business organizations in the private sector. Just put up the link that talks about some of the potential public-private partnership models that are available. And the slide to answer someone else's questions, the slide checks will be available on the website as well.

We probably have enough time for maybe one or two more questions. Next question is from Albert Romano. For industry day events, is there a mechanism to get e-mail alerts for upcoming events for this year?

What we do, we have our contracting officer post the invitation to FBO.gov, and so I would recommend that the vendor continue to look at FBO, because that's how we get our folks registered. What you'll see is a flyer regarding the event, and registration instructions. Normally a registration instruction comes down to the IL program, and you can probably send us an e-mail if we do have an industry day event forth coming and we will get you all registered, but that's how the announcements are made, through FBO.

Okay. And finally, let's see, one last question from Sarah Jewel. Where are FEMA acquisitions posted? Are they always FBO, GSA or on sole-sourced?

Right. Okay. The FEMA acquisitions are posted on FBO.gov. Sometimes in a disaster realm, you know, all of our requirements are not posted on FBO, depending on the type of disaster; a contracting officer may reach directly out to local vendors, and may not post it on FBO.gov. We try not to go sole-source unless it's a situation that requires that, and that may insure a disaster realm, but we try to complete most of our contracts, it definitely increases competition and for the government to get the best dollar. So that's why we do promote competition, and rarely are things sole-sourced at FEMA anymore.

All right. And I have posted an additional link, the correct link for the particular private partnership tool approximation. They talked about a few independent study courses. Those are free, as well, through our EMI website, and you can access the direct link to those going to the private secretary web page, as well as to get to the PS-prep web page. I'm going to post that now. Let me see. The last question that he will answer is from Clarence Hill. Is there a source to go to, to find contractors bidding on FEMA contracts?

Not that I'm aware of, not to find out contractors actually in the acquisition process of bidding on a contract, no. What they can do is find out what contractors have been awarded contracts, and you can find that on FDPS.gov. That can assist you.

Yeah, and I just want to piggyback on what Kim said, you can also find out what contracts have been awarded on federal business opportunity, and also to kind of go back to that other question from Sarah, it's important, also, for small business vendors and for large businesses, to know that they can look on the acquisition planning and forecast system to look for a forecast of what could potentially become serious situations posted on, so you always want to check on the acquisition planning and forecast system to see what federal agencies -- well, for DHS, to see what DHS and it's components are buying, or forecasting that they're going to buy.

Okay. I just posted that link up there, Pamela.

And also, for small business vendors, for small business, if you are going to attend any of the DHS vendor outreach sessions, the research that you want to do is usually to look on FEDBIZOP before you get there, and look at the forecasting system. Because that way when you get an appointment with the small business representative or whomever is going to be there, you'll have something in your hands and something that they may be familiar with and that they can talk to you a little bit about, and give you, you know, additional information, some information that might help you regarding the potential acquisition.

Okay?

All right. And then for Tracey, before we go, I just wanted you to elaborate a little bit more on the private sector representative position. Know that they are available both nationally and at a regional level. Correct?

Marcus, thanking you for that question. Actually, right now the private sector representative opportunity is available at FEMA headquarters, and they are in development in the regions at this time. So they're not operational yet, but they are forthcoming.

Okay.

And headquarters, the detail is a 90-day rotation.

Wonderful. Wonderful. Thank you very much for the correction, Tracey. With that, I want to give a major thanks to the FEMA private sector division, the FEMA small business office, and the FEMA business industry liaison's office, asking those who are still remaining on the call if you can please identify the sector that you're representing today. I understand that there are some people who have recommended additional sectors that we can include, but I want to thank everybody once again for staying with us on the call, and hope that you can join us next Tuesday at 3:00 p.m. for a Webinar, our monthly FEMA Preparedness Webinar. If there are no more questions, thank you, and have a good day.