

# Public Health and Disaster Response Task Force



Governor Josh Green  
Co-Chair  
Hawaii



Governor Phil Scott  
Co-Chair  
Vermont

## OUR JURISDICTION

The Public Health and Disaster Response Task Force has organizational jurisdiction over a broad range of issues including Disaster and Emergency Public Health Response, Defense, Homeland Security, Cybersecurity, Healthcare, Human Services, Nutrition, and Immigration.

## OUR PRIORITIES

Support policy and procedural changes to ensure efficient, transparent, and timely responses to disaster recovery for all;

Ensure the National Guard is equipped with adequate resources and capabilities to serve as the operational reserve for national security missions as well as support domestic emergencies while ensuring that Governors retain the authority to control the National Guard personnel as laid out in U.S.C. Title 32, Section 104;

Support the facilitation of private, non-profit, local, state, territorial and federal partnerships to enhance cybersecurity resiliency, and improve long-term critical infrastructure for new and emerging threats;

Strengthen and support mental health nationwide through sustained federal investment and reduction of stigma, particularly for vulnerable populations including youth, emergency personnel, disaster survivors and essential workers.

Identify pathways for increasing the healthcare workforce in areas including but not limited to community health, rural health, direct care, nursing support, long-term care, mental health, and substance use disorders in order to improve healthcare delivery.

Improve child and maternal health outcomes through strong federal-state partnerships that evaluate and address root causes while better supporting families nationwide.

Strengthen healthcare infrastructure through development of resources, guidance, and collaboration with supply chain, public health infrastructure, human services, health equity, nutrition, and telehealth.

## OUR WORK

### Reimagining Models Of Disaster Preparedness And Recovery

In February 2024, the Task Force hosted a [policy discussion](#) on how largescale emergencies continue to threaten national and state response systems. Throughout the conversation, panelists addressed the complexities of disaster response by analyzing multiple system integration needs across the nation.

Governors were joined for the discussion by Colt Hagmaier, Assistant Administrator from the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA); Dr. Delphin-Rittmon, Assistant Secretary of The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); and Jennifer Enderlin, Director of Corporate Social Responsibility from AT&T and board member for SBP.

### Building Readiness And Strengthening Resiliency To Combat Disasters And Emerging Threats

In May of 2024, the Task Force held a [congressional briefing](#) on building readiness and resiliency to combat disasters and emerging threats including cyber, health, National Guard, and homeland security. This briefing united congress, federal agencies, and private partners to understand the priorities of state and territory leaders.

The panel featured Jason Gibbs, Chief of Staff to Vermont Governor Phill Scott, Russel Strickland, Secretary of Emergency Management for Maryland and President of the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA), John Riggi, National Advisor for Cybersecurity and Risk to the American Hospital Association, and Madeleine Bordallo, Director of the Washington office for Guam Governor Lou Leon Guerrero.

Panelists highlighted priority “asks” for Congress including:

- Pass the Management Cost Bill
- Increase the Emergency Management Planning Grant in FY 25
- Support for healthcare providers in response to large-scale cyber attacks
- Renewal of Cybersecurity Sharing Act
- Funding to upgrade weather monitoring on Guam
- 

### Funding Critical Needs for FY 25

In May 2024, the Task Force [wrote to House and Senate Appropriators](#) requesting the inclusion of Governors’ top priorities in the Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations bills. Within the health and human services portfolio, these requests addressed Community Mental Health Services Block Grants (MHBG), Substance Use Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Block Grants (SABG), and more for behavioral health. Applauding the previously requested funding increases for the Child Care and Development Block Grant and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Urging strong support for Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant, Advanced Nursing Education, Public Health Data Modernization, and more.

Additionally, the letter highlighted funding requests for programs within the disaster response and preparedness portfolio including the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF), Homeland Security Grant Program Suite, Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), and State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP). The letter also urged an increase in National Guard personnel and funding for critical items like facilities and health care.

### Maintaining Governor Authority Of National Guard

In April of 2024, the Task Force [sent a letter](#) including **53 Governors from U.S. States, Commonwealths and Territories** to Secretary of Department of Defense (DOD) Lloyd Austin calling for the discontinuation of legislative proposal (LP480) that would weaken or eliminate Governor authority over the National Guard and threaten readiness and operational efficacy of their units.

### Preserving The State And Local Cyber Security Grant Program

In June of 2024, the Task Force [sent a letter](#) on behalf of NGA alongside other organizations representing the voice of state and local governments to House and Senate Appropriations. This letter urged Congress to preserve the State and Local Cyber Security Grant Program (SLCGP) funding for cybersecurity improvements at \$100 million for FY25.

## Members

- Governor Katie Hobbs  
Arizona
- Governor Gavin Newsom  
California
- Governor Ned Lamont  
Connecticut
- Governor Leon Guerrero  
Guam
- Governor Kim Reynolds  
Iowa
- Governor Jeff Landry  
Louisiana
- Governor Tim Walz  
Minnesota
- Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham  
New Mexico
- Governor Kathy Hochul  
New York
- Governor Spencer Cox  
Utah

## NGA Staff

- Renee Antoine  
202-624-5378  
rantoine@nga.org
- Abigail Smith Judstra  
202-624-7857  
ajudstra@nga.org