

**ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

**2023
ANNUAL
REPORT**

A YEAR IN REVIEW



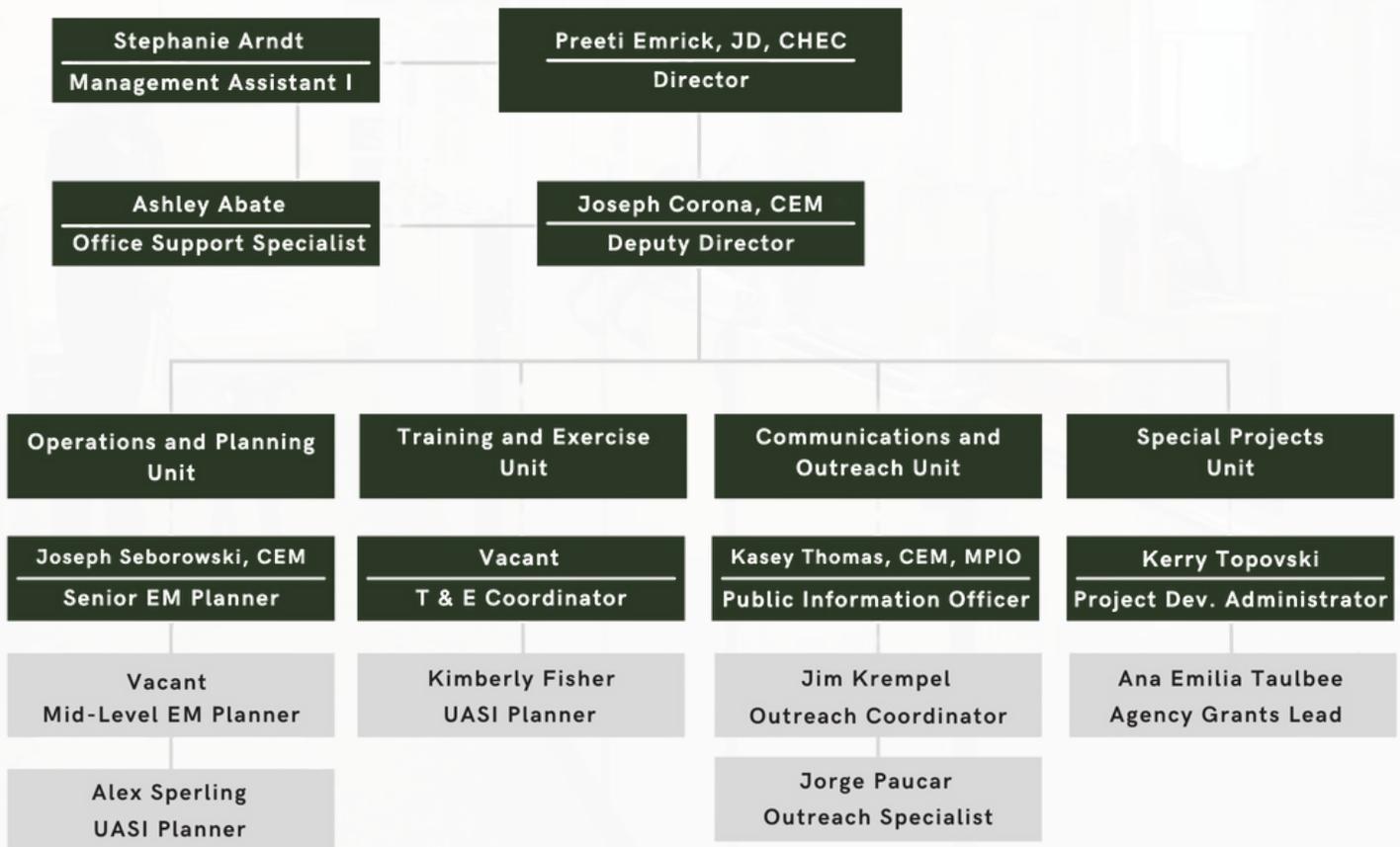
ABOUT US

MISSION

The Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management was established in 2006 to coordinate the County's response to major emergencies. Our mission is to help our County agencies, non-governmental organizations, businesses, and residents prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters.

UNITS

The Office of Emergency Management is comprised of four units: Operations and Planning, Training and Exercise, Communications and Outreach, and Special Projects. The organizational chart below depicts the positions and names of staff members under each unit.



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Over the past year, our office has been adapting to better meet the needs of our community and ensure that we respond effectively to emergencies. Recognizing that public safety is always changing, we took steps to enhance our capabilities across mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts throughout the County.



Preeti Emrick, JD, CHEC

One important part of these changes was reorganizing our workforce. We created new positions to tackle our challenges and adjusted existing roles to make us more efficient in areas like grants management, communications, and administrative operations. This reorganization was also about making sure our team has the right skills and resources to respond well to the diverse needs of our community.

A significant project that shows our commitment to public safety is the joint 9-1-1 communications and emergency operations center project. This project holds the promise of improving our emergency coordination efforts, strengthening our public safety operations, and reducing emergency response times across the County. As of this writing, we're working on the initial design phase with an architectural firm, and look forward to engaging with the community and sharing updates and the benefits that this project will bring to Anne Arundel County. By investing in this infrastructure, we are not only embracing technological advancements but also proactively addressing the needs of our growing community.

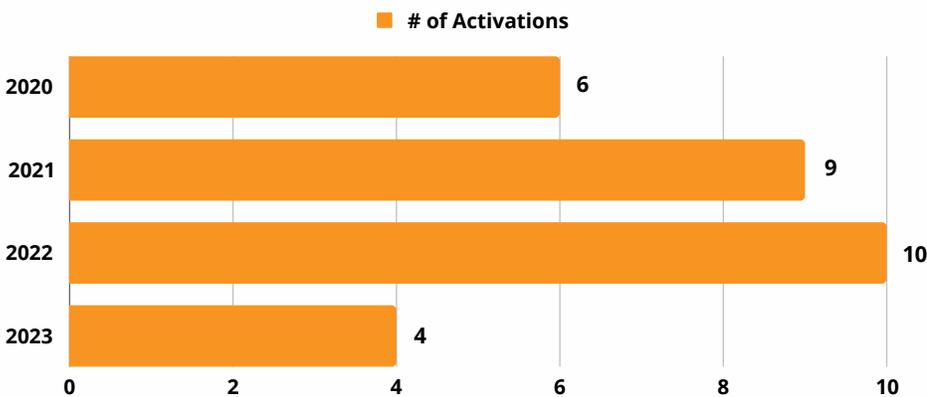
Our team is excited about this new chapter in public safety for Anne Arundel County. We're working together with our skilled workforce, combined with innovative designs to create a positive outlook for the future. We look forward to seeing how this project will make a difference in serving and protecting our community, making it safer and more resilient for everyone. Our dedication to continuous improvement and the well-being of our residents remains strong as we face the challenges and opportunities ahead. That is why I'm pleased to share this second edition of our annual report, highlighting some of our achievements from 2023. I encourage you to visit our website to learn more about our office at www.aacounty.org/oem and follow us on social media for preparedness tips and upcoming events.

OPERATIONS AND PLANNING

The Operations and Planning Unit ensures plans, policies, and procedures reflect the County's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters. This unit also manages [Alert Anne Arundel](#), the County's Mass Notification System, and coordinates special events planning with public safety agencies.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC) ACTIVATIONS

In 2023, we activated for 3 different severe weather events and 1 utility outage. We improved operational readiness and increased training for EOC representatives to respond to events such as excessive heat and air quality issues.



Tropical Storm Ophelia
September 2023

SPECIAL EVENTS PERMIT PROCESS

In light of the increase of special events in the County, a new special events permit process was created to streamline the different requirements of holding an event in the County. This process provides the sponsors with an easier application process and ensures that all large events held in the County are safer for the community and patrons. All of the information about the permit process, including the permit portal and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are available on the [County website](#).



Emergency Preparedness Expo
September 2023

HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE

Anne Arundel County's Hazard Mitigation Plan creates a long-term strategy to reduce the costs and damages caused by disasters and helps create more resilient communities. As we work to update the plan we will reach out for community input in the Spring of 2024. We also encourage residents, businesses, and community groups to visit [our website](#) to learn more about mitigating the effects of natural disasters and other emergencies.

TRAINING AND EXERCISE

The Training and Exercise Unit maintains and facilitates a comprehensive training program for the Office of Emergency Management and its partnering agencies. This unit works with participating County, State, local, and non-governmental agencies to coordinate regular training and exercises to develop the necessary knowledge, skills, and capabilities to effectively prepare for, mitigate, respond to, and recover from potential emergencies and disasters that may affect County residents, businesses, and visitors.

FAMILY INFORMATION CENTER TABLETOP

This discussion-based exercise was conducted in preparation for next year's full-scale exercise involving reunification of families and death notifications after a mass casualty event, with the scenario involving a gas main explosion at a hotel.



SPECIAL EVENTS/ACTIVE SHOOTER TABLETOP

In November, entities from across the County, including large private businesses, participated in a scenario to learn what planning actions are triggered by a special event permit application and how the response operations would be conducted if a planned special event turned into a mass casualty event.



EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION (ESF) WORKSHOPS

As we revise the County's Emergency Operations Plan, we are incorporating FEMA's Community Lifelines concepts into our ESF annexes. This allows responders to quickly determine the stability of key infrastructure that is essential to human health and safety or economic security. This series of workshops ensures that all County agencies and departments understand the Lifelines construct and their roles in response when an ESF is activated.



CYBER INCIDENT COORDINATION WORKSHOP

We hosted this Workshop in April to discuss our partners' roles and responsibilities for cyber incidents. The feedback from this workshop helped us improve our coordination and update our plan to reflect our capabilities.



BREAKDOWN OF EXERCISES

This year we focused on conducting more discussion-based exercises to familiarize our partners with their roles and responsibilities in new or updated plans. We also hosted operations-based exercises and implemented a tracking system to account for monthly WebEOC drills. As we complete the update to the Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP) we are looking forward to conducting a full-scale exercise in addition to other operations-based exercises in 2024.

Discussion-Based

- Community Lifelines Workshop
- Family Information Center Seminar
- Family Information Center Tabletop
- Joint Information Center Workshop
- Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attack Workshop
- 9 Emergency Support Function Workshops
- Continuity of Operations/Emergency Action Plan Workshop
- Special Events/Active Shooter Tabletop
- Winter Weather Operations Seminar



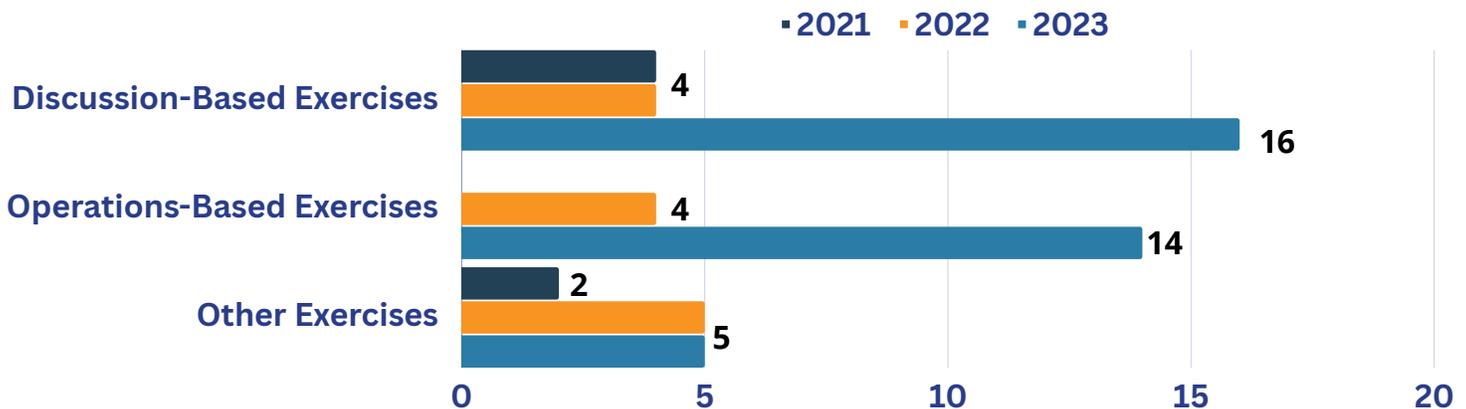
Operations-Based

- FIC Phone Line Drill
- The Great Shake-Out Earthquake Drill
- Monthly WebEOC Drills



Others

- Passenger Train Emergency Response Workshop by Amtrak
- Regional Food and Water Tabletop
- Regional Evacuation Tabletop
- Annapolis CityWide Exercise
- Annapolis Family Information Center Tabletop



INCREASED TRAINING

We have continued our efforts to increase the number of fully-trained County agency Emergency Operations Center (EOC) representatives (Reps). To remain compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), a fully-trained EOC Rep must complete six Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Independent Study (IS) courses providing the foundation of emergency management. Since 2020, we have seen a substantial increase in compliance which has improved our preparedness for activations. By providing multiple sessions of the required training again in 2024, we expect this percentage to continue to improve.



TYPES OF TRAINING OFFERED

This year, we used a combination of in-person and virtual trainings to better prepare our staff and emergency operations center representatives. Required trainings were made readily available to help increase the total number of fully-trained reps.

- FEMA IS 100 EOC Rep Training
- FEMA IS 200 EOC Rep Training
- FEMA IS 230 EOC Rep Training
- FEMA IS 700 EOC Rep Training
- FEMA IS 800 EOC Rep Training
- FEMA IS 2200 EOC Rep Training
- Basic WebEOC Training
- Advanced Emergency Operations Center Operations



Our staff also completed the following training to better improve our capabilities for responding to disasters:

- CPR/First Aid and Stop the Bleed Training
- Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE) Training
- Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Training
- Back-up Communication System Training
- Radio and Backup Phone Line Training
- CivicReady Mass Notification System Training
- Call Taker Training
- Emergency Action Plan Training
- Road Closure Board Training
- Social Media Training

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

The Communications and Outreach Unit ensures that timely and accurate information is shared with the public and County agencies before, during, and after emergencies and disasters. This unit increases public awareness and education through social media, traditional media, presentations, and by attending community events.

“IT'S A SNOW DAY FOR ADULTS” EVENT

In February, we hosted an event with community and County partners to talk about emergency operations for the winter season. We also provided a tour of our facilities and completed a snowstorm activity to show how we can work together to prepare Anne Arundel for emergencies.



ANNUAL SHADOW DAY CONTEST

Three local high schools participated in an emergency preparedness PSA/essay contest, with six winners spending a day shadowing our Director. They toured the Emergency Operations Center, learned more about emergency preparedness, and simulated responding to a disaster.

ANNUAL HOUSES OF WORSHIP SEMINAR

The 2023 Protecting Our Houses of Worship Seminar Series offered presentations from county, state, and federal public safety agencies to better prepare our religious sanctuaries. The free interdenominational seminar covered emergency planning, physical security, cybersecurity, and other practical preparedness topics. We finished the series with an Active Assailant Training and Active Attacker Tabletop Exercise to further develop emergency plans.



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS EXPO

We celebrated National Preparedness Month by hosting our Emergency Preparedness Expo which is a free, family-friendly event with hands-on displays, games, and activities to provide a fun-filled way to learn about preparing for emergencies. This helps increase both individual and community preparedness in our County. This year we had a great turnout of vendors, visitors, County employees, and elected officials!

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Since starting our internship program in 2022, we have expanded the program to help more high school and college students explore careers in emergency management. We hosted a record number of interns in 2023 with 4 high schoolers and 1 college student. They primarily worked on emergency planning or outreach operations to help support our office's preparedness goals.



LIFE-SAVING SKILLS

This year, we invested in equipment to support the high demand for CPR and Stop the Bleed training for residents and community groups. We also worked with the County Police Department to increase our training capabilities and teach Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE) training in both English and Spanish. To request a training, visit [our website](#) or email oemoutreach@aacounty.org.

HERricane

In July, we partnered with the Institute for Diversity and Inclusion in Emergency Management (I-DIEM) to host Maryland's first-ever HERricane camp. HERricane is a free emergency management summer camp that allows young ladies ages 14-22 to explore emergency management-related career paths, and learn valuable leadership and life-saving skills. We had 15 young ladies participate with support from Emergency Managers from all over the State.



MY GUIDE TO EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Our fillable workbook that helps individuals and families plan for emergencies is now available in Spanish and Korean. This year, we prioritized making more of our emergency preparedness materials available in our top spoken languages in the County. To access the My Guide workbook visit [our website](#) or stop by our booth at community events.

COUNTY-WIDE OUTREACH COORDINATION GROUP

In coordination with the [County Office of Community Engagement and Constituent Services](#), we formed a new group that brings together outreach specialists from different County agencies and community partners. We host meetings virtually to encourage collaboration across the County and develop more intentional outreach strategies to better reach our diverse community.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

The Special Projects Unit organizes, leads, and helps execute projects that may fall outside the scope of regular duties. This unit assists with grant management, oversees public assistance reimbursement after disasters, and maintains the operational readiness of the Emergency Operations Center. The Special Projects Unit also manages our call center during emergencies and coordinates logistics for mass care sheltering supplies.

GRANT MANAGEMENT

The FEMA-funded grants that we manage allow us to financially support projects, initiatives, and programs for the County Office of Emergency Management (OEM), the Fire Department, and the Police Department. Our grants management team works to track spending and ensure that the use of funds follows local and Federal purchasing guidelines. This fiscal year, the county was awarded \$1,002,221 across multiple grants to fund identified emergency management and public safety projects.



AGENCY GRANTS LEAD

To expand our office's capabilities, we created a new position to focus on managing emergency management and public safety grants. Adding this position allows us to capitalize on more grant funding opportunities that improve public safety and better prepare our communities.

SAFETY FIRST GRANT

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is equipped with instruments for the use of the Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) ham radio operators to support us in the event of a communications failure. We are excited to share that Norfolk Southern awarded our County's ARES team a generous Safety First grant of \$10,105 to update and replace this equipment. This update will help ensure the reliability of our backup communications capabilities.



EXPANDING PARTNERSHIPS

BWI AIRPORT

We met with Emergency Management, Fire, and Police personnel from Baltimore Washington International (BWI) Airport to discuss coordination efforts for large-scale disasters. We also received a tour of their facilities and learned more about their emergency procedures.



PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS DELEGATION

We had the pleasure of hosting the Philippine Government Officials Delegation and the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) to discuss emergency management coordination. The delegation heard from State and County representatives and took a tour of our facility. It was a fantastic opportunity to share best practices and learn from one another.

DETENTION FACILITIES

A few of our staff members and our high school intern toured the County's detention facilities to learn more about their emergency operations and procedures. It was a great opportunity to discuss future coordination and planning efforts.



BOWIE BAYSOX

We have been partnering with our local minor league baseball team to meet our community where they are at. We have attended a bunch of games and events at the stadium to share emergency preparedness information and handouts.

THE JUDY CENTER AT BELLE GROVE ELEMENTARY

For the last few years, we have partnered with the Judy Center to increase emergency preparedness outreach to our Hispanic youth and families. This year, we did more presentations and events to continue expanding on this partnership and better prepare our residents for emergencies.



GUN VIOLENCE INTERVENTION TEAM (GVIT)

The GVIT is led by the Department of Health to address gun violence as a public health issue. Through collaborative meetings and workgroup efforts with more than a dozen partner agencies, the GVIT is using a public health, data-driven, and community-engaged approach to address gun violence. Through a partnership with the GVIT, gun safety locks are available at all Anne Arundel County Library locations. For more information visit the [Anne Arundel County Department of Health website](#).



OPIOID INTERVENTION TEAM (OIT)

The OIT is a group of representatives from different agencies that work together to understand and coordinate responses to the opioid crisis within Anne Arundel County. The OIT uses data on total and fatal overdoses within our county and state to create strategies to reduce the risks associated with drugs and infectious diseases by improving the physical, mental, and societal health of people who use drugs within our community. For more information visit the [Anne Arundel County Department of Health website](#).



STATE DISASTER RECOVERY FUND WORKGROUP

Anne Arundel County OEM Director Preeti Emrick and City of Annapolis OEM Director Kevin Simmons co-chaired a workgroup to study the establishment of a State Disaster Recovery Fund. The two directors spearheaded this initiative after a tornado impacted the county and city, leaving residents and businesses in need of additional recovery resources and financial assistance. The workgroup helped to successfully create the State Disaster Relief Fund in May 2023 to provide more disaster recovery assistance to individuals for micro-disasters that don't receive a federal disaster declaration.



AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

COUNTY EXECUTIVE CITATION

Kerry Topovski was awarded a citation to acknowledge her efforts in managing COVID-19 reimbursements of disaster-related expenses. Kerry worked with our partners to collect data, total costs, and write justifications, which resulted in over 8 million dollars in federal reimbursements.



EMERGENCY MANAGER OF THE YEAR AWARD

At the Annual Maryland Emergency Management Association Conference, Preeti Emrick was presented with the Emergency Manager of the Year Award. Preeti's efforts were acknowledged for her work on the State Disaster Relief Fund and the County's consolidated 911 Center/EOC project.

MASTER PIO DESIGNATION

Kasey Thomas was recognized for being the youngest person to complete the FEMA Master Public Information Officer (PIO) program. There are only 156 FEMA Master PIOs in the Country, and we are proud to have one of them serving Anne Arundel County.



COMMUNITY SAFETY AWARD

Joseph Seborowski was awarded a citation from the Northern Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce, County Council, County Executive, and Maryland General Assembly for his work on the special events permit process.

CERTIFIED EMERGENCY MANAGER (CEM) DESIGNATION

Kasey Thomas was awarded her CEM designation acknowledging that she has demonstrated an advanced understanding of emergency management and contributed to improving the emergency management field.



CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

James Krempel was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) for his work on the Protecting Houses of Worship Seminar series and continued partnership.

Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management

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