



Improving Customer Experience with Federal Services

High Impact Service Provider Annual CX Action Plan

FEMA: Individual Assistance (IA) Program

June 2019



HISP Annual Maturity Self-Assessment Summary

In 200 words or less total, tell us about your efforts around each core CX function by responding to the following prompts that apply.

Measurement: 5 / 6

Overview:

Objective 3.1 of FEMA's [FY 18-22 Strategic Plan](#) focuses on improving the survivor experience. Navigating complex federal programs is an unnecessary burden in times of disaster and FEMA must streamline current processes to improve the survivor experience. Conducting customer experience surveys helps FEMA to capture information about the processes survivors navigate so improvements can be made.

Activities:

FEMA's Recovery Directorate established a consistent set of customer experience metrics for the IA program. These measures make up the Recovery Performance Framework, which are used to assess a survivors' customer satisfaction of the Individuals and Households Program's (IHP) assistance and services. FEMA conducts three ongoing survey programs to capture experience data at multiple points of a survivor's journey: initial survey, contact survey, and assessment survey.

Next Steps:

To mature FEMA's processes for assistance to survivors, FEMA plans on developing a customer journey map of the Recovery process to identify additional touchpoints where customer experience data can be used to inform programmatic changes.

Challenges (where applicable):

Changes to program strategies result in the need to adjust survey questions or develop new questions to address the changes and get the most accurate information.

Governance: 3 / 6

Overview:

Providing assistance to disaster survivors and impacted communities following a disaster is at the core of FEMA's mission. FEMA is committed to improving the delivery of services and accomplishes this by identifying key individuals responsible for the recovery efforts for each disaster.

Activities:

FEMA maintains a robust review process to integrate customer feedback into policy solutions. Through interagency working groups, FEMA shares customer feedback to help improve cross agency recovery efforts for survivors. The Disaster Assistance Improvement Plan captures efforts being taken across federal agencies to support survivors.

Next Steps:

FEMA will be focusing on building a cross-component customer experience function to examine the Individual Assistance portfolio to ensure consistent application of customer experience practices.

Challenges (where applicable):

FEMA does not currently have a customer experience framework that can be used across programs, resulting in inconsistent application of practices across the agency.





Organization & Culture: 3 / 6

Overview:

FEMA's commitment to survivors is paramount and this is reflected in FEMA's core values and celebrate annually through the Administrator's Awards. Training for customer service is targeted to those who have direct contact with survivors, whether in person or on the phone.

Activities:

There are approximately 2,500 members of the Individual Assistance Incident Management Cadre that receive training on a regular basis based on the requirements set forth in their position task books. FEMA continually updates training requirements based on feedback received from survivors and due to program changes. Call center staff are evaluated on a regular basis as well. Annually, FEMA holds the Administrator's Awards to recognize staff for their excellent customer service. Categories include: Outstanding Survivor Service, Exceptional Service, and Excellence in Supporting the Mission.

Next Steps:

FEMA is working to develop agency wide training on behavioral health and wellness.

Challenges (where applicable):

N/A

Customer Research: 5 / 6

Overview:

FEMA continually reviews the available forms of assistance and how survivors access the various programs to improve current processes in order to deliver efficient solutions that provide the most effective survivor support. Understanding the barriers that limit or prevent access to programs, especially for vulnerable populations, remains essential to FEMA's mission.

Activities:

FEMA conducts surveys and periodic interviews with survivors on a consistent basis to gather their feedback about current processes and how they can be improved. Using data analytics, FEMA identifies service gaps from state level capability data to inform what services survivors will need and to develop program strategies to meet the identified needs.

Next Steps:

To build upon current success of customer research, FEMA is working to tie in applicant information with data from the Census database to analyze and understand the populations of individuals in high-risk natural disaster areas.

Challenges (where applicable):

N/A





Service Design: 5 / 6

Overview:

Providing assistance to disaster survivors and impacted communities following a disaster is at the core of FEMA's mission. FEMA continually uses survivor experience data to better assess program design. Understanding the survivor experience will help to improve FEMA's performance culture and outcome driven recovery. Data reviews enable FEMA to create innovative and efficient solutions that provide the most effective survivor support. Integrating technology solutions is one way in which FEMA is reducing the complexity of program service design.

Activities:

FEMA is implementing two projects to improve how feedback is obtained from survivors. The first project will build an on-line survey capability allowing FEMA to get feedback from survivors in additional communication modes. Second, FEMA is working to get a post-transaction voice response survey built into the current telephone platform that will allow FEMA to receive individualized feedback about agents providing service and guidance to survivors.

Next Steps:

Along with the two projects identified above, FEMA will be working to test program design changes such as the goal to decrease in person inspections by increasing the use of virtual or desk inspections. In an effort to be more customer-centric, FEMA will initiate a longitudinal survey to better understand FEMA's and other federal programs' effects on the survivor experience. The survey is under development and will be submitted to OMB later this year. FEMA will incorporate these results into the Recovery Performance Framework.

Challenges (where applicable):

N/A

Areas of Focus

Reflecting upon our 2019 CX Maturity Self-Assessment, our HISP has decided to focus on raising our maturity in the following areas in FY19/FY20:

- Measurement
- Governance
- Organization & Culture
- Customer Research
- Service Design





FY 2019 / 2020 CX Improvement Actions

Describe a use case where a typical customer of your program faced challenge(s) during a service experience. This case should relate to one of your organization's Focus Areas for the remainder of FY19 and through FY20.

Example HISP Customer Profile

An example HISP customer profile at FEMA is an individual or household with uninsured or underinsured necessary expenses and serious needs as a result of a Presidentially declared disaster.

Customer Needs + Frustrations

Navigating federal programs after surviving a disaster can be a frustrating experience, especially since a survivor may receive benefits from more than one agency but may need to provide the same information to each agency. Time is also a challenge for survivors as a home inspection may be required to assess damages, which may limit some forms of financial assistance.

HISP Implementation Challenge(s)

Each federal agency conducts a different process for survivors and separate IT systems, processes, and privacy concerns makes sharing data not a possibility. This results in a cumbersome process for survivors.

Stats

FEMA examines timeliness of award to survivors to examine how long it takes from registration to issuing an award to a survivor on a quarterly basis. This measure is enhanced by also tracking the accuracy of the award.

Action 1

Focus Area: **Governance**

Goal to be accomplished by September 30th, 2021:

- Establish a customer experience team within the Individual Assistance Program with the key focus of integrating consistent customer experience practices across all aspects of the program.

Critical Activities and Milestones:

- Develop customer experience analyst position descriptions to begin the hiring process.
- Hire individuals to serve in the customer experience analyst position.
- Develop annual governance priorities for implementation by the new team.





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Action 2

Focus Area: **Customer Research**

Goal to be accomplished by September 30th, 2021:

- Integrate CMS, Census and FEMA disaster survivor information to determine how services can be streamlined to create process efficiencies across the federal government.

Critical Activities and Milestones:

- Use the cross agency recovery leadership group to identify common required data elements across programs
- Analyze current agency processes to identify opportunities to reduce survivor reporting duplication

