

2022-2026 Strategic Plan



June 2022



OUR MISSION

**PROVIDE EFFECTIVE COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION
TO CREATE A CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS THAT BUILDS
AND SUSTAINS A DISASTER RESISTANT AND RESILIENT
COMMUNITY IN HAMILTON COUNTY**

OUR VISION

**A SAFER FUTURE THROUGH EFFECTIVE WHOLE
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT,
EMERGENCY SERVICES, PRIVATE SECTOR, VOLUNTEER
AGENCIES AND THE RESIDENTS OF HAMILTON COUNTY
TO SAVE LIVES, PROTECT PROPERTY, AND REDUCE THE
EFFECTS OF DISASTERS**

OUR VALUES

**COMMUNITY • LEADERSHIP
INTERGRITY • EQUITY • COLLABORATION
PROFESSIONALISM • INNOVATION**



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Letter from the Director

I was first appointed Director of the Hamilton County Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency in 2015. At that time, like today, I wanted to better understand the county's unique disaster history and challenges we might face in the future. After completing a review of the Agency's current structure and activities, I worked with my staff to identify how best to increase the level of preparedness for the county and its 49 jurisdictions. My goal was to develop a strong culture of emergency management in the county and to strengthen the practice at all levels. My thought was that the stronger each community was, the stronger we all were.

My first undertaking was a broad reorganization of Agency staff, utilizing our existing staff to their fullest potential and bringing in new personnel with different experiences and ideas. This allowed the Agency to shift our focus and place a greater emphasis on supporting planning, training and exercises, operations, and response efforts across the county. The guide for this effort, in 2016, was our first five-year Strategic Plan, to document our short and long-term goals. We set lofty targets for ourselves, and we began sharing our vision with our partners. During that same period, the Agency's activities and efforts grew like never before.

We enhanced our emergency notification and warnings systems and connected with residents through Alert Hamilton County and a strong outreach program. We increased efforts to support our communities through the development of new planning templates and support during pre-planned events. We completely rewrote our suite of planning documents including overhauls of our Emergency Operations Plan and Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, in addition to developing our new Threat & Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment, Recovery Framework, and Continuity of Government Plans. We focused on trainings that met the needs of our partners and supported all exercise types, from Emergency Support Function tabletops to the full-scale Mass Casualty exercise at Great American Ballpark.

The last five years also posed many challenges for the Agency as we created a foundation for a strong emergency management program. This foundation was strengthened by the lessons we learned as the county experienced a wide-range of events including flash and riverine flooding, wind events, hazardous material releases, civil unrest, mass casualty incidents, building collapses and, most recently, COVID-19.



Throughout the multitude of events we participated in, we learned important lessons and areas for improvement, all of which allowed our Agency to better serve our community. We saw firsthand the importance of coordinating with partners and focusing on how best to manage information, resources, and consequences.

The Agency built the framework for developing a robust emergency management program that supports our mission throughout the county. We were rewarded for our efforts, having been recognized by the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) as one of only 29 counties in the country to become an accredited emergency management program. This is an achievement I am immensely proud of and would not have been possible when I first started.

Looking into the future, we realize that a great emergency management program cannot stop at a strong foundation. This 2022-2026 Strategic Plan will serve as a blueprint for our program going forward. The goals and objectives outlined herein will take a two-prong approach for achieving our vision: enhancing the county's ability to support its communities during disasters, and strengthening local emergency management programs in every jurisdiction in the county. Over the next five years we will focus on strengthening these initiatives, using lessons learned and partnerships to drive our efforts and retain accreditation in the future. We must also ensure that what we are working towards is equitable and addresses the unique needs of our diverse county, to ensure every resident in every community is more prepared and resilient.

If I have learned anything from my first seven years in Hamilton County, it is that our program is only as strong as the relationships that exist between our public, private, and non-profit partners. We want to nurture these relationships and reinforce the mentality that emergency management is strong when we work together. I thank all our partners for their continued support and look forward to working with the whole community as we continue to move forward.

Nick Crossley, CEM, CPM
Director

About Hamilton County

Hamilton County is located in the southwest corner of Ohio. The county is between hills formed by the slopes of the Ohio Valley and the banks of the Ohio River. To the west of Hamilton County is the state of Indiana and directly to the south is the state of Kentucky.

At the heart of the county rests the city of Cincinnati, commonly referred to as the "Queen City," which was taken from the 1854 poem *Catawba Wine*, written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. He wrote of the city: "And this Song of the Vine/This greeting of mine/The winds and the birds shall deliver/To the Queen of the West/In her garlands dressed/On the banks of the Beautiful River."

Early settlers moved to the area in the late 1700's, which led to the formation of Hamilton County on January 2, 1790, just the second county formed in the Northwest Territory. As one of the ten original counties that existed at the time of the Ohio Constitutional Convention of 1802, Hamilton County has historically been and continues to play an important role in shaping the future of Ohio.

The county was named in honor of Alexander Hamilton, first Secretary of the Treasury and founder of the Federalist Party. At the time of its establishment, Hamilton County had an area roughly one-eighth of modern-day Ohio and only 2,000 non-Native American residents. After years of other counties being developed from Hamilton County lands, today the county has a land area of 407.4 square miles.

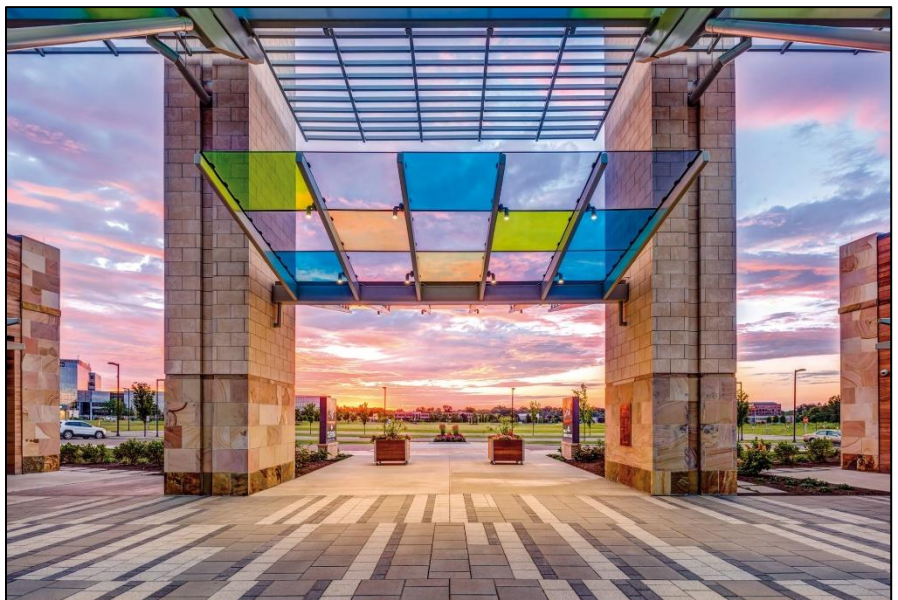
Hamilton County is home to 13 colleges and universities, including the largest public employer in the county, the University of Cincinnati. The county is also home to many industry leaders, including the headquarters of six Fortune 500 companies. A variety of items and goods produced in Hamilton County include aircraft engines, auto parts, motor vehicles, chemicals, valves, alcoholic beverages and soft drinks, food and kindred products, playing cards, drugs, cosmetics, toiletries, detergents, building materials, cans, metalworking and general industrial machinery, toys, apparel, mattresses, electric motors, robotics, electronic equipment, housewares, shoes, printing and publishing.

Hamilton County is also a harbor for the Cincinnati Reds, America's first professional

baseball team, the Cincinnati Bengals, and FC Cincinnati. In addition to those three professional teams, Hamilton County also includes four minor league teams: the Cincinnati Cyclones (hockey), the Ohio Kings (basketball), the Cincinnati Rollergirls (roller derby), and the Cincinnati Revolution (ultimate frisbee).

The mixture of the large city and the suburbs provides an enriching environment for families of all sizes. The culture is rich with German and Irish heritage, which provides the community with opportunities to participate in festivals all year-round. The community of 830,639 are the driving force behind the county. They are responsible for the large industries settling here and the ever-growing economy that stimulates Hamilton County.

Perhaps the most unique characteristic of Hamilton County, besides the long-standing chili on spaghetti debate, is an event that occurs every spring. After a long winter, when the flowers are just about to bloom at the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, people stir from every corner of the county and migrate toward Cincinnati for Opening Day. This single day brings all citizens of Hamilton County together in the best, most joyous way and for those few hours this county stands side by side with pride and hope for the future; not just for the Reds, but for the longevity of the county they call home, so that this county can provide the same incredible opportunities for generations to come. In that moment, it is easy to see why so many people call Hamilton County home.



Summit Park in Blue Ash, located in northeast Hamilton County

Our History

The Hamilton County Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency's current mission is to provide effective coordination and collaboration to create a culture of preparedness that builds and sustains a disaster resistant and resilient community in Hamilton County. But creating a culture of preparedness isn't new for this agency, which can trace its history back to World War II.

On November 15, 1941, the State of Ohio officially certified the Hamilton County National Defense Council (HCNDC) as part of Ohio's defense program. Retired Brigadier General Dana T. Merrill was hired by the HCNDC to coordinate civilian protection activities at a time when the greatest concern for the Greater Cincinnati area was the threat of air raids.

At its height, over 60,000 residents of Hamilton County volunteered for some type of civilian defense work, whether as air raid wardens, childcare workers, clericals, bandage rollers, or salvage collectors. But after the War Department recommended the complete cessation of air raid drills on November 1, 1943, the activities of the HCNDC quickly dropped off and the organization was officially disbanded in September 1944.

On December 2, 1952, the Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution authorizing the formation of the Cincinnati-Hamilton County Civil Defense Organization, though the organization struggled to find adequate funding despite being a requirement under the Ohio General Code. In the Cold War Era that followed the end of World War II, the emphasis was on preparing Hamilton County for a potential nuclear attack.

In 1962, the Agency was re-organized as the Hamilton County Civil Defense under the leadership of Director Liore Maccarone. From there the group found more solid footing, able to focus on civil defense and public warning.

It was during the 1960s that the group began to expand its mission and focus on other forms of disaster response. In the 1960s and early 1970s, several large national disasters occurred requiring response and recovery efforts by the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration. The government's role in disaster response continued to evolve throughout the 1970s until 1979, when President Carter signed the executive order creating the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).



Former Director Liore Maccarone testing the emergency radio network at the Hamilton County Communications Center in 1968.

Hamilton County followed suit, focusing more on disaster response until 1989 when all jurisdictions signed an updated county-wide agreement. The agreement outlined the Agency's purpose in coordinating the core functions of the county during times of emergency and highlights the need for combining the efforts of the county and the local jurisdictions in focusing on Civil Defense and Emergency Management. Thus, the Agency was renamed Hamilton County Office of Emergency Management and Civil Defense. By 1997, the Agency, now under the direction of Mr. Maccarone's son Don Maccarone, was simply the Hamilton County Emergency Management Agency.

In 2003, former Cincinnati Police Chief Mike Snowden was appointed Director of the Agency and oversaw the transition as Homeland Security was included in the emergency management mission. For 13 years, Mr. Snowden oversaw a large influx of grant funds including the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG), Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), and Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP). It was during Mr. Snowden's tenure that the Agency's name shifted to include Homeland Security, becoming the Hamilton County Emergency Management & Hamilton County Homeland Security Agency.

In February 2015, Nick Crossley was appointed the Agency's fourth Director. Today the Agency has shifted its focus to a comprehensive emergency management approach. Under the leadership of Director Crossley, the staff was reorganized, and the Agency's mission and values were defined and refocused in order to better shape not only the Agency, but Hamilton County's comprehensive emergency management program, which includes the various public, private and non-profit partners that are engaged during the four phases of the emergency management cycle.

Our Program

Hamilton County's emergency management program has been designed to comply with [Ohio Revised Code \(ORC\) 5502.21](#) and national emergency management program standards. The ORC defines "emergency management" to include all emergency preparedness and civil defense activities and measures, whether or not mentioned or described in sections 5502.21 to 5502.51. Activities of the Agency should be designed or undertaken to minimize the effects upon the civilian population caused or that could be caused by any hazard and that are necessary to address mitigation, emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.

Furthermore, the ORC defines "emergency preparedness" as an integral part of emergency management that includes those activities and measures designed or undertaken in preparation for any hazard, including, but not limited to, natural disasters and human-caused hazards and that will enhance the probability for preservation of life, property, and the environment.

"Emergency preparedness" includes, without limitation (not all inclusive):

- The establishment of appropriate agencies and organizations;
- The development of necessary plans and standard operating procedures for mitigation, preparation, response, and recovery purposes, including, without limitation, the development of supporting agreements and memorandums of understanding;
 - Hazard identification;
 - Capability assessment;
- The recruitment, retention, and training of personnel;
- The development, printing, and distribution of emergency public information, education, and training materials and programs;
- The necessary conduct of research;
- The development of resource inventories;
- The development and construction of public shelter facilities and shelter spaces;
- The development and construction of emergency operations centers for the conduct

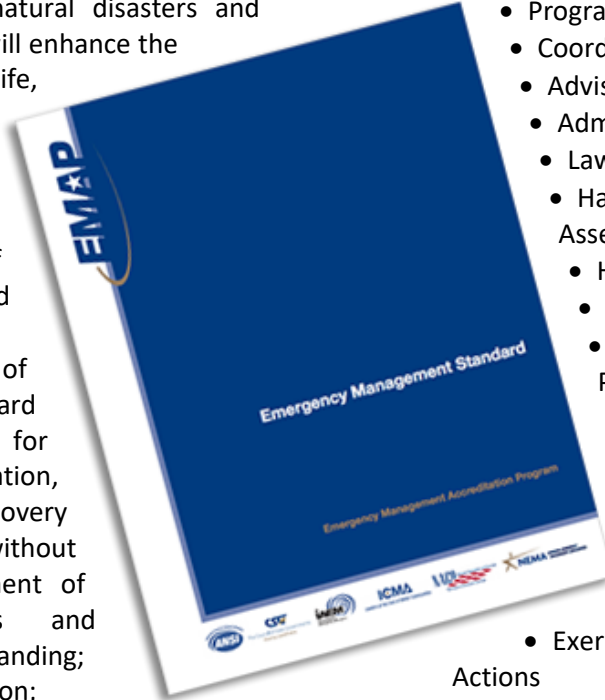
and support of coordination, direction, and control activities;

- When appropriate and considered necessary, the non-military evacuation or temporary relocation of the civilian population.

The program is accredited and continues to being designed to comply with the Emergency Management Accreditation Program. The *Emergency Management Standard* by EMAP is the set of 66 standards by which programs that apply for EMAP accreditation are evaluated. [The Emergency Management Standard](#) is designed as a tool for continuous improvement as part of the voluntary accreditation process for local and state emergency management programs.

The *Emergency Management Standard* covers:

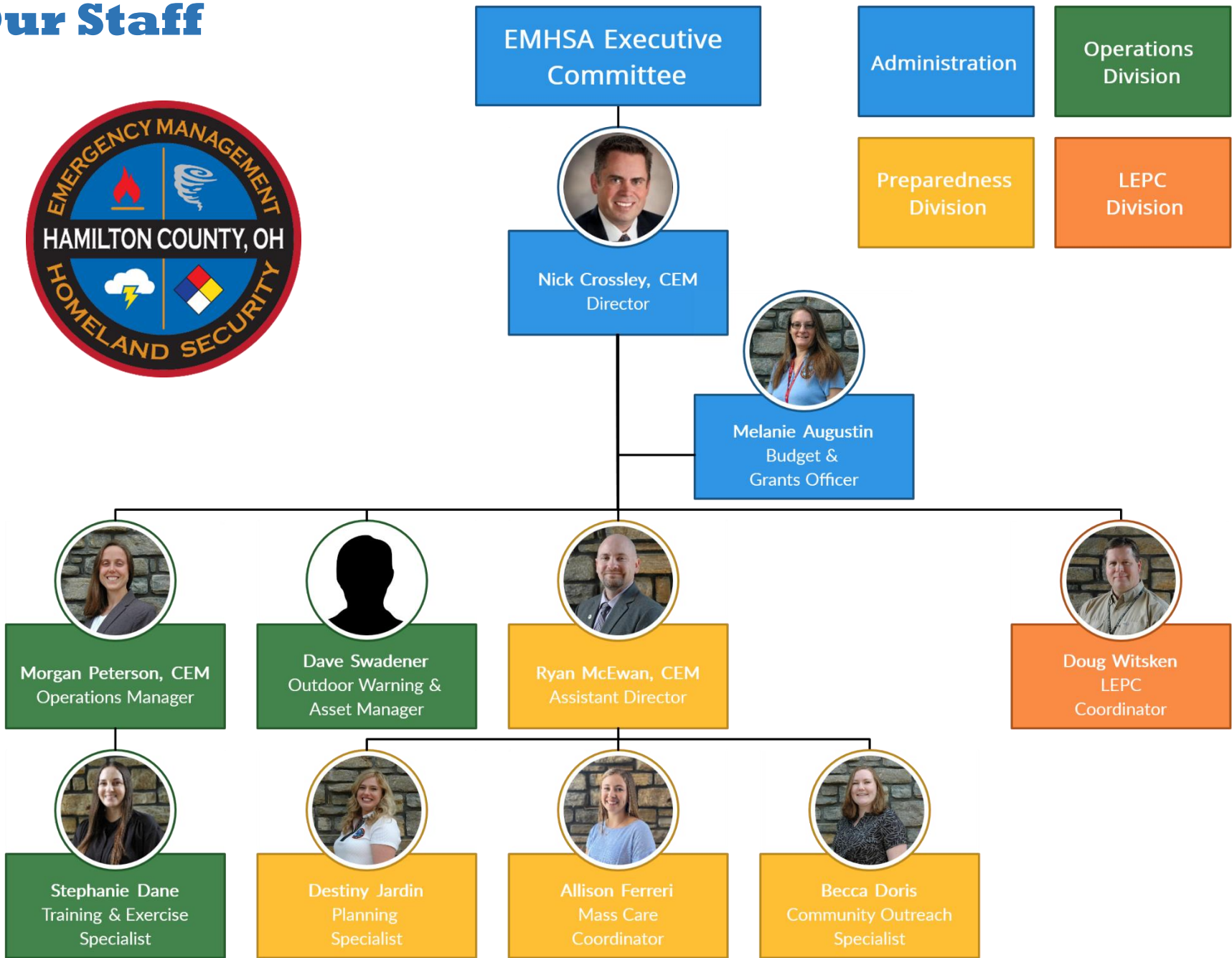
- Program Administration and Evaluation
- Coordination
- Advisory Committee
- Administration and Finance
- Laws and Authorities
- Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Consequence Analysis
- Hazard Mitigation
- Prevention
- Operational Planning and Procedures
- Incident Management
- Resource Management, Mutual Aid and Logistics
- Communications and Warning
- Facilities
- Training
- Exercises, Evaluations, and Corrective Actions
- Emergency Public Information and Education



EMAP maintains a three-year cycle for the *Emergency Management Standard*. The three-year review cycle is designed to ensure committee and commission review of comments from the public, applicant programs, and assessors as well as evolving industry practices. The *Emergency Management Standard* is reviewed and updated through the work of the EMAP Technical Committee, which makes recommendations to the EMAP Commission.

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Our Staff



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Our Values



COMMUNITY

We will strive to understand all communities and cultures within Hamilton County. We will engage and empower our residents and partners through inclusive practices that cultivate trust and continued engagement.



LEADERSHIP

We will be forerunners in the industry of emergency management and take an active role in leading the profession. We will influence and guide all entities of Hamilton County during each disaster phase.



INTEGRITY

We will be transparent in our workings with all partners and community members. We will hold ourselves accountable to the highest standard of ethical behavior and organizational excellence and be responsible fiscal stewards with all available resources.



EQUITY

We will work diligently to understand the interrelated elements that systematically affect our communities during all phases of a disaster. We will be impartial and fair in the services we offer and strive for equitable outcomes for all.



COLLABORATION

We will embrace the Whole Community approach, involving all levels of government and working with stakeholders from the public, private, and non-profit sectors. We will work cohesively and utilize the talents, knowledge, and ingenuity of all our partners.



PROFESSIONALISM

We will always appear, speak, and interact with others in a professional manner. We will invest in a skilled workforce through constant training and professional development.



INNOVATION

We will be proactive in seeking opportunities to move the field of emergency management forward. We will always look for new and better ways to improve upon the services we offer to Hamilton County ensuring that we are providing the highest quality products.

Plan Implementation

Having a Strategic Plan is only effective if you have the ability to implement that plan to achieve your vision and accomplish your mission. To be successful, the Hamilton County Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency (EMHSA) has developed a comprehensive list of goals that will help us to achieve our mission. Each of those goals has multiple objectives and specific tasks associated with it.

EMHSA staff are assigned the tasks based on their areas of responsibility, though some tasks by their very nature will never be finished (e.g., conducting preparedness outreach in the community). The Strategic Plan will be used in conjunction with Annual Reports to track progress towards the tasks and denote any significant updates and accomplishments related to the objectives and goals.

Plan Maintenance

Evaluation

The Strategic Plan is a living document and requires ongoing review and evaluation to determine if the goals set forth are being met. As such, the EMHSA staff will meet at least once a year to evaluate the Plan and make updates as appropriate. At the annual review meeting, all available staff will come together and discuss each of the goals and objectives, share progress towards completion of the tasks, and discuss any updates that are needed to the language throughout the document. This will allow the Agency to evaluate the overall direction as it relates to our Mission and Vision.

Revision

Revisions of the Strategic Plan will be made following each evaluation; additional revisions can be made on an “as needed” basis. The Assistant Director will have the responsibility of making any updates to the plan and uploading the latest plan to the EMHSA website: www.hcready.org. Revisions to the goals and objectives should be documented on their respective pages in the following sections. The table below will be used to document when revisions have occurred.



Revision Date	Version #

Our Goals

The goals, objectives and tasks listed on the following pages are numbered in no particular order. Each of the areas identified below represents strategic priorities which will all be addressed simultaneously by the EMHSA staff to accomplish our mission and continue to work towards our vision.

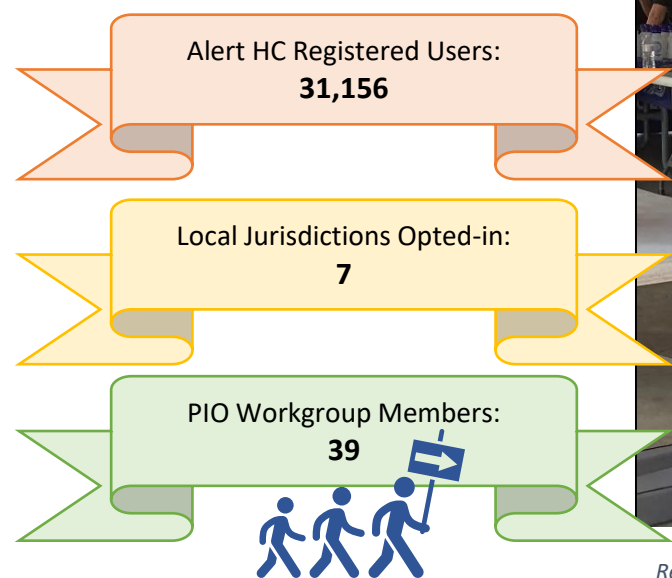
Goal #1 - Strengthen Community Engagement

Strengthen community engagement efforts through programs and initiatives to develop a “Culture of Preparedness” in Hamilton County

Objective 1.1 - Raise public awareness through enhanced outreach efforts and activities

To best serve the residents of Hamilton County, EMHSA must work with the individuals in our 49 communities to help them become more informed about local hazards and the actions they can take to be prepared. In addition, public engagement provides the opportunity to build relationships between our Agency and the people we serve, helping them to better understand what we do, and how they can be proactive in addressing the needs they may experience after a disaster strikes.

	Tasks	Responsibility
1.1.1	Conduct regular public education campaigns for the threats and hazards that can affect Hamilton County and the resources available to help residents understand those threats.	Community Outreach Specialist
1.1.2	Develop monthly social media campaigns using a seasonal preparedness calendar and highlighting important topics and events.	Community Outreach Specialist
1.1.3	Continue to develop and disseminate public education program materials (including electronic materials) to include individuals with access and functional needs on all-hazards planning and preparedness.	Community Outreach Specialist
1.1.4	Participate in ongoing workshops and public education/outreach events with community stakeholders and local jurisdictions.	Preparedness Division
1.1.5	Include community outreach engagements and strategies in the Integrated Preparedness Plan.	Preparedness Division
1.1.6	Redesign the Hamilton County EMHSA website to include additional content supporting preparedness efforts while increasing accessibility for individuals with access and functional needs.	Director and Community Outreach Specialist



Community Outreach Specialist Becca Doris helping a resident of the City of Reading sign up for Alert HC at Reading’s National Night Out on August 3, 2021

Goal #1 - Strengthen Community Engagement

Strengthen community engagement efforts through programs and initiatives to develop a “Culture of Preparedness” in Hamilton County

Objective 1.2 – Bolster partnerships with public, private, non-profit, and faith-based organizations

To best serve our communities, preparedness efforts must expand beyond the public sector to include private, non-profit, and faith-based organizations who can provide important resources during disasters. Preparedness is a shared responsibility, and only by working together can the county address the multitude of needs that are likely to arise during times of disaster. Working across levels of government and with a wide range of community groups will keep Hamilton County safe and resilient when struck by hazards.

	Tasks	Responsibility
1.2.1	Conduct an annual Partners in Preparedness meeting with various stakeholders from around the county.	EMHSA
1.2.2	Hold routine meetings with locally elected and appointed officials in Hamilton County to build relationships and communicate roles and expectations.	Director
1.2.3	Attend community service organization meetings to discuss shared preparedness efforts.	EMHSA
1.2.4	Incorporate private, non-profit, and faith-based organizations in preparedness efforts including training and exercise opportunities.	Preparedness Division

Objective 1.3 – Advance the county’s emergency public information system

The ability to develop, coordinate, and disseminate information, alerts, warnings, and notifications to the public and incident management responders is one of the most important roles EMHSA plays for Hamilton County. Having a robust Joint Information System that coordinates accurate and timely information is an important component of Hamilton County’s Emergency Management Program.

	Tasks	Responsibility
1.3.1	Routinely engage with communications personnel from multiple public sector partners to enhance the Public Information Officers (PIOs) Workgroup and maintain a network focused on sharing best practices and professional development.	Community Outreach Specialist
1.3.2	Improve and maintain documents and procedures that enhance the activities of the Joint Information Center (JIC).	Community Outreach Specialist
1.3.3	Increase participation in and engagement efforts with the Alert Hamilton County (Alert HC) public notification system targeting both residents and local jurisdictions.	Director and Community Outreach Specialist
1.3.5	Identify trainings and opportunities to exercise crisis communications and emergency public information capabilities.	Preparedness Division

Goal #2 - Support Equitable Mass Care Efforts

Create a system that supports equitable mass care efforts for all residents of Hamilton County

Objective 2.1 – Establish support for mass care efforts through new and existing county partners

Our Agency recognizes that the 49 jurisdictions we serve may need support addressing the mass care needs of residents. That is why our Agency will lead the way in working with different partners to determine how Hamilton County can best support the jurisdictions in their efforts to care for residents following a disaster.

Tasks		Responsibility
2.1.1	Develop and fulfill a Community Mass Care Coordinator position within the Agency.	Director and Assistant Director
2.1.2	Facilitate the identification and documentation of marginalized and vulnerable populations in appropriate plans with other county departments and community organizations, including those with access and functional needs.	Preparedness Division
2.1.3	Assess Hamilton County’s current mass care capabilities and identify gaps and areas for improvement.	Mass Care Coordinator
2.1.4	Develop a strategic approach for addressing missing elements with support from private and non-profit partners.	Mass Care Coordinator
2.1.5	Understand and coordinate with existing county recovery resources to streamline access for all residents.	Mass Care Coordinator

Objective 2.2 – Support the delivery of better mass care services to increase opportunities and access to post-disaster resources

Everyone has the right to fair and equitable treatment in times of emergency. The concerns and needs of all communities should be known and adequately addressed after a disaster, and that means working with partners across Hamilton County to ensure the needs of all residents are being met, including those with access and functional needs (individuals who need assistance due to any condition (temporary or permanent) that limits their ability to act).

Tasks		Responsibility
2.2.1	Develop trusted and ongoing relationships between emergency management and local and regional organizations that can support mass care and recovery efforts while seeking feedback from under-resourced and marginalized communities.	EMHSA
2.2.2	Support efforts to form and sustain a coordinated working group of public, private, and non-profit organizations involved in disaster response and recovery.	Mass Care Coordinator
2.2.3	Identify, acquire, and maintain mass care resources to supplement existing capabilities.	Mass Care Coordinator
2.2.4	Ensure the concerns and needs of all communities within Hamilton County are addressed following a disaster with a focus on inclusion and transparency that reduces barriers to resources.	Mass Care Coordinator


Goal #2 - Support Equitable Mass Care Efforts

Create a system that supports equitable mass care efforts for all residents of Hamilton County

Objective 2.3 - Augment Hamilton County's disaster recovery capabilities

Our Agency recognizes that the 49 jurisdictions we serve may need support addressing the mass care needs of residents. That is why our Agency will lead the way in working with different partners to determine how Hamilton County can best support the jurisdictions in their efforts to care for residents following a disaster.

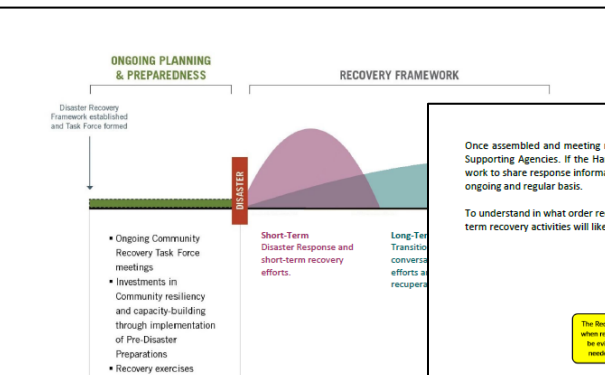
	Tasks	Responsibility
2.3.1	Meet with recovery partners and evaluate current capabilities.	Mass Care Coordinator
2.3.2	Update the Hamilton County Disaster Recovery Framework (DRF) to include community resources.	Mass Care Coordinator
2.3.3	Educate emergency management partners on County DRF.	Preparedness Division
2.3.4	Develop and execute a tabletop exercise focused on the Hamilton County Recovery Taskforce.	Preparedness Division



Disaster Recovery Framework

October 2020

ONGOING PLANNING & PREPAREDNESS **RECOVERY FRAMEWORK**



Disaster Recovery Framework established and Task Force formed

- Ongoing Community Recovery Task Force meetings
- Investments in Community resiliency and capacity-building through implementation of Pre-Disaster Preparations
- Recovery exercises

Short-Term Disaster Response and short-term recovery efforts.

Long-Term Transition recovery efforts as recovery.

Whereas response actions are supported by the Hamilton County Emergency Operations actions are managed by county leadership with input from the Recovery Taskforce.

Recovery Task Force
The Recovery Task Force (RTF) is designed to work across government and community recommendations in support of the recovery operations and priorities. It also serves as a broad look at the many competing needs presented across the community and as represented by each RF. In this role, the RTF needs to assess competing demands, fact thoughtful, balanced, and effective recommendations for recovery functions.

Pre-disaster, the RTF will meet on an ongoing basis of a minimum of once annually to make priorities and to ensure the group is ready to provide expert advice in a coordinated fashion. The RTF decide, more frequent meetings are allowable, and post-disaster, on an as-needed will administer the RTF including organizing meetings, agendas, email coordination, meeting not replace existing organizations or committees but endeavors to bring together coordination and service delivery.

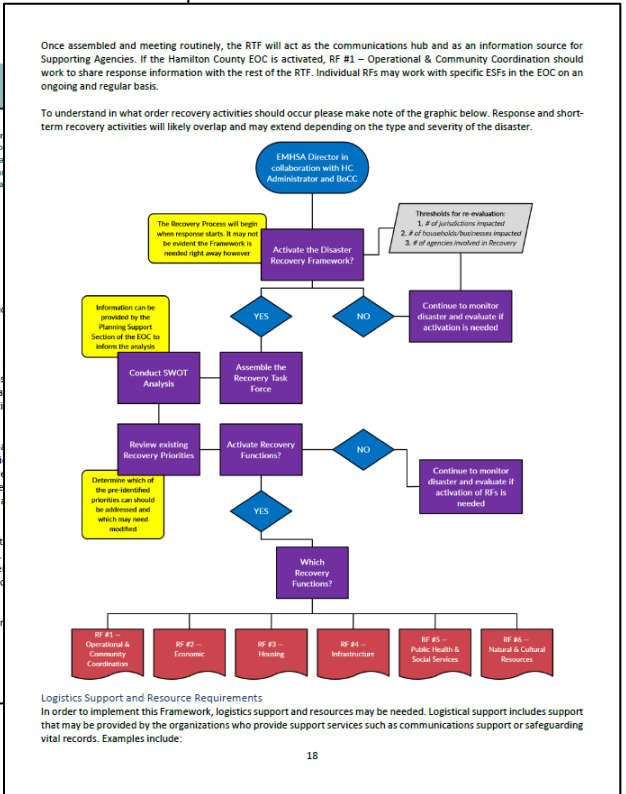
This RTF engages possible resources such as community, public, private and not coordinated effort to make recovery recommendations and maximize service delivery, short and long-term recovery efforts. It is composed of representatives of government organizations, and others, to work as a liaison between coordinating groups, support departments, emergency management and the public.

The RTF is directed to ensure a Whole Community approach to problem solving pre-disaster. The RTF is communication and coordination that:

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Once assembled and meeting routinely, the RTF will act as the communications hub and as an information source for Supporting Agencies. If the Hamilton County EOC is activated, RF #1 – Operational & Community Coordination should work to share response information with the rest of the RTF. Individual RFs may work with specific ESFs in the EOC on an ongoing and regular basis.

To understand in what order recovery activities should occur please make note of the graphic below. Response and short-term recovery activities will likely overlap and may extend depending on the type and severity of the disaster.



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The Hamilton County Disaster Recovery Framework was first published in October 2020 and focuses on the six Recovery Functions that will be addressed follow a disaster.

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Goal #3 - Implement Hazard Mitigation Strategies

Revise and implement hazard mitigation strategies driven by input from community partners and residents across Hamilton County

Objective 3.1 - Develop the 2023 Hamilton County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan

Hamilton County’s Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (MHMP) forms the foundation for the county’s long-term strategy to reduce disaster losses and break the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction, and repetitive loss. The planning process is as important as the plan itself. It creates a framework for risk-based decision making to reduce damage to lives, property, and the economy from future disasters.

	Tasks	Responsibility
3.1.1	Develop a Request for Proposals and select a contractor to facilitate updating the 2018 MHMP for 2023.	Assistant Director
3.1.2	Assemble a new Mitigation Steering Committee to oversee MHMP development and review mitigation strategies.	Assistant Director
3.1.3	Coordinate with all 48 participating jurisdictions (City of Milford is covered by Clermont County), regional partner agencies, and the public to review proposed strategies and projects.	Preparedness Division
3.1.4	Submit completed MHMP to Ohio Emergency Management Agency and the Federal Emergency Management Agency for review.	Assistant Director
3.1.5	Ensure adoption of the MHMP by the Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners and all 48 participating jurisdictions.	Assistant Director

Objective 3.2 - Encourage county partners and local jurisdictions to implement mitigation projects

A 2019 report from the National Institute of Building Sciences found that on average, mitigation measures saved communities \$4-\$11 per \$1 spent, and reaffirmed that mitigation represents a sound financial investment. Yet local jurisdictions must constantly balance how best to invest their limited resources, especially when the day-to-day concerns of running a jurisdiction hang overhead. That is why our Agency will continue to find ways to help our partners at the county and local level identify opportunities to supplement their funding and how to get the greatest benefit when implementing mitigation projects.

	Tasks	Responsibility
3.2.1	Identify and promote all federal and state funding opportunities for jurisdictions and residents.	Preparedness Division
3.2.2	Review project status annually and document progress in the MHMP.	Assistant Director
3.2.3	Assess new projects that reduce the impacts of hazards for inclusion in the MHMP on an ongoing basis.	Assistant Director

Goal #4 - Reinforce Planning Efforts

Reinforce planning efforts by focusing on improved plan integration and ensuring the inclusion of additional partners in planning activities

Objective 4.1 - Evaluate and implement methods for improved plan integration across county and local-level emergency management plans

One of the eight core principles of emergency management is *Integrated*, which is defined as “ensuring unity of effort among all levels of government and all elements of a community.” Plans that are integrated between the local and county level can support better communication between different levels of government while clearly documenting expectations, roles and responsibilities, and strategies for improving services offered.

	Tasks	Responsibility
4.1.1	Develop an Integrated Preparedness Plan to document future planning efforts and align planning strategies with identified gaps.	Preparedness Division
4.1.2	Maintain planning templates that can be used by local jurisdictions to develop or update local emergency management plans.	Planning Specialist
4.1.3	Continue to coordinate the development and maintenance of county-level plans with emergency management partners and stakeholders.	Assistant Director and Planning Specialist
4.1.4	Use emergency management exercises to evaluate the effectiveness of plans and use any identified planning gaps to improve plans and planning efforts.	Training & Exercise Specialist



Partners discussed how different hazards may impact their local capabilities during the Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW) at the Hamilton County Partners in Preparedness Meeting at the Sharonville Convention Center on September 29, 2021

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Goal #4 - Reinforce Planning Efforts

Reinforce planning efforts by focusing on improved plan integration and ensuring the inclusion of additional partners in planning activities

Objective 4.2 - Update the Hamilton County Emergency Operations Plan while integrating federal concepts and national best practices

Planning is fundamental to preparedness. As a practice, it provides a methodical way to engage the whole community in considering the lifecycle of a potential crisis, determining required capabilities, and establishing a framework for roles and responsibilities. In order to truly be effective, Hamilton County’s Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) should not only be up to date, but should also ensure that it takes into consideration best practices from other Programs around the country.

	Tasks	Responsibility
4.2.1	Review the EOP annually including revisions of multiple Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) each year.	Assistant Director and Planning Specialist
4.2.2	Evaluate the need for additional hazard-specific annexes and work with key stakeholders on development and maintenance of supporting documents like the Spontaneous Volunteer Management Plan or the Mass Casualty Incident Plan.	Assistant Director
4.2.3	Include Lifeline and Core Capability concepts throughout the EOP as appropriate.	Assistant Director
4.2.4	Engage the public during EOP development and encourage participation in the planning process to address the needs of all residents.	Preparedness Division
4.2.5	Promulgate and adopt an updated EOP with the Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners and the EMHSA Executive Committee.	EMHSA
4.2.6	Update the plan when areas for improvement are identified from exercises or real-world events.	Assistant Director

Objective 4.3 - Improve Hamilton County’s Continuity of Operations Program and Continuity of Government Plan

When disasters strike, Hamilton County must ensure that county government remains prepared to fulfill its functions and support all residents. To that end, in 2020, the Board of County Commissioners passed a county resolution promulgating a Continuity of Government (COG) Plan that ensures that our form of government will be able to continue to operate under any and all circumstances. Along those same lines, each county department that supports the county’s essential functions has developed a Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan as part of Hamilton County’s overarching COOP Program.

	Tasks	Responsibility
4.3.1	Conduct COOP planning workshops every three years to help county departments evaluate and maintain continuity plans.	Planning Specialist
4.3.2	Review and update the Hamilton County COG Plan with the appropriate county stakeholders.	Planning Specialist
4.3.3	Continue outreach to county departments that do not have a COOP Plan and offer support in developing new plans.	Director and Planning Specialist

Goal #5 - Coordinate Multi-Hazard Training & Exercise

Coordinate a multi-hazards training and exercise program to evaluate all aspects of the emergency management system

Objective 5.1 - Request and provide trainings following a multi-year schedule that addresses community-defined needs

Training has a wide variety of purposes, including giving individuals and organizations a greater understanding of their responsibilities and the knowledge and skills they need to do the job. As our Agency works to improve the processes and procedures utilized to support Hamilton County and its jurisdictions, we must also ensure our staff and partners understand the changes made and have the appropriate skills to be as effective as possible. The trainings brought to Hamilton County by the Agency will address identified gaps and needs, and not brought in simply for the sake of conducting trainings.

	Tasks	Responsibility
5.1.1	Hold an annual Integrated Planning Preparedness Workshop (IPPW) to assess training needs across the county.	Preparedness Division
5.1.2	Schedule trainings based on IPPW results and a gap-analysis with external partners including Ohio EMA and National Domestic Preparedness Consortium partners.	Training & Exercise Specialist
5.1.3	Develop a master calendar of trainings for a three-year period each year for inclusion in the Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP).	Training & Exercise Specialist
5.1.4	Facilitate all course offerings by coordinating with community host sites.	Training & Exercise Specialist
5.1.5	Create and conduct trainings for emergency management partners that address skills and capabilities needed in the Hamilton County Emergency Operations Center (EOC).	Operations and Preparedness Divisions
5.1.6	Maintain a comprehensive record of Hamilton County EOC team training records.	Training & Exercise Specialist



Assistant Director Ryan McEwan instructs Damage Assessment to students in Forest Park on January 28, 2022

Goal #5 - Coordinate Multi-Hazard Training & Exercise

Coordinate a multi-hazards training and exercise program to evaluate all aspects of the emergency management system

Objective 5.2 - Enact a routine exercise and improvement evaluation program that regularly tests the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities of emergency personnel and support agencies county-wide

Experience gained during exercises is one of the best ways to prepare teams to respond effectively to an emergency. In Hamilton County, exercises are designed to engage participants in a no-fault learning environment and get them working together to manage the response to hypothetical incidents. Exercises enhance knowledge of plans, allow participants to improve their own performance, and identify opportunities to improve capabilities to respond to real events.

	Tasks	Responsibility
5.2.1	Hold an annual IPPW to assess exercise needs across the county.	Preparedness Division
5.2.2	Schedule exercises based on IPPW results and a gap-analysis for the Hamilton County EOC and EOC personnel.	Training & Exercise Specialist
5.2.3	Ensure emergency management plans, policies, procedures, equipment, and facilities are regularly tested and evaluated through a variety of initiatives.	Operations and Preparedness Divisions
5.2.4	Generate Incident Reports and After Actions Reports to identify and document strengths and areas for improvement for incidents involving emergency management.	Training & Exercise Specialist
5.2.5	Prioritize and track the implementation of corrective actions and resolution of any areas for improvement.	Training & Exercise Specialist
5.2.6	Address identified corrective actions with support from applicable Agency staff and partners.	EMHSA



Director Nick Crossley and Hamilton County EOC personnel discuss the response to multiple tornados during a functional EOC exercise on September 17, 2021

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Goal #6 - Maintain Hamilton County's LEPC Program

Maintain Hamilton County's Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Program

Objective 6.1 - Foster public and private sector collaboration to enhance chemical safety throughout Hamilton County

The Hamilton County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) meets quarterly to discuss issues related to chemical safety in the county. In addition, the LEPC Coordinator routinely works with private sector partners and organizations to document hazards and response procedures while supporting relationship building with local first responders.

	Tasks	Responsibility
6.1.1	Maintain a strong and diverse LEPC membership that meets all state requirements.	LEPC Coordinator
6.1.2	Routinely engage with government agencies, private sector agencies, the chemical industry, community advisory groups, and the chemical transportation sector to ensure strong communication and collaboration in the region.	LEPC Coordinator
6.1.3	Actively monitor existing and new chemical facilities in Hamilton County and ensure reporting compliance as outlined in the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) and Ohio Revised Code Section 3750.	LEPC Coordinator
6.1.4	Include opportunities for private sector partners to participate in exercises with local first responders and hazardous materials response teams.	LEPC Coordinator

Objective 6.2 - Promote preparedness focused on potential hazardous materials incidents

The Hamilton County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) helps reduce the county's risk from accidents involving hazardous chemicals coordinated planning, training, exercises, and public education. In addition to quarterly meetings, our LEPC encourages local first responders to work with facilities in their area of response, and provides every jurisdiction with up-to-date information about the facilities and their associated chemicals.

	Tasks	Responsibility
6.2.1	Conduct routine first arrival training with local first responders.	LEPC Coordinator
6.2.2	Pursue grant opportunities to fund advanced training for regional first responders and hazardous materials response teams.	LEPC Coordinator and Budget & Grants Officer
6.2.3	Update the Hamilton County Hazardous Materials Response Plan annually as required by Ohio Revised Code Section 3750.	LEPC Coordinator and Assistant Director
6.2.4	Coordinate at least one annual exercise using local jurisdictions with a hazmat incident focus that meets the Ohio State Emergency Response Commission requirements.	LEPC Coordinator and Training & Exercise Specialist
6.2.5	Promote hazardous materials awareness, with an emphasis on shelter-in-place procedures, for the public through educational materials and public outreach.	LEPC Coordinator and Community Outreach Specialist

Goal #7 - Ensure the Ability to Support Response

Ensure Hamilton County's ability to support multi-faceted response through enhanced facilities, technology, and well-documented procedures

Objective 7.1 - Streamline Hamilton County's operational readiness by moving into a new joint-operated facility with the Communications Center

For many years, the Hamilton County Communications Center has been one of this Agency's closest partners. The two departments share a symbiotic relationship, often sharing information and resources and supporting each other's efforts. Both organizations have a need for an updated and more modern facility, and with the support of the Board of County Commissioners and County Administration, that option is on the horizon.

	Tasks	Responsibility
7.1.1	Work with Hamilton County Administration and Facilities to identify a location where communications and emergency management operations can be co-located	Director
7.1.2	Provide input on the design and creation of a new Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and Agency offices.	EMHSA
7.1.3	Create space in the new facility to allow for additional first responder trainings and community meetings.	Director
7.1.4	Review information sharing technology and procedures with the Communications Center to allow for better situational awareness.	Operations Manager
7.1.5	Consolidate Agency resources that are not actively supporting operations.	Operations Division
7.1.6	Facilitate a smooth transition from the current Agency office to the new joint-operated facility.	Director



Above: The proposed new facility for the joint HCCC/EMHSA building, located in Springdale, OH



Left: First floor inside the proposed site, which will serve as the future location of the Hamilton County EOC



Right: EMHSA Director Nick Crossley and HCCC Director Andy Knapp review initial layout proposals

Goal #7 - Ensure the Ability to Support Response

Ensure Hamilton County's ability to support multi-faceted response through enhanced facilities, technology, and well-documented procedures

Objective 7.2 - Identify and implement technological improvements that enhance information sharing during response and recovery operations

Regardless of the disaster, one constant that will always exist is the need for close coordination and the ability to quickly share information between emergency management and our partners. As we look to the future, we must also be cognizant of the new technologies that exist that will allow us to collect, analyze and disseminate information and enhance response and recovery operations more readily.

	Tasks	Responsibility
7.2.1	Design a Warning Room in the new facility that will allow Duty Officers to maintain comprehensive awareness of potential events and easily transition when activating the EOC.	Director and Operations Manager
7.2.2	Review and implement new emergency management software with the option of virtual operations to include information gathered from multiple stakeholders that will be utilized for daily operations and during EOC activations.	Operations Manager
7.2.3	Identify technology needs in the new EOC that include creating and displaying event information, telephone and radio communications, and the ability to monitor information from multiple external sources.	Director and Operations Manager
7.2.4	Develop and execute a virtual EOC functional exercise to validate the new systems and technologies.	Training & Exercise Specialist
7.2.5	Finalize the enhancements to the alternate EOC.	Operations Manager

Objective 7.3 - Manage Agency resources and maintain a resource management system

When supporting incidents, Hamilton County utilizes the resource management concepts outlined in the National Incident Management System (NIMS). For daily operations, the Agency is still responsible for a wide array of resources that must be carefully managed by inventorying, storing, and maintaining each one.

	Tasks	Responsibility
7.3.1	Document Agency resources and develop appropriate operating and maintenance procedures.	Operations Division
7.3.2	Ensure the functionality of Agency resources through routine testing and maintenance.	Operations Division
7.3.3	Demobilize resources not needed for Agency operations.	Operations Division
7.3.4	Manage a system to identify and track local, county, regional, state, and federal resources that could support emergency response and recovery operations.	Operations Manager
7.3.5	Coordinate with Hamilton County facilities to complete and document siren preventative maintenance.	Operations Division

Goal #7 - Ensure the Ability to Support Response

Ensure Hamilton County's ability to support multi-faceted response through enhanced facilities, technology, and well-documented procedures

Objective 7.4 - Amend existing procedures for the Emergency Operations Center and daily Agency operations

Two Agency staff members serve as Primary and Alternate Duty Officer 365 days a year. This provides the Agency with the capacity to constantly monitor for potential hazards and threats and always be ready to activate the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC). To ensure Agency staff and EOC personnel are always ready to response, procedures are documented and tested.

	Tasks	Responsibility
7.4.1	Review and update the existing Duty Officer Manual and provide routine training and exercises to all Agency staff.	Operations Manager
7.4.2	Complete the EOC Manual to include Emergency Support Function and position checklists.	Operations Manager and Assistant Director
7.4.3	Routinely update countywide contact lists for county personnel, local jurisdictions, and partner agencies.	Operations Manager



Above: EMHSA staff practice setting up the Alternate EOC during an EMHSA in-service drill in Green Twp. on April 2, 2021

Right: The EMHSA warehouse in Blue Ash, OH was established for the storage and distribution of PPE resources to support local jurisdictions and community organizations response to the COVID-19 pandemic



Goal #8 - Enhance Capabilities for Prevention Activities

Enhance capabilities for prevention including resource acquisition and intelligence and information sharing activities

Objective 8.1 - Implement a comprehensive strategy among local, county, and regional stakeholders to address prevention capabilities

Often the lines between the four phases of emergency management and the five mission areas of the National Preparedness are blurred. Unlike the other four mission areas, which are all-hazard by design, Prevention core capabilities focus specifically on avoiding, preventing, or stopping threatened or actual man-made attacks. Though the Agency has an all-hazards focus, we must work to ensure that we maintain a close relationship with law enforcement partners, especially when it comes to addressing hazards that are more specific to law enforcement by their very nature.

	Tasks	Responsibility
8.1.1	Update and improve Hamilton County's Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment to assess risk and identify local, county, or regional prevention gaps.	Assistant Director
8.1.2	Develop and maintain an Integrated Preparedness Plan to document mechanisms for addressing prevention gaps.	Assistant Director
8.1.3	Document lessons learned from exercises and real-world incidents and incorporate findings into future prevention initiatives.	Training & Exercise Specialist
8.1.4	Maintain a system to facilitate the exchange of information among local, state, and federal agencies involved in prevention activities.	Operations Manager
8.1.5	Promote information gathering and sharing capabilities among emergency management stakeholders.	EMHSA

Objective 8.2 - Engage public and private infrastructure partners in prevention and protection activities

The private sector owns and operates the vast majority of Hamilton County's critical infrastructure, so partnerships between the public and private sectors that foster integrated, collaborative engagement and interaction are essential to maintaining critical infrastructure security and resilience. The Agency serves as one of many partners in creating an environment for sharing critical threat information and risk mitigation across sectors.

	Tasks	Responsibility
8.2.1	Identify and document Critical Infrastructure and Key Resource partnerships in appropriate county-level plans.	Assistant Director
8.2.2	Participate in public-private organizations to foster relationships between community first response organizations and private sector infrastructure owners.	EMHSA
8.2.3	Incorporate public and private sector infrastructure into training and exercises.	Training & Exercise Specialist
8.2.4	Develop Emergency Support Function #14 and related procedures in coordination with private sector infrastructure partners.	Assistant Director and Operations Manager

Goal #9 - Achieve EMAP Reaccreditation

Achieve reaccreditation through the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP)

Objective 9.1 - Retain Hamilton County's current EMAP accreditation

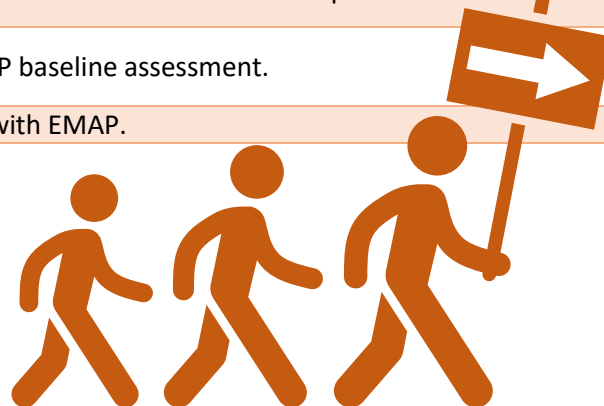
In July 2021, Hamilton County did what only 29 other counties in the United States had accomplished by receiving its first accreditation status through EMAP. EMAP, the voluntary standards, assessment, and accreditation process for disaster preparedness programs throughout the world, fosters excellence and accountability in emergency management by establishing credible standards applied in a peer reviewed accreditation process. To achieve accreditation, Hamilton County was required to achieve a set of 66 standards. To retain accreditation, Hamilton County will be required to maintain the high standards the Agency has set for itself.

	Tasks	Responsibility
9.1.1	Training all new Agency staff and county leadership on importance of existing accreditation and process for reaccreditation.	Director and Assistant Director
9.1.2	Hold annual meetings with Agency staff to discuss changes to EMAP standards and impacts to the Agency.	Assistant Director
9.1.3	Routinely review all new and existing plans, policies, and procedures to ensure compliance.	EMHSA
9.1.4	Participate in annual EMAP compliance checks.	EMHSA
9.1.5	Send multiple staff members to participate in assessments of other programs to ensure familiarity with the process.	Director

Objective 9.2 - Schedule and manage the reaccreditation process

In 2026, Hamilton County will invite a new team from EMAP to re-evaluate its Program and achieve reaccreditation.

	Tasks	Responsibility
9.2.1	Develop a process and determine estimated timeframe for pre-assessment.	Director and Assistant Director
9.2.2	Register for and complete EMAP baseline assessment.	Director and Assistant Director
9.2.3	Coordinate onsite assessment with EMAP.	Director



Looking Ahead

Strategic planning is important because it provides a sense of direction and outlines measurable goals. It is a tool that is useful for guiding day-to-day decisions and also for evaluating progress and changing approaches when moving forward. The Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency staff has given careful thought to the goals and objectives above, and will work hard to accomplish the tasks to the best of our abilities.

Andrew Carnegie is quoted as saying “teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments towards organizations objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.”



As an Agency, we understand that accomplishing each of the goals and objectives listed above would be to achieve uncommon results. The last few years have demonstrated to us that we are fortunate to have unwavering support from our community partners and stakeholders.

The safer future of our Vision is not unobtainable. With this Strategic Plan we hope to hold ourselves accountable and continue our efforts to build and sustain a disaster resistant and resilient community in Hamilton County.

Above: Operations Manager Morgan Peterson conducts an interview with WLWT to share preparedness information for high wind and tornado events



Left: Hamilton County celebrates Riverfest in September 2021



Commissioner Summerow Dumas, Director Crossley, Commissioner Driehaus and Commissioner Reece declare Severe Weather Awareness Week by Resolution in March 2022

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