



Homeland Security and
Emergency Management

Annual Performance Report

SFY 2026

*Enhancing the quality of life for Iowans by preparing our
State and building resilient communities.*

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Contents

Message from the Director	3
Executive Summary.....	4
Organizational Structure.....	5
Progress Made in SFY 2026 on Improvement Efforts.....	7
Major Accomplishments in SFY 2026.....	10
All SFY 2026 Performance Indicators.....	12
SFY 2026 Performance Summary.....	13

Message from the Director

This report outlines the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management's performance for State Fiscal Year 2026 and highlights how our work impacts communities across Iowa.

Our core mission is service, which includes enhancing Iowans' quality of life by preparing the state for future challenges and building resilient communities. This past year, our department has significantly advanced this mission through key efforts. These included conducting vital disaster response exercises, ensuring local jurisdictions achieved compliant response plans, implementing critical process improvements, completing numerous public assistance and hazard mitigation projects, and executing comprehensive levee surveys.

As we move forward, our focus remains on service to Iowans, prioritizing transparency, fostering collaboration, and maintaining leadership in emergency management. We appreciate your continued partnership and support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John R. Benson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John R. Benson

Director

Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management

Executive Summary

This report covers the performance of the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2026. It outlines our progress on key initiatives from the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, as well as performance metrics found in the HSEM Operational Plan.

Of the 14 total measures tracked, nine met or exceeded their performance targets. The remaining targets where operational performance was not met have been thoroughly reviewed. A full breakdown of the performance measures is included at the end of this report.

Our Mission

The mission of the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management is enhancing the quality of life for Iowans by preparing our State and building resilient communities.

Our Vision

To serve government entities across Iowa to fulfill their missions with efficient, innovative, and strategic solutions.

Our Values

- **Mission Oriented:** We are resolute in our service to Iowans.
- **Integrity:** We conduct ourselves with honesty and are transparent in our actions.
- **Distinguished:** We are leaders in our field.
- **Collaboration:** We collaborate, connect, and share.

Organizational Structure

HSEM is the coordinating body for homeland security and emergency management activities across the state. The Department is composed of two divisions and six bureaus that support the governor's priorities and our statutory obligations.

Response Division

The Response Division focuses on first-line agency response to disasters and emergencies. It also carries out general planning efforts, including local and State plan development, training support, administration of the State Emergency Response Commission, Capitol Complex planning, continuity planning, agricultural emergency planning, and emergency response support. It consists of three bureaus:

Preparedness Bureau: Directs Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) during a State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) activation, houses the department's duty officer program, resource and volunteer management activities, radiological planning, capabilities assessment and strategic planning, individual and community disaster engagement programs, critical infrastructure protection and information sharing, and special teams.

Communications & Technology Bureau: Focuses on exercise coordination and support, communications, 911, mass notification and emergency messaging, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), strategic communication, and legislative and congressional relations.

Non-Disaster Grants Bureau: Focuses on the management and accounting services of HSEM's non-disaster grants.

Together, these functions support statewide preparedness, coordination, communication, and response capabilities before and during disasters and emergencies.

Recovery Division

The Recovery Division focuses on short- and long-term recovery, implementing mitigation programs, and coordination of recovery support. It consists of three bureaus:

Public Assistance Bureau: Manages the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance (PA) Grant Program.

Hazard Mitigation Bureau: Manages pre- and post-disaster hazard mitigation programs and maintain the State Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Disaster Grants and Administration Bureau: Coordinates Recovery Support Functions (RSFs) after a disaster, manages implementation of other disaster-related programs, coordinates State funding requirements with the State Executive Council, and provides grant monitoring, compliance, and accounting services.

Together, the Recovery Division's programs support the restoration of disaster-damaged communities, reduce future disaster risk, and provide the coordination and resources necessary for effective long-term recovery.

Progress Made in SFY 2026 on Improvement Efforts

In SFY 2026, HSEM advanced the following six key initiatives from our 2024-2028 Strategic Plan:

- Establish and maintain dynamic emergency response operations.
- Foster a holistic planning program that covers all aspects of emergency management.
- Sustain disaster recovery and hazard mitigation capabilities that are adaptable, integrated, and effective.
- Develop a critical infrastructure information analysis program.
- Develop and implement technological solutions throughout the department to improve processes and service delivery.
- Implement Whole Community principles across all aspects of the Department.

Strategic Initiative 1: Establish and maintain dynamic emergency response operations.

During SFY 2026, HSEM maintained a 24/7 statewide emergency response capability through continuous Duty Officer coverage and state resource coordination. The Department coordinated responses to severe weather and other emergency incidents, supported local jurisdictions when incidents exceeded local capabilities, and maintained statewide response resources and specialized teams.

HSEM also transitioned SEOC modernization efforts into ongoing operations through standardized training, exercises, operational procedures, and improved coordination. State exercises were completed at 100%, demonstrating continued operational readiness.

Strategic Initiative 2: Foster a holistic planning program that covers all aspects of emergency management.

HSEM continued to strengthen a holistic, Whole Community planning framework integrating preparedness, response, recovery, mitigation, and local emergency management planning. The Department provided technical assistance and training to local jurisdictions, strengthened the connection between planning, training, and exercises, and maintained Iowa's statewide and local hazard mitigation planning framework.

A total of 94% of jurisdictions met plan-compliance standards, exceeding the 75% target. HSEM also expanded integration of vulnerable-population considerations into plans, programs, and procedures to ensure the needs of the entire community are addressed.

Strategic Initiative 3: Sustain disaster recovery and hazard mitigation capabilities that are adaptable, integrated, and effective.

HSEM advanced disaster recovery and hazard mitigation by administering substantial federal resources. During SFY 2026, HSEM managed 210 Public Assistance projects for 104 applicants,

representing approximately \$233.8 million in estimated eligible costs, with roughly \$182.8 million obligated.

HSEM also managed approximately \$169 million in hazard mitigation funding, advancing 12 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) applicants involving 262 properties. By the end of the fiscal year, 168 properties were approved with \$59 million obligated. Recent project obligations, combined with project completion and closeout timelines, affected the mitigation completion measure, which reached 79% against an 85% target.

Strategic Initiative 4: Develop a Critical Infrastructure Information Analysis Program.

HSEM advanced development of its critical infrastructure information analysis capability to improve the state's ability to identify, assess, and communicate infrastructure risks and vulnerabilities. The Department strengthened information sharing and situational awareness among local, state, federal, and private-sector partners and conducted vulnerability and threat assessments to identify opportunities to improve security and resilience.

HSEM also expanded public-private partnerships and maintained the Critical Asset Protection Plan, protected critical infrastructure information processes, and the IP Gateway. These efforts strengthen Iowa's ability to anticipate threats, improve coordination among partners, and protect infrastructure essential to public safety and economic continuity.

Strategic Initiative 5: Develop and implement technological solutions throughout the department to improve processes and service delivery.

HSEM embraced technology and artificial intelligence initiatives by identifying and mapping key business processes for potential automation and efficiency improvements. These efforts helped identify opportunities to streamline internal processes and improve the Department's ability to deliver services effectively.

The Department also continued modernization of Iowa's Next Generation 911 system, including GIS-based emergency call routing and statewide emergency communications infrastructure, while expanding integration of technology platforms supporting 911 and PSAP operations.

Strategic Initiative 6: Implement Whole Community principles across all aspects of the Department.

HSEM engaged schools, nonprofits, businesses, community organizations, and other partners in preparedness, security, training, planning, and recovery efforts. The Department delivered 29 Whole Community-focused trainings and 29 training, workshop, and guidance sessions, substantially exceeding established targets.

HSEM also continued integrating access and functional needs considerations into plans, programs, and procedures and supported school security improvements through the School Safety Improvement Fund. These efforts expanded preparedness beyond traditional emergency-management organizations and strengthened the ability of communities and partners to work together before, during, and after emergencies.

Major Accomplishments in SFY 2026

In addition to the overall improvements related to strategic initiatives, HSEM also did significant work on the following items:

Strengthening Disaster Recovery and Reducing Future Disaster Risk

HSEM's most direct impact on Iowans during SFY 2026 was helping communities and households recover from disasters while reducing the likelihood and cost of future losses. The Department advanced Public Assistance recovery across multiple Presidential Disaster Declarations, and maintained rigorous oversight of these funds by managing project performance-period extensions when necessary, and continued recovery and closeout activities to restore disaster-damaged public infrastructure. HSEM oversaw 210 projects, for 104 applicants representing approximately \$233.8 million in estimated eligible costs. FEMA obligations increased to approximately \$182.8 million during the fiscal year.

HSEM also provided direct support to disaster survivors through the Iowa Individual Assistance Grant Program and Disaster Case Advocacy following multiple 2025–26 severe-weather events. These programs connected affected households with state financial assistance, individualized advocacy, and FEMA, insurance, SBA, and other recovery resources. HSEM successfully concluded Disaster Case Advocacy for the June 2024 severe-weather disaster while transitioning households with continuing needs to local long-term recovery resources.

At the same time, HSEM advanced long-term risk reduction by managing approximately \$169 million in hazard mitigation funding and advancing 12 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program applicants involving 262 properties. By June 30, 2026:

- 168 properties were approved for acquisition.
- Approximately \$59 million was obligated.
- 262 properties were included in the 12 applicant portfolios.

These acquisition projects permanently remove vulnerable properties from areas subject to repetitive or severe disaster risk. Together, HSEM's recovery and mitigation efforts put federal resources to work in Iowa communities, help households address unmet disaster-related needs, restore essential infrastructure, and make communities safer and more resilient before the next disaster.

Expanding Whole Community Preparedness and School Security

HSEM significantly expanded preparedness beyond traditional emergency-management organizations by strengthening partnerships with schools, nonprofits, businesses, community organizations, and other partners. The Department delivered 29 Whole Community-focused trainings, increased plans, programs, and procedures incorporating Whole Community

provisions to 15% , and more fully integrated access and functional needs into preparedness activities. Through EMPG, HSGP/SHSP, NSGP, the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program, and other preparedness and security programs, HSEM connected state and local partners with resources for planning, equipment, training, exercises, nonprofit security, cybersecurity, and school safety.

School safety remained atop priority. The School Safety Improvement Fund completed its implementation phase and funded 431 school district and system applications. HSEM supported 885 school security improvements—exceeding the performance target of 800. The Department also implemented the statewide school weapons-detection program and continued strengthening security and resilience through partnerships with schools, nonprofits, private-sector organizations, and other community stakeholders.

HSEM further strengthened Iowa’s preparedness by improving public-private information sharing, conducting critical infrastructure vulnerability and threat assessments, and advancing the state’s critical infrastructure information analysis program. This work has a direct impact on Iowans because preparedness and security are strongest when communities can act together to protect children, vulnerable populations, essential infrastructure, and the institutions and services on which Iowans depend.

Maintaining and Modernizing Iowa’s Statewide Emergency Response Capability

HSEM sustained a 24/7 statewide emergency response capability while modernizing the critical systems that support emergency communications and coordination. Throughout the year, the Department provided continuous Duty Officer coverage, coordinated state resources during severe-weather and other emergencies, and supported local jurisdictions when incidents exceeded local capabilities. HSEM also kept statewide response resources and specialized teams on standby to deliver surge support when needed.

On the modernization front, the Department successfully completed all state-level exercises and fully integrated the newly modernized SEOC into daily operations through standardized training and procedures. Technological advancements included the ongoing rollout modernization of Next Generation 911, GIS-based emergency call routing, statewide emergency communications infrastructure, and integrated technology supporting 911 and public safety answering point operations. HSEM also modernized administrative rules governing 911 and emergency response teams and secured \$400,000 in state funding to continue implementation of Iowa’s statewide mass-notification and emergency-messaging system.

To complement these operational upgrades, HSEM increased the public accessibility of emergency information and mapped key business processes to identify future automation opportunities. Together, these strategic investments strengthen Iowa’s ability to communicate reliably during emergencies, coordinate resources efficiently, and provide reliable state support when local capabilities are stretched or overwhelmed.

All SFY 2026 Performance Indicators

During SFY 2026, HSEM tracked the following performance indicators. Nine of the 14 measures met or exceeded their established targets.

Performance Measure	Target	Actual	Comments & Analysis
Percentage of Plans, Programs, and Procedures with Whole Community Integrated Provisions	10%	15%	Performance standard was met.
Number of Whole Community-Focused Trainings	10	29	Performance standard was met.
Percentage of State Exercises Completed	100%	100%	Performance standard was met.
Percentage of Local Exercises Completed	100%	94%	A small number of non-EMPG counties did not submit exercises during the reporting period, preventing the measure from reaching 100% completion.
Percentage of Jurisdictions with Compliant Plans	75%	94%	Performance standard was met.
Percentage of Obligated PA Large Projects Completed	70%	69%	A change in federal project thresholds resulted in slightly lower-than-expected closeout results.
Number of Department Processes Mapped	5	8	Performance standard was met.
Percentage of Staff in Leadership Development	30%	29%	Competing workloads and limited leadership development opportunities resulted in participation slightly below the target.
Percentage of Public Materials that are Accessible	80%	85%	Performance standard was met.
Percentage of Obligated Mitigation Projects Completed	85%	79%	Recent project obligations, combined with project completion and closeout timelines, resulted in a lower-than-expected completion rate.
Number of Schools That Make Capital Security Improvements	800	885	Performance standard was met.
Number of Cross-Jurisdictional Mutual Aid Events	6	3	The number of cross-jurisdictional mutual aid events is dependent on the number, severity, and type of disasters or emergencies in other states that generate requests for Iowa resources.
Number of Trainings, Workshops, Guidance Sessions	10	29	Performance standard was met.
Percentage of Whole Community Accessible Materials	80%	85%	Performance standard was met.

SFY 2026 Performance Summary

SFY 2026 performance reflects continued progress in HSEM's core responsibilities of preparedness, response, recovery, mitigation, and homeland security. The Department exceeded targets for Whole Community integration, Whole Community training, state exercises, jurisdictional plan compliance, process mapping, accessible public materials, school security improvements, and training and guidance activities. Measures that fell below target generally reflect external demand, project timing, federal program changes, or competing operational priorities rather than a decline in core capability.

HSEM will continue to use performance information to identify opportunities for improvement, strengthen accountability, and focus resources on activities that provide measurable value to Iowans. The Department's SFY 2026 results demonstrate the importance of sustained investment in resilient communities, effective disaster recovery, hazard mitigation, emergency communications, school safety, and Whole Community preparedness.