

VDEM VCU Emergency Preparedness for Locally Elected/Appointed Officials: Overview of Courses

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) has partnered with the Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University to offer free emergency preparedness education for locally elected and appointed officials. These courses are taught by full time faculty in the Homeland Security/Emergency Preparedness Department at VCU. All courses are one day, face-to-face, with coffee and lunch provided. Courses are offered at a variety of venues and dates during the first part of 2025. The link for registration is:

<https://cpp.wilder.vcu.edu/our-work-in-action-posts/disaster-preparedness-training.html>

1. Pre-Disaster Financial and Administrative Best Practices: The course offers elected and appointed officials an introduction to the field of emergency management with particular emphasis on financial preparation prior to the next disaster. Designed to equip officials with essential knowledge and understanding, this program covers key principles, strategies, and best practices. Participants will explore topics such as flood risk, financial preparedness, requirements of government funding procedures, the role of public property and private infrastructure insurance, enabling them to effectively lead and provide support to local emergency managers in their communities.

2. Navigating Disasters: Declarations and Resources: The course provides a comprehensive understanding of the critical concepts related to requests for resources during a disaster. Participants will gain insight into the importance of local, state, and federal declarations in response to increasing occurrences and intensity of natural hazards and human-caused threats. Through a combination of case studies, best practices, and practical exercises, officials will develop the tools necessary to support community resource needs. The course will explore key topics such as local unmet resource needs, requests for assistance, damage assessment, post-disaster programs, and roles and responsibilities at the local/state/federal levels.

3. Disaster Recovery: Rebounding and Rebuilding: The course is focused on incorporating hazard mitigation concepts in order to “build back better” after a disaster. Through a combination of case studies and immersive simulations, participants will develop the ability to conduct risk management with vulnerable populations, build resilience in their communities, secure technical assistance in the recovery process. By the end of the course, elected and appointed officials will be equipped to lead their communities towards recovery post-disaster, ensuring a safer and more sustainable future.

Please contact Dr. William Pelfrey at wvpelfrey@vcu.edu with any questions.