



MICHAEL J. "MIKE"
WAGUESPACK, CPA

Report Highlights

Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness

Hurricane Ida Preparation and Response

Audit Control # 40210023

Performance Audit Services • March 2022

Why We Conducted This Audit

Pursuant to a legislative request, we evaluated the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness' (GOHSEP) preparation for and response to Hurricane Ida, which made landfall in Louisiana on August 29, 2021. This audit focused on parish emergency operations plans (EOPs), pre-awarded emergency contracts, resource requests through GOHSEP's web-based Emergency Operations Center (WebEOC) system, communication issues, and the state's program for providing temporary housing for dislocated residents.

What We Found

- **While GOHSEP reviewed most parish EOPs timely, parishes did not always include important components in these plans. For example, in the most recent reviews of EOPs, GOHSEP found that 17 of the 25 (68%) parishes in the emergency declaration did not identify fuel requirements for first responders, and 13 (52%) did not identify who was responsible for staffing and managing Points of Distribution (PODs).** However, GOHSEP does not have the authority to mandate that parishes include missing components in their EOPs. Including all components in EOPs is important because these plans help ensure appropriate systems are in place before a disaster or emergency so that needed resources (e.g., equipment, materials, supplies, and manpower) are identified and available.
- **Pre-awarded emergency contracts were not always sufficient to meet the demand for resources after Hurricane Ida. In many cases, the state had to find additional contractors after the storm, which were often costlier, in order to meet the demand.** For example, GOHSEP paid \$1.6 million for generators from pre-awarded emergency contract vendors, but paid additional vendors approximately \$9.7 million for generators because of insufficient supply. According to GOHSEP, some vendors may not submit bids for pre-awarded contracts because they know they can be paid a higher rate if they provide emergency services.
- **Between August 26, 2021, and December 9, 2021, GOHSEP received approximately 3,200 requests through WebEOC after Hurricane Ida, with the most common items requested being generators and fuel. However, because GOHSEP and other state Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) do not fully use status and date fields to document the progress of fulfilling resource requests, it is difficult to determine whether parishes received requested resources timely.** Allowing local officials (i.e., first responders, mayors, parish presidents, healthcare workers, etc.) to have "view only" access to WebEOC and setting up automatic notifications of status changes would improve efficiency and communication with parishes.

Continued on next page

Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness

Hurricane Ida Preparations and Response

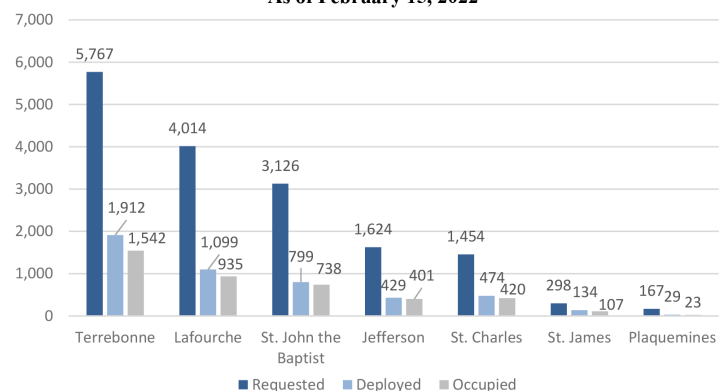
What We Found (Cont.)

Top 10 Parishes with Most Requests Closed Out* by GOHSEP After Hurricane Ida						
Most Requested Items						
Parish	Fuel	Generator	POD	Security	Transportation	Total (All Items)
Terrebonne	16	55	11	18	14	256
Jefferson	3	18	3	11	15	167
Orleans	19	16	8	11	26	165
Tangipahoa	13	32	25	12	6	157
Lafourche	6	14	14	6	2	141
St. Charles	4	11	2	8	10	129
St. John the Baptist	1	5	7	5	12	125
Livingston	4	11	9	1	2	91
Plaquemines	8	8	4	3	6	82
St. Helena	0	6	7	3	1	50
Top 10 Parish Total	74	176	90	78	94	1,363
Top 10% of Total	30.0%	61.5%	61.2%	67.8%	44.5%	45.4%
Total Closed Requests	247	286	147	115	211	3,005

* "Closed out" can mean the request was fulfilled, the request was canceled before fulfillment, or it was a duplicate request.
 Note: Ouachita Parish was actually number 10 in requested items, but was not one of the President's designated 25 parishes in his emergency declaration. The majority of its requests were shelter related.
 Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from WebEOC.

- Louisiana experienced extensive power, internet, and cellular outages that made it difficult for local officials to communicate requests to GOHSEP. GOHSEP's backup system also failed, which further impacted parishes' abilities to respond to emergencies and request resources.** Following Hurricane Katrina, GOHSEP established the Louisiana Wireless Information Network (LWIN) as a backup system to enable seamless communication among all responders to improve information sharing and systems. Since 2006, GOHSEP has spent more than \$300 million in state, federal, and local funds on LWIN. However, only 11 of 30 (36.7%) local officials who responded to our survey stated that LWIN was an effective means of communications during Hurricane Ida.
- The state's Hurricane Ida Sheltering Program is moving more quickly than FEMA's housing program. As of February 15, 2022, 11,980 residents are housed in 4,166 housing units provided through the state's program compared to FEMA's program, which has only provided 1,107 housing units as of February 2022.** Because the program was implemented quickly, GOHSEP did not establish a process to prioritize applicant registrations to ensure the most impacted residents were given priority. In addition, better communication and management of expectations may have reduced the public's frustration over the speed of the program.

Requested, Deployed, and Occupied Housing Units
Louisiana Ida Sheltering Program
As of February 15, 2022



Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using information provided by GOHSEP.