

2025-27 Strategic Plan

Mission: Protecting the people, property, the environment and economy of Washington state

Vision: Safe, secure and resilient Washington

Values: All employees are guided by the following principles:

- Be ready and able to respond to emergencies and disasters
- Build meaningful and beneficial partnerships to support shared goals and improve community resilience
- Strive for ever increasing respect, connection, and belonging within the workplace and among our community partners
- Prepare future leaders

Agency Overview

The Adjutant General is appointed by the governor and serves as the director of the Washington Military Department, commander of the Washington National Guard and homeland security advisor to the governor. The Washington Military Department administrative support divisions include Communications; Construction, Facilities and Management Office; Continuous Performance Improvement; Finance; Human Resources; Information Technology; Intergovernmental Affairs and Policy; and Security.

The Emergency Management Division's mission is to minimize the impact of disasters and emergencies on the people, property, environment, and economy of Washington. EMD manages the state's Emergency Operations Center where the state's response to disasters and incidents is coordinated quickly and effectively to ensure assistance is provided to those who need it. The division manages more than 40 programs that focus on disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, including planning for catastrophic disasters and all hazards, managing federal grants to local jurisdictions, and ensuring the seamless operation of the state's 911 communications system.

Washington Youth ChalleNge Academy operates as part of the National Guard Youth ChalleNge Program. Established under authority of both federal and state law, the WYCA is a state-run residential and post-residential intervention for youth who have dropped out of high school or are at risk of dropping out. The goal of the program is to give youth a second chance to return to high school and graduate and become responsible and productive Washingtonians, helping them improve their life skills, education levels and employment potential.

Washington National Guard is comprised of three distinct organizations: the Washington Army National Guard, the Washington Air National Guard, and the Joint Enterprise. In addition to federal missions, the Washington National Guard is prepared to respond to emergencies at home and across the United States including wildfires, floods, tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanic

eruptions, as well as cyber-attacks to critical infrastructure, spills and release of contaminants, pandemics, and civil disturbances.

Washington State Guard is an all-volunteer force organized under the Washington Military Department which provides organized units that can support the Washington National Guard. Members normally serve without being paid, and meet monthly, or more often as needed. Members specialize in unmanned aerial systems, cyber security, high frequency emergency communications and strengthening intergovernmental affairs with Tribes.

Current Challenges and Opportunities

Natural Environment: The natural beauty of Washington cannot be understated. The mountains, beaches, rivers, streams, and prairies support a diverse ecosystem and provide enjoyment for those that live and visit here. That ecosystem is fragile and susceptible to harm from natural and manmade disasters. Preparing for and mitigating the effects of disasters, as well as responding to and recovering from these events, are responsibilities shared by state, local, tribal, and community partners, as well as individual Washington residents. The Emergency Management Division leads and coordinates mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery in Washington to minimize the impact of disasters and emergencies on the people, property, environment and economy. Recent federal budget reductions to FEMA preparedness grants should be expected to continue in future budget cycles. At a time when Washington is experiencing an unprecedented increase in the number, magnitude, frequency, and complexity of natural disasters, the capacity and capability of local, tribal, and state emergency programs to prepare, respond, and recover. Additionally, this impacts the resources that partners are able to dedicate toward addressing the truly catastrophic hazards that could impact our state. The frequency of incidents and disasters impacting the state that do not rise to the level of a federal declaration, coupled with the infrequency of federal individual assistance (IA) awards, makes it important the state create a capability to provide assistance to individuals and communities impacted by disaster.

Critical Infrastructure: Between 2013 and 2023, Washington experienced 15 percent population growth. More people, combined with emerging cyber security threats, are straining an aging public infrastructure. Disaster response and recovery operations as well as mitigation projects become more complex with this increased population density. do we add fragmented cyber as part of homeland security advisor vs enabling function.

Supporting Washington's Youth: Student standardized test scores in math and science remain low, and students continue to struggle to learn the life skills required to become responsible and productive adults. The challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic only made these issues worse. Our Washington Youth ChalleNGe Academy (WYCA) has partnered with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Education (OSPI) for decades to address this need; however, our current facilities are not sufficient to meet the demand and are geographically separated from Central and Eastern Washington, leaving too many youth unable to access this opportunity.

Emergency Operations Surge Capacity: As disasters become more frequent and complex, local response and recovery efforts will need more resources. Many local jurisdictions are already overburdened and short staffed, so their emergency management teams are quickly overwhelmed

during disasters. This leads to more requests for assistance from the Washington Military Department and other state agencies. A ready and capable force within the Washington National Guard and Emergency Management Division is crucial. Investing in talent acquisition, retention programs, training, and deployable teams to assist local governments can help reduce human suffering during complex emergencies.

Agency Goals

- Empower personal, public and Military Department READINESS for disasters and emergencies through training, planning, and partnerships
- Coordinate and provide timely and relevant RESPONSE support to communities impacted by disasters and emergencies to reduce harm
- Build and sustain reliable systems, relationships, and infrastructure to foster community RESILIENCE

Agency Objectives

1. Readiness: Empower personal, public, and Military Department readiness for disasters and emergencies through training, planning, and partnerships

1.a. MIL employees are trained, equipped, and adaptable

1.a.1. Create an agency-supported employee professional development program (HR)

1.a.2. Equip employees with appropriate technology assets and systems (IT)

1.a.3. Fully integrate technology systems into our agency operations (JOC / EMD / IT)

1.a.4. Prepare our employees, data, business processes, and operations to implement the state's new enterprise resource planning tools in partnership with the OneWashington program (Fin)

1.a.5. Achieve state training requirements for domestic operations missions for the National Guard and the State Guard (JOC / Fin / IGAP)

1.b. MIL recruits and retains quality employees

1.b.1. Support Class and Compensation requests through State HR to work to increase salaries for targeted job classes based on significant recruitment and retention difficulties

1.b.2. Increase employer support for National Guard members by addressing costs shifts for lost work hours and health care (Army, Air, IGAP)

1.b.3. Achieve Washington National Guard readiness, training, and strength requirements through an enhanced recruitment and retention program (ARNG/ANG/JFHQ/CFO/IGAP)

1.b.4. WYCA staffing model reflects the new post COVID learning environment

1.c. MIL has strong, collaborative relationships with key stakeholders throughout the planning/ response/ recovery continuum

1.c.1. Create a communications engagement plan (Comms)

1.c.2. Increase the frequency and efficacy of town hall meetings, listening sessions, work groups and after-action teams to gain understanding about the department's performance on our key service lines and incorporate that feedback into plans, training, and exercises (EMD, JOC, WSG)

1.c.3. Incorporate community and partner concerns into MIL operations, including legislative and budget requests (EMT, IGAP)

2. Response: Coordinate and provide timely and relevant support to communities impacted by disasters and emergencies to reduce harm

2.a. MIL has a regional presence close to wherever services are needed as reflected in the 10-year capital plan (CFMO, Fin, IGAP, EMT)

2.b. Emergency response support to local jurisdictions is aligned to the communities' needs

2.b.1. Secure funding for a state administered individual assistance program to reduce human suffering in a disaster/emergency (EMD, IGAP)

2.b.2. Complete rule making and secure funding for a state public infrastructure assistance program to restore essential services and expedite return to normalcy (EMD, IGAP)

2.b.3. Provide tools and resources to local jurisdictions and tribes to enable local English proficiency (LEP) and access and functional needs (AFN) communications (EMD)

2.b.4. Prioritize emergency response support to communities with the greatest need, such as vulnerable populations and low-income communities (EMD, IT, IGAP)

2.c. SEOC and AWC can send and receive timely and accurate information about disasters and emergencies

2.c.1. Upgrade/update/synchronize JOC, SEOC and AWC systems and technologies (EMD, IT)

2.c.2. Improve emergency communications functions with Tribes within the state of Washington (JOC, WSG)

3. Resilience: Build and sustain reliable systems, relationships, and infrastructure to foster more resilient communities

3.a. Modernize the State Partnership Program to include state agencies and local government to provide more holistic engagement with foreign nation partners to increase infrastructure resilience (Army, Air, IGAP)

3.b. Regionalize MIL (MIL) services to enable resources to be where they are needed

- 3.c. Improve outreach and engagement of impacted communities in the decision-making processes (State PEAR Team)
- 3.d. Gather data on disparities for people and places impacted by our key service lines to inform agency decision-making (State PEAR Team)
- 3.e. Increase the resilience of Washington's critical infrastructure
 - 3.e.1. Advise/mentor local and tribal governments to accessing state and federal resources to build more resilient infrastructure
 - 3.e.2. Assist local and tribal governments in building and implementing long-term recovery plans
- 3.f. WYCA has a regional presence across the state
 - 3.f.1. Complete longitudinal analysis of previous classes for high school graduation, wage progression, and other factors to demonstrate Washington Youth Challenge program efficacy (WYCA, IGAP, Comms, Fin)
 - 3.f.2. Enhanced tribal engagement through the tribal liaison program resulting in greater applications from Native American students (WYCA, JOC, IGAP)
 - 3.f.3. Explore expansion opportunities for program to address geographic inaccessibility (WYCA, FIN, IGAP)

Performance Monitoring is accomplished through employee surveys, community and advocacy meetings, business resource group recommendations and a monthly synchronization forum that focuses on program effectiveness across all business lines administered by the military department.