



# FAIRFAX COUNTY

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## V I R G I N I A

Statement of Anthony H. Griffin  
County Executive, Fairfax County, Virginia  
Government Reform Committee Hearing  
Emergency Preparedness in the Nation's  
Capital with an Emphasis on Grant  
Management and Coordination  
June 24, 2004

Thank you Chairman Davis for the opportunity to testify before the Committee on Government Reform on the subject of grant management and coordination for emergency management from the perspective of Fairfax County.

Grants for Homeland Security have been allocated to Fairfax County in three ways, direct allocation by the Federal government; allocation through the State of Virginia; and, indirect allocation through funding to the National Capital Region (NCR) for enhancing the region's response to potential terrorism. The County has used the money to supplement its emergency preparedness efforts to include strengthening emergency planning programs, conducting training and exercises and purchasing equipment directly related to emergency management and response.

The Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is the agency responsible for managing Homeland Security grants. An interagency committee assists OEM in identifying unmet needs and matching them to grant funding opportunities. The following is illustrative of how grant funds have been used:

- Equipment has been purchased for an Alternate Emergency Operations Center (AEOC) located in the County's Government Center to be operational by the beginning of August this year.
- A new fire department mobile command post has been purchased.
- Screening devices and security cameras have been purchased.
- Protective gear for first responders has been or is in the process of being acquired.
- A fully operational Citizens Corp program is being established with several hundred citizens having completed Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training. A data base has been established to track and notify these volunteers.

- A Medical Reserve Corp (MRC) has been developed with 5,200 volunteers. In October, 2003, the MRC participated in a full scale dispensing site exercise at a local high school.
- A new Terrorism Annex has been written for the County Emergency Operations Plan. This annex is more detailed and outlines roles and responsibilities for County agencies in the event of a nuclear, chemical or biological event. In 2003, the County conducted a table top exercise with a "dirty" bomb scenario with more than 100 participants from a cross section of agencies and volunteer groups.

The list of accomplishments is a beginning in the County's efforts to be responsive in case there is significant terrorism event. Training and a shift in readiness is underway, but emergency preparedness will require sustained attention over the next several years. The grant funding must continue if these efforts at preparedness are to succeed. The Federal government should review the criteria for the expenditure of grant funds, because in some instances the preparedness needs of a community are not supported by current regulations. For example, the County's largest expenditure, by far, is for a new Emergency Operations Center to include an Emergency Communications Center. The prohibition against "bricks and mortar" makes this facility a major funding challenge.

Finally, while this is not a grant issue, one area of emergency preparedness that needs continuous focus in the NCR is the coordination and communication of Federal agencies with state and local governments. Federal agencies need to be continually encouraged to work with state and local governments on the timely sharing of information and the integration of Federal agency planning with state and local plans. The implementation of the new National Response Plan and National Incident Management System (NIMS) is a good beginning, but it is only that.

In closing, significant progress has been made, but significant work at readiness remains and a partnership between the three levels of government is necessary to enhance our success. In particular, I want to thank the Chairman for his support of the County in its efforts to enhance security and emergency response.