# 2020 Annual Report



### Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security





### Message from the Chairman



William F. Vedra, Jr. Chairman On behalf of the Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security Executive Committee, I am pleased to present the 2020 Annual Report for Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security. This report reflects the dedication and exceptional service the Agency provides to all 42 Franklin County jurisdictions every day during one of the most trying years in history.

The events surrounding the coronavirus pandemic significantly impacted every one of us. No one could have predicted the dominance the virus would have on our lives, activities, and resources. The year 2020 will be remembered as unprecedented and challenging, however, the Agency persevered to keep our community resilient.

The Agency served as a collection point for personal protective equipment (PPE) donations from our community and local businesses. Through a county-wide resource request system, over 1.25 million pieces of PPE were distributed to local agencies.

Director Young utilized his multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional partnerships with public safety, health professionals, local government and private sector partners to plan and execute an Alternate Care Site (ACS) for all three local hospital systems in the event of a COVID-19 hospital surge.

In June, the Agency expanded its volunteer program with the integration of the Franklin County & Columbus Medical Reserve Corps (FC&C MRC). These medical and non-medical volunteers supported public health during the early COVID-19 vaccination operations in December. In addition to working through the pandemic, the Agency supported state and local law enforcement during the county-wide protests last summer. Emergency messages were also disseminated through the Integrated Public Warning System (IPAWS) in ALERT Franklin County.

The members of the Executive Committee who represent all 42 Franklin County jurisdictions are dedicated to achieving the highest level of preparedness for the safety of our citizens. We would like to offer our sincere gratitude to the entire staff at FCEM&HS. In 2021, we look forward to the end of the pandemic, FC&C MRC volunteers assisting local health agencies with Points of Distribution (POD) vaccination operations as well as the execution of the Franklin County Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attack (CCTA) Full-Scale Exercise and county-wide plan to further ensure that Franklin County is better prepared to respond to the emerging threats that exist today.

William F. Vedra, Jr. FCEM&HS Executive Committee Chairman



### **Message from the Director**

The year 2020 has been anything but routine or typical, but with fundamental challenges best captured by the words "New Normal," an already overused phrase, used even more in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. Regardless of it's overuse, on a deeper level, it really speaks to how the residents of Central Ohio adapted to our ever-changing world that has been on display and led by Franklin County governments and our partner agencies.

Early in the year, we began the pandemic seeking information and working to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to essential staff, core safety services and our health care providers. Our focus quickly shifted to planning for a potential surge of COVID-19 patients that had the potential to cripple our hospital systems. The realities of the pandemic and supply shortages completely changed the way government, businesses, and educational processes operated, forcing them to adapt to daily life in a "New Normal." Yes, I said it.



Jeffrey J. Young Director

The year 2020 ended with the optimistic news of vaccine approvals and the ability for our public health agencies, private medical providers, pharmacies and the Fire/EMS services to lead us into 2021 with the hope of ending the pandemic. In the world of Emergency Management, this could almost be considered as the start of a Recovery Phase. This is when we review our response actions, lessons learned, and how we can collaborate better as communities looking towards the future. Yes, this is part of our "New Normal," where we re-energize our non-COVID work processes and programs, supporting the jurisdictions in Franklin County.

Yes, the year 2020 will be remembered for the word COVID, but the word that comes to my mind is collaboration. The collaborative nature of supporting our communities and the methods used for approaching response and services has been the backbone of every phase and body of work that I have participated in during the pandemic. This is something I believe you will observe throughout this annual report. The year's highlights exhibit the collaborative nature of Central Ohio, which is not part of the "New Normal," but something that has been part of daily life for years.

As we prepare for 2021 and beyond (getting us past the pandemic, while also preparing for the next disaster and being resilient), collaboration will continue to be a core value that brings together all 42 of our jurisdictions and partner agencies regardless of demographic. As the Director of FCEM&HS and on behalf of my entire staff, I can assure you that we take nothing for granted and speak of with great pride, not as the "New Normal," but as the expected normal in Franklin County.

Jeffrey J. Young FCEM&HS Director

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## **Agency Mission/Authority**

Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security (FCEM&HS) coordinates and prepares for all-hazards disaster planning, community education, warning, training, grant funding, response, and recovery efforts in order to prepare and protect the citizens of Franklin County before, during, and after natural and man-made disasters.

FCEM&HS in accordance with Chapter 5502 of the Ohio Revised Code is organized as a regional agency under the 1988 Countywide Agreement coordinates all-hazards emergency management and disaster preparedness functions for the 42 local government jurisdictions of Franklin County.

### Jurisdictions Supported

City of Bexley	Village of Harrisburg	Pleasant Township	
Blendon Township	City of Hilliard	Prairie Township	
Village of Brice	Jackson Township	City of Reynoldsburg	
Brown Township	Jefferson Township	Village of Riverlea	
Village of Canal Winchester	Village of Lockbourne	Sharon Township	
Clinton Township	Madison Township	Truro Township	
City of Columbus	Village of Marble Cliff	City of Upper Arlington	
City of Dublin	Mifflin Township	Village of Urbancrest	
Franklin Township	Village of Minerva Park	Village of Valleyview	
City of Gahanna	City of New Albany	Washington Township	
City of Grandview Heights	Norwich Township	City of Westerville	
City of Grove City	Village of Obetz	City of Whitehall	
City of Groveport	Perry Township	City of Worthington	
Hamilton Township	Plain Township	Franklin County	



### **Executive Committee**



The Franklin County Emergency Management & Homeland Security Executive Committee is comprised of 14 representatives from various municipalities, townships and villages in Franklin County. The committee oversees the overall operations and policies for the agency.

#### **Executive Committee Chairman**

William F. Vedra, Jr. Deputy City Administrator/Public Safety Director City of Grove City

Kevin Boyce Franklin County Commissioner Alternate: Ken Wilson

Marilyn Brown Franklin County Commissioner Alternate: Mike Hochron

Dana McDaniel Dublin City Manager Alternate: Police Chief Justin Paez

Steve Schoeny Upper Arlington Interim City Manager Alternate: Fire Chief Lyn Nofziger

Kim Maggard Mayor City of Whitehall Alternate: Fire Chief Preston Moore

Dallas Baldwin Franklin County Sheriff Alternate: Chief Jim Gilbert/Major Carl Hickey

Christian Selch IT/Planning Director City of Columbus Alternate: Patti Austin

#### **Executive Committee Vice Chairman**

David Collinsworth, City Manager City of Westerville Alternate: Fire Chief Brian Miller

John O'Grady Franklin County Commissioner Alternate: Erik Janas

Andrew J. Ginther Mayor City of Columbus Alternate: Kenneth Paul

Ike Stage Mayor City of Grove City Alternate: William F. Vedra, Jr.

Steve Kennedy Prairie Township Trustee Alternate: Nancy White

Ned Pettus, Jr. Safety Director City of Columbus Alternate: Cathy Collins

Dr. Mysheika Williams Roberts Health Commissioner City of Columbus Alternate: Mike Fielding



On March 9, 2020, Governor Mike DeWine declared a state of emergency in Ohio in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020. No one could have ever predicted the impact the virus would have on the nation as well as the residents in all 42 jurisdictions in Franklin County.

To help slow the spread of the virus, a state-wide mask mandate was issued, personal protective equipment (PPE) became limited and paper supplies were scarce. Businesses were forced to shut down as stay-at-home orders were issued. COVID-19 restrictions would become the new normal for the remainder of 2020.



#### FCEM&HS COVID-19 Response

In support of our public health partners and local communities, FCEMHS activated the Franklin County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in response to confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 in Franklin County on March 12, 2020 after monitoring the 'novel coronavirus' since the beginning of 2020. Staff members facilitated over 100 EOC briefings and operational periods among dozens of local, state, and federal partners to provide situational awareness and continuity of operations. Briefings were conducted virtually to protect partners and stop the spread of the virus.

FCEM&HS served as a collection point for personal protective equipment (PPE) donations from the community and local businesses. A county-wide resource request system was developed and managed for PPE distribution to local agencies. The Agency coordinated the mass fatality branch operations and alternate decedent storage site, as well as supported and arranged for the Central Ohio alternate care site hospital at the Greater Columbus Convention Center. Staff members conducted COVID threat assessments, countless tasks and operations while supporting Franklin County Public Health in dozens of mission areas spanning hundreds of personnel hours.





### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Collection Point

As the number of COVID-19 cases surged in Franklin County, the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) became extremely limited and public donations were needed. FCEM&HS served as a collection point for companies, medical facilities, and residents to donate PPE for local healthcare workers.

FCEM&HS staff, volunteers from Franklin County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and Franklin County & Columbus Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) collected, organized, and inventoried the PPE donations which were then sent to a warehouse owned by the City of Columbus and managed by Columbus Public Health for distribution to approved resource requestors.





#### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

FCEM&HS is responsible for managing resources before, during, and after an incident. Through the resource management program, FCEM&HS incorporates use of all available resources from all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, and the public when appropriate.

FCEM&HS received thousands of PPE donations from over 300 local businesses, nonprofit organizations and individuals. During the first eight months of the pandemic, FCEM&HS received 555 resource requests for PPE ranging from medical gloves to isolation gowns and surgical masks to hand sanitizer and face shields. Each request was reviewed, validated, tracked and disseminated. FCEM&HS utilized all available resources from local, state, and federal government stockpiles as well as donations from the public and fulfilled PPE requests for local police and fire departments, public safety agencies, urgent care facilities, dialysis centers, long-term care facilities and others.







#### Greater Columbus Convention Center - Alternate Care Site

As the number of hospitalizations and ICU admissions increased in Franklin County, local hospitals undertook a proactive approach and managed medical surge levels and hospital capacity. In conjunction with the Regional Medical Surge Plan, the Central Ohio Trauma System (COTS) began working to facilitate a coordinated solution of all three local hospitals in the event of increased surge levels and heightened hospital capacity that would require activation of an Alternate Care Site (ACS). Franklin County Emergency Management & Homeland Security (FCEM&HS) engaged the Franklin County Convention Center Authority Administrator for functionality, expandability, operation of the Greater Columbus Convention Center (GCCC) as a unified Alternate Care Site for all three hospital systems.

It was determined that the GCCC facility would serve as Franklin County's ACS and funded by the Franklin County Board of Commissioners with reimbursement from FEMA. The facility could support 1,000 individual patient care spaces with room for an overflow space for 500 open dorm space. Large generators needed to be installed to provide full back-up power for medical equipment. The hospitals would be responsible for all operations if activated and would operate independently but co-located within the exhibit halls.



Due to the hospital's ability to operate effectively and administer care through all medical surge levels, the facility was never activated.

FCEM&HS managed over \$3.6 million for the reimbursement of costs associated with the ACS through the Federal Emergency Declaration (Stafford Act). FEMA approved the reimbursement request and will cover 100% of the costs associated with the ACS and the reimbursement will be received in 2021.





### **Homeland Security**

Franklin County Emergency Management & Homeland Security (FCEM&HS) works with agencies and jurisdictions throughout the county to coordinate information sharing, planning, training, and equipment needed for protecting Franklin County from acts of terrorism.

#### Franklin County Mass Gatherings/Public Protests

In 2020, FCEM&HS conducted multiple collaboration efforts, working with local agencies on numerous special events and provided operational support, common operating picture, situational awareness and alerting for over 350+ events. This included establishing the Multi Agency Coordination Center (MACC) and actively supporting local agencies activities during 32 separate events including numerous protests throughout Franklin County. As part of this support, staff worked over 300+ additional hours in support of our public safety and private partners.



Photos courtesy of open source media



### **Homeland Security**



### Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN)

A new initiative for Homeland Security this year was the creation and integration of our Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) platform for information & intelligence sharing, creating a county-wide common operating picture and situational awareness for ongoing public safety efforts

Franklin County is the first county in the nation to be granted "super-user" status by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and given our own Community of Interest portal to further enhance collaborative efforts.



FCEM&HS successfully integrated HSIN into a county-wide hub of information, accessible and shareable 24/7 with our public safety and private partners. Over 200 HSIN users, representing over 100 public safety and/or private organizations at all levels of government and corporate presence utilize the platform.



FCEM&HS is actively engaged in the planning and execution of the Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attack (CCTA) project, which has been re-developed and enhanced to meet Homeland Security Exercise/Evaluation Practitioner standards. In addition to a full-scale exercise with eight separate venues, FCEM&HS has integrated an enhanced plan to cover emerging threats (UAS, civil unrest, fire as a weapon, hazardous materials as a mass-casualty producing agent), as well as more traditional tactics of homemade/traditional explosives, vehicle borne IEDs, vehicle ramming, edged/blunt force weapons attacks, and active-shooter.

The workshop curriculum has also been expanded to include Area Command Training with tabletop exercises for Elected Officials and Executive Public Safety Leadership. This is being done to effectively support and manage resources, mitigate impacts, and align with recovery strategies. Lastly, an intelligence/information sharing functional exercise has been integrated, which will further position the HSIN platform and our role as the central collection and dissemination point for county-wide activities.





## **Alerting and Warning**

#### Franklin County Outdoor Warning Siren System

The Franklin County Outdoor Warning Siren System is one of the largest siren networks in Ohio and the country. The system consists of 196 outdoor warning sirens located throughout all 42 jurisdictions and Franklin County. The system is divided by four warning zones (NW, NE, SW and SE) to more closely align siren activations with warning polygons issued by NWS or the actual location of tornadic activity in Franklin County.

FCEM&HS tests the system each Wednesday at noon (weather permitting) to ensure the system is functioning properly. In 2020, the outdoor warning sirens were activated after NWS issued three Tornado Warnings in Franklin County. Results of the weekly testing showed a 99% fully operational rate.









#### ALERT Franklin County Mass Notification System

ALERT Franklin County, a county-wide mass notification and warning system, is a vital element of the Franklin County Warning Program. The system is used to digitally alert residents and visitors in Franklin County of hazards or threats requiring actionable measures to be taken. Alerts are sent to electronic devices by phone, text, or email. FCEM&HS maintains the system, which is available to all 42 jurisdictions in Franklin County.

In support of our partners at Franklin County Public Health (FCPH) and Columbus Public Health (CPH) FCEM&HS launched text message alerts for residents to receive the latest information on the coronavirus (COVID19). The keyword COVID19FC text alert system allowed public health and safety officials in all Franklin County jurisdictions to quickly issue real-time information, updates and instructions on the coronavirus through Alert Franklin County.



Photo courtesy of open source media

#### ALERT Franklin County Emergency Alerts

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) - 7

Emergency Alert System (EAS) - 2

In response to local protests and at the request of the Columbus Division of Police, FCEM&HS disseminated emergency messages through the Integrated Public Alert Warning System (IPAWS) in ALERT Franklin County.

Messages were sent through the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and to wireless devices through the Wireless Emergency System (WEA) regarding the declared state of emergency in downtown Columbus, the citywide curfews and state-wide mask mandate for COVID-19.

#### ! EMERGENCY ALERTS

Emergency Alert City of Columbus, Ohio. Citywide curfew 10:00pm Saturday until 6:00am Sunday.

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## Planning

### Franklin County Emergency Operations (EOC) Plan

In 2020, FCEM&HS updated the Franklin County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). The plan serves as the required all hazards emergency plan for 42 jurisdictions within Franklin County. The plan is in place when incidents surpass the response capabilities of any one jurisdiction and details how the county would coordinate large or multi-jurisdictional, multiple operational period (multi day) incidents.

The plan is designed to help support incident stabilization, limit damage and speed recovery to Franklin County residents resulting from natural, man-made, and/or technological disasters. It unifies county agencies and community partners in a common goal to prevent against, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against the threats and hazards that pose a risk to Franklin County.

#### Ohio Homeland Security Region 4 (HSR4) Evacuation Plan



Franklin County and the 15 surrounding counties that make up Ohio Homeland Security Region 4 successfully completed a year-long planning effort to better prepare for and coordinate evacuation strategies. Evacuations are complex emergency situations and working through the planning process as a county and a region have better prepared Central Ohio for low probability, high consequence events where populations of people must be evacuated for life safety.

#### Franklin County Non-Acute Mass Fatality Plan

The Franklin County Non-Acute Mass Fatality Plan outlines the roles and responsibilities of Franklin County agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGO), and associations regarding incident response, morgue operations, victim identification, family assistance centers, and behavioral health needs to support Franklin County's response to non-acute mass fatality incidents.

In 2020, FCEMHS with support from the Franklin County Coroner's Office, Public Health, the Central Ohio Trauma System (COTS), funeral directors, fire chiefs, the State of Ohio and private partners began coordinating Franklin County non-acute mass fatality planning and operations in response to COVID-19.





### Operations



The Operations Program is responsible for implementing plans, policies and standard operating procedures (SOPs) developed to respond and recover from events in Franklin County. The program oversees the operation of the Assessment Center and the Franklin County Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The Franklin County EOC provides a central location for multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional coordination and executive decision-making to better manage disaster response and recovery in our community.

#### Franklin County Spring Flooding Events

In conjunction with COVID-19, FCEM&HS responded to a busy spring flooding season in 2020. Heavy rain in March and May left roads underwater and neighborhoods flooded. FCEM&HS received hundreds of damage reports to homes and businesses. FCEM&HS staff and Franklin County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers performed over 600 damage assessments. As a result of these assessments, Franklin County applied for and received two Small Business Administration federal disaster declarations opening-up low interest loan programs for impacted residents.

CERT volunteers and staff worked over 1000 hours during the spring flood responses to ensure Franklin County residents were given the best chance at receiving a disaster declaration for possible fiscal relief. Each year, FCEM&HS continues mitigation efforts in Franklin County to save the lives and property of residents in the event of substantial rain, flooding, and severe weather.





### **Volunteer Resources**

### Franklin County and Columbus Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)



In June, FCEM&HS welcomed the Franklin County and Columbus Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) as an extension of the Agency's volunteer programs. The Medical Reserve Corps is a network of local volunteers organized to improve the health and safety of the community through public health preparedness.

The organization provides medical and non-medical volunteers to support public health threats, public health emergencies, major emergencies, and disasters, when requested by local officials. In December of 2020 as the vaccine for COVID-19 became available, Franklin County Public Health requested medical and non-medical members to assist with Points of Dispensing (POD) vaccine operations.

In 2020, the FC&C Medical Reserve Corps had a total of 619 approved volunteers with hundreds of occupational backgrounds ranging from doctors to lawyers to food service workers. The number of FC&C MRC volunteers is expected to increase in 2021 as more COVID-19 POD operations are established to vaccine the public.



#### Volunteers in Public Safety Support (VIPSS)



Photo courtesy of Columbus Dispatch

The Volunteers in Public Safety Support (VIPSS) Program trains volunteers to aid county and local governments with major emergencies and disasters. VIPSS volunteers are trained in terrorism awareness, crowd and traffic management, emergency radio communications, public health emergency dispensing, volunteer management, CPR & first aid training and active shooter response. All participants must complete the FC CERT Basic Training Program to become a volunteer.

In 2020, the VIPSS volunteers supported several events including early voting activities and Election Day. These events represented over 400 volunteer hours from VIPSS members.



## **Regional Communications**



Franklin County's first responders depend on reliable communications systems to relay critical information in real-time during an incident. The ability for emergency responders to communicate among jurisdictions, disciplines, and levels of government, using a variety of frequency bands as needed and as authorized, is vital.

The Franklin County Regional Communications Program works to ensure interoperability by providing administrative oversight and management of local radio systems. The system is currently utilized by thousands of employees from local agencies such as the Franklin County Sheriff's Office, COTA, Township Law Enforcement and others.

#### Franklin County Radio Communications System Expansion

Franklin County owns and operates a digital radio system that serves local public agencies and service providers. The system operates approximately 3,500 individual radio devices and includes dispatcher consoles, mobile vehicle radios and portable hand-held devices (walkie talkie). The system was last upgraded in 2013 and since then, the number of radio system subscribers and their service needs have increased with a need for improved signal strength and channel capacity.

In 2020, FCEM&HS, with the support of the Franklin County Administration, reviewed possible collaborative opportunities to prevent system redundancy. This evaluation identified that the State of Ohio operates the Multi Agency Radio Communications System (MARCS) which covers not only all of Franklin County, but the surrounding counties and as well as statewide. The system can also be expanded to serve all Franklin County subscribers and increase in signal strength.

The expansion requires approximately \$3,200,000 in infrastructure upgrades. Franklin County will fund \$2.6 million of the infrastructure expansion to serve the local agencies with the State of Ohio contributing \$600,000. The system upgrades are expected to be completed in July 2021.







#### CitizenAID Public Safety Drop Kits

During a mass casualty event such as acts of violence, the initial responders can be faced with numerous priorities ranging from neutralizing or stopping further violence, managing an evacuation, providing directions and information to responding units as well as addressing the volume of injured victims.

The Public Safety Drop Kits were developed by citizenAID of North America. Each kit includes six individual Public Treatment Kits (PTKs) which contain medical equipment such as tourniquets, pressure dressings and gauze to help control bleeding along with emergency blankets, and nitrile gloves. The kits also contain lifesaving instructions to help stop life threatening bleeding in the valuable minutes prior to advanced help and medical transportation arriving on the scene. Six PTKs are packaged in a transportable bag, making it easy for first responders to "drop" them so civilians can help treat the wounded.



FCEM&HS provided nearly 1000 Public Safety Drop Kits for placement in first responder vehicles such as police cruisers, fire and ems vehicles, special event units working large crowd public events and non-profit organizations. The kits were purchased through a State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) Grant which was awarded to 15 counties in the Central Ohio region.



## Fiscal

OPERATIONS FUND			
Fund Balance – January 1, 2020		1,188,547	
2020 Revenue Sources			
Emergency Management Performance Grant		700,842	
2020 Local Proportionate Shares		1,226,267	
Chemical Emergency Preparedness Advisory Council (CEPAC)		36,179	
Hazmat Recovery/Misc. Reimbursement		12,471	
Federal & State Grants		609,601	
2020 Total Revenue Received		2,585,360	
2020 Expenditures			
Personnel Services	\$	(1,019,984)	
Operations	\$	(757,810)	
Pass Through Expenditures			
Grand Funded Expenditures (Materials & Service)		(618,423)	
2020 Total Expenditures		(2,396,217)	
Fund Balance – December 31, 2020		1,377,690	

WARNING FUND				
Fund Balance – January 1, 2020	\$	661,529		
2020 Revenue Sources				
Annual Warning Fees	\$	196,000		
Purchase/Installation/Removal/Misc. Reimbursement	\$	6,536		
2020 Total Revenue Received	\$	202,536		
2020 Expenditures				
Personnel Services	\$	(102,280)		
Maintenance Expenditures	\$	( 59,389)		
Program Operations	\$	( 19,953)		
Pass Through – New Sirens, Installs, Billable Purchases	\$	( 6,536)		
2020 Total Expenditures		( 188,158)		
Fund Balance – December 31, 2020		675,907		



### Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security



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