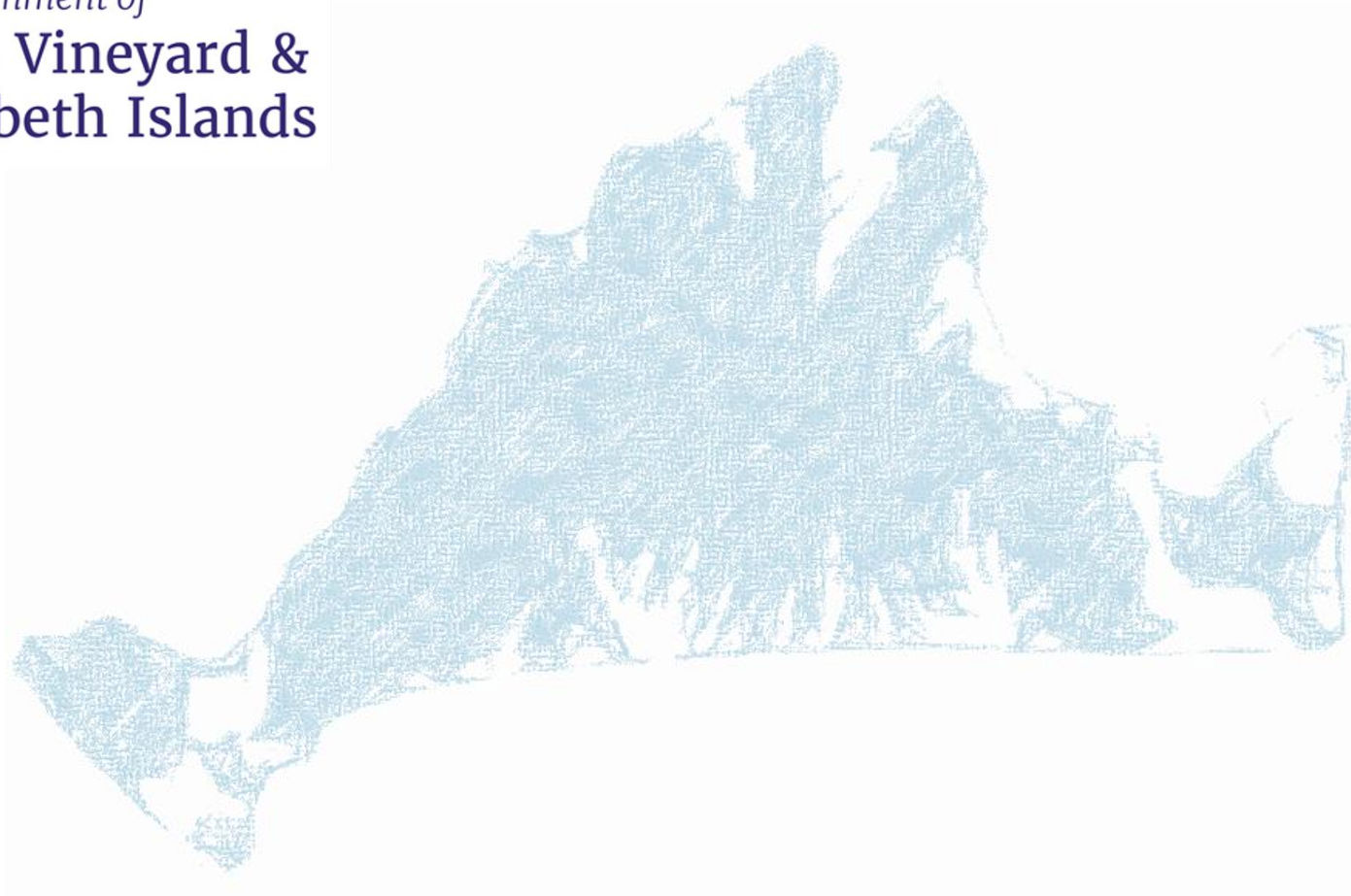




Regional Government of

**Martha's Vineyard &
the Elizabeth Islands**



Martha's Vineyard Island-Wide Emergency Management Strategic Plan

Dukes County Presentation

Martha's Vineyard Coastal Conference

October 6, 2026



ARPA FUNDING and DUKES COUNTY COMMISSION VISION

Dukes County received **\$3.37M of ARPA funding** from the federal government in 2021 aimed at post-COVID relief in four specific categories.

In collaboration with the towns, the Dukes County Commissioners applied **95%** of the funding to the islands' **wastewater infrastructure** improvements.

This decision aimed to address two key issues our community is facing – shortage of affordable housing and preserving our coastal environment.

- \$2.4M went to municipalities and the Airport for wastewater treatment system improvements
- \$700K went directly to low-income homeowners in pond watersheds that were recommended by the local Boards of Health to upgrade their septic systems with the IA nitrogen-reducing systems

\$100,000 was reserved for **island-wide emergency planning** to help the island get ready for any future public health or other emergencies and strengthen coordination among the towns.



COASTAL RESILIENCY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Shared goal : protect lives, property, ecosystems, and the local economy

so residents can remain safe and communities can thrive over time.

Climate change, sea-level rise, and stronger storm surges force emergency managers to plan for an increased number of weather-related events and hazards they have not experienced in the past (like the February 2026 winter blizzard or the storm surges that flood the harbor infrastructure).

Coastal resiliency reduces the impacts that emergency management must respond to (less flooding, less impact on infrastructure disruptions, etc.) and provides the long-term environmental protection that emergency management alone cannot achieve.

Emergency management informs where resiliency investments are needed.

Emergency managers track hazards, vulnerabilities, evacuation challenges, and critical infrastructure needs. Their insights guide coastal resiliency planners to prioritize areas most at risk.

Example on MV: the Beach Road in Tisbury from Five Corners to Draw Bridge that now floods more frequently and is often closed during major storms, which prevents ambulances from Tisbury to access MV Hospital directly).



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Island-wide planning and coordination efforts



Dukes County hired The Olson Group, a national emergency management consulting firm, to conduct an island-wide emergency management review and develop an **land-wide Emergency Management Strategic Integration and Implementation Plan**

All towns' emergency management directors, other key municipal staff, including town administrators, select board members, Boards of Health, Fire, EMS, and DPW, as well as key stakeholders, including emergency management staff from the MV Hospital, Steamship Authority, Eversource, American Red Cross, Hospice, and others, participated in the creation of the Strategic Plan and were involved in the comment period before it was finalized.

The Plan is based on:

- Massachusetts General Law Chapter 639 (Civil Defense Act)
- National Incident Management System (NIMS)
- National Response Framework (NRF)
- National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF)
- MEMA and FEMA planning guidance and standards

Martha's Vineyard Operational Environment for Emergency Management

KEY ELEMENTS:

- **Geographic isolation**
- Transportation dependency
- **Seasonal population surge** amplifies emergency risk

Functionally interconnected island system with shared healthcare, ferry, fuel, utility systems

Common threats: severe weather and coastal storms; public health emergencies; cyber and infrastructure threats.

Critical infrastructure disruptions impact all jurisdictions simultaneously.

Current coordination mechanisms are insufficient for sustained complex incidents due to **limited emergency management staffing depth**.

Strategic Vision

- Develop a **resilient, coordinated**, and professional emergency management program and framework that supports preparedness, mitigation, response, recovery, and continuity of operations
- Strengthen island-wide **situational awareness** and **resource coordination**
- Improve **operational readiness** and **recovery capability**
- Enhance **interoperability** across jurisdictions and partners
- Create a **sustainable** emergency management governance structure while preserving the municipal authority

Scope of the Strategic Plan

- Align municipal, county, tribal, state, and federal emergency management efforts - the Plan to be adopted by **all towns in Dukes County and Wampanoag Tribe**
- Addresses **all-hazards** emergency management
 - COASTAL STORMS AND HURRICANES
 - FLOODING AND STORM SURGE
 - WILDFIRES AND DROUGHT CONDITIONS
 - TRANSPORTATION DISRUPTIONS AND FERRY INTERRUPTIONS
 - PANDEMIC AND PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES
 - INFRASTRUCTURE AND CYBERSECURITY THREATS
- Focuses on **coordination, interoperability, and sustainable capability** development
- Includes **planning, training, exercises, technology, recovery, and governance**

Steps to Establish Island-wide Coordination System

1

Create governance
structure

2

Hire Emergency
Management
Coordinator

3

Develop shared
emergency
management
doctrine

4

Define activation
and coordination
procedures

5

Establish recurring
oversight and
reporting

Governance Framework

Dukes County Emergency Management Association (DCEMA),

Composed of Emergency Management Directors from each Town and the County

- Recommended as the governance body for the implementation of the Plan
 - Accountable for Plan implementation
 - Provides strategic oversight and policy guidance to the Coordinator
 - Serves as Executive Policy Group during activations
-
- **Municipal authority and operational control are preserved**

Emergency Management Coordinator



Central enabling **position for implementation** of the Plan



Program manager—not an incident commander



Coordinates planning, grants, exercises, and MACS (Multi-agency Coordination System) operations



Supports island-wide preparedness and recovery activities



Acts as **integration hub** for participating jurisdictions

Proposed Activation Triggers for Multi-Agency Coordination System (MAC-S)

Multi-town impacts or shared infrastructure disruption

Complex incidents exceeding routine mutual aid

Need for island-wide **resource prioritization** and coordination

Major recovery and reimbursement operations

Recommendations from incident command or emergency managers



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Key Takeaways



Martha's Vineyard faces unique island-wide risks and dependencies



The strategic plan creates a coordinated emergency management framework



The MAC System supports—not replaces—local authority



Implementation is phased, measurable, and sustainable



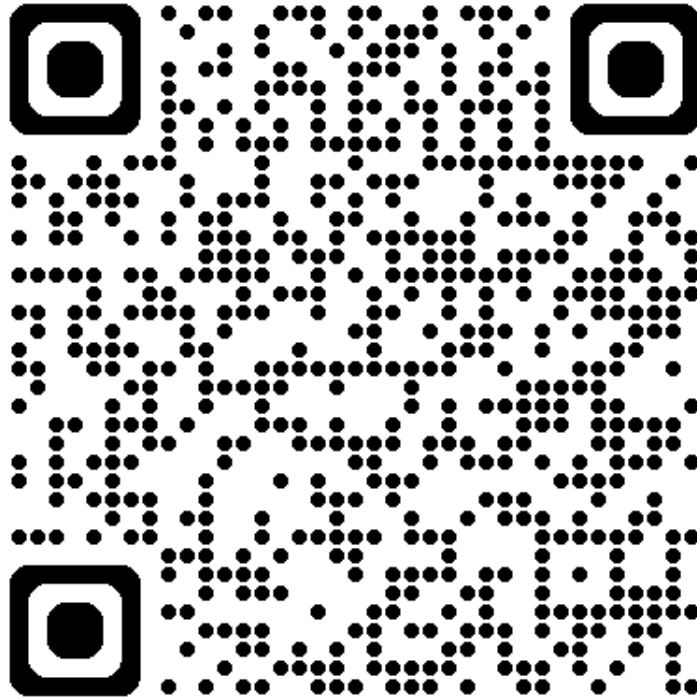
Preparedness and coordination today reduces future losses



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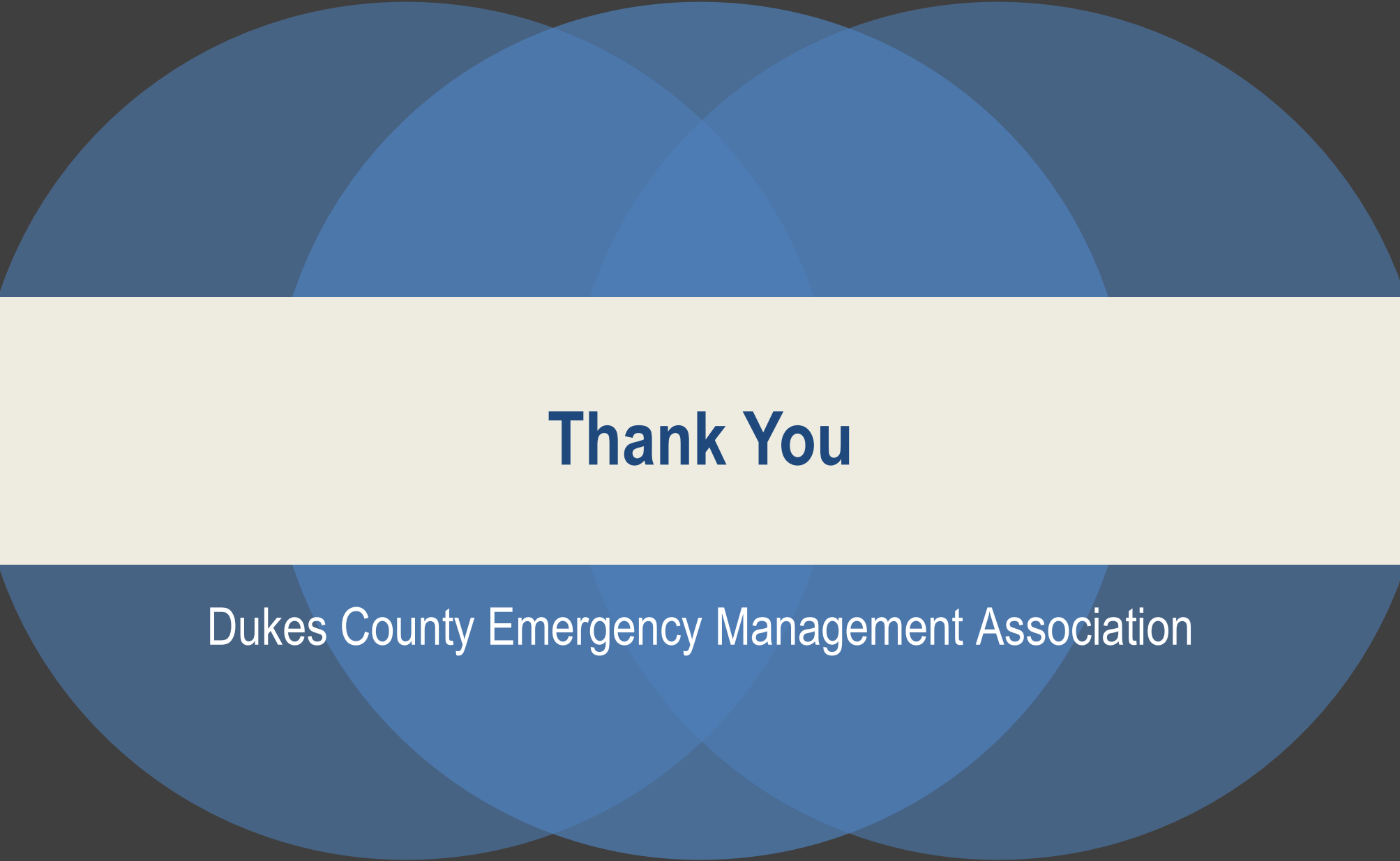
More information – www.dukescounty.gov

Island-wide Emergency Management Strategic Integration and Implementation Plan



Discussion & Questions





Thank You

Dukes County Emergency Management Association