

THE PATH FORWARD

A Roadmap for NYC Emergency Management



KNOW YOUR ZONE

KNOW WHAT TO DO
Learn what you can do to prepare for hurricanes in NYC.
Visit NYC.gov/knowyourzone or call 311.
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NYC
Emergency Management

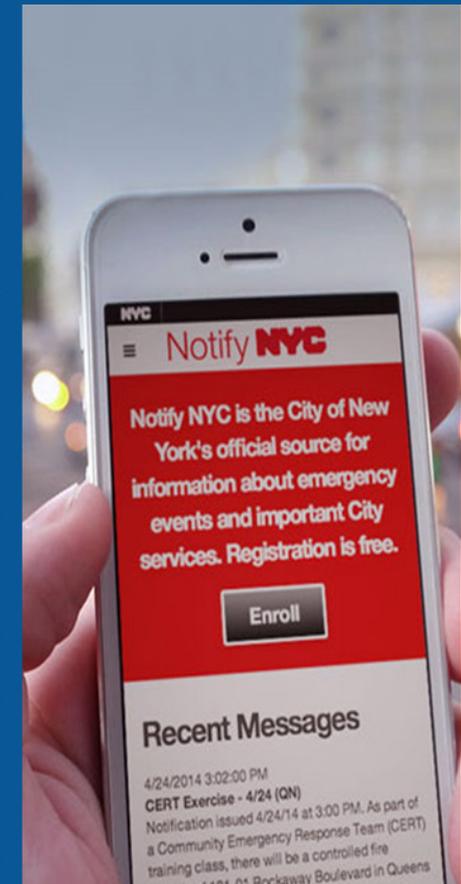


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An aerial photograph of the New York City skyline, showing a dense cluster of skyscrapers and buildings. The image is used as a background for the table of contents.

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Message from the Commissioner



I couldn't be more proud of the men and women of our agency. On most days, they are responding to emergencies across the city; writing plans to ensure all sectors of New York City are prepared for any possibility; using these plans to run training classes, drills and tabletop exercises; educating New Yorkers on how to be ready for disasters, translating our messages into multiple languages; using data to inform all that we do; and more. However, several times a year — be it a snow storm, blistering heatwave, a building explosion, or a confirmed case of a deadly virus — everyone at our agency shifts his or her focus to the emergency at hand and works tirelessly around the clock to provide the highest level of service, coordination, information, supplies, and whatever else is needed to minimize the impact of the event on the City's operations.

We do this through partnering with all sectors, be it our fellow City agencies that we talk to and meet with every day, elected officials, the private sector, nonprofits, schools, houses of worship, hospitals, and others. We meet them in the field at disaster responses, in the classroom to train, on evenings and weekends at Ready New York events, and everywhere in between. We welcome everyday New Yorkers who become our Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers; businesses that want to ensure their employees are prepared; all City agencies that maintain a continuity of operations plan to make sure that their operations will not be interrupted whatever situation they face; and state, regional, and federal partners to coordinate plans, response and public information strategies.

We hope that this report pulls back the cover on NYC Emergency Management. We love our work and the opportunity to serve this great city and its residents who prove their resiliency time and time again. Thanks for taking the time to learn more about our operations.

Joseph J. Esposito, Commissioner

Message from the Mayor



In a city as big and busy as New York, it is essential for us to always be prepared to address any emergency or crisis that may arise. Accomplishing this mission requires a team of dedicated men and women who are ready to respond quickly and efficiently to hazards that could potentially affect the five boroughs, as well as careful planning and educational outreach to ensure that all New Yorkers know what they can do to stay safe before an emergency ever takes place.

Responsible for helping our city to develop specific action plans and coordinated responses to recover from emergencies, NYC Emergency Management has not only kept people safe and well-informed on the resources that are available to them in times of need, but has also worked to bring our communities back stronger than ever after incidents occur. Under the leadership of Commissioner Esposito, this agency has stood on the frontlines to face emergencies and threats of all types and scales, and it has bravely upheld our promise to protect residents and move our city forward to prepare for the challenges of the future.

NYC Emergency Management has made vital contributions to building a safer, more resilient city for the next generation, and I invite you to learn more about its critical work in this biennial report.

Bill de Blasio, Mayor

About the Agency

NYC Emergency Management plans and prepares for emergencies, educates the public about preparedness, coordinates response and recovery, and collects and disseminates emergency information.



24/7: Tracking local, regional, national, and international incidents affecting New York City.



2,948: Number of incidents the agency monitored across the five boroughs in the last year.



892: Number of the agency's emergency responses in the last year.



150: Number of agencies involved in any given incident, large or small.



55+: Number of interagency emergency plans and protocols to guide the City's response to incidents.



1,386: Number of Notify NYC messages sent last year to keep the public informed.



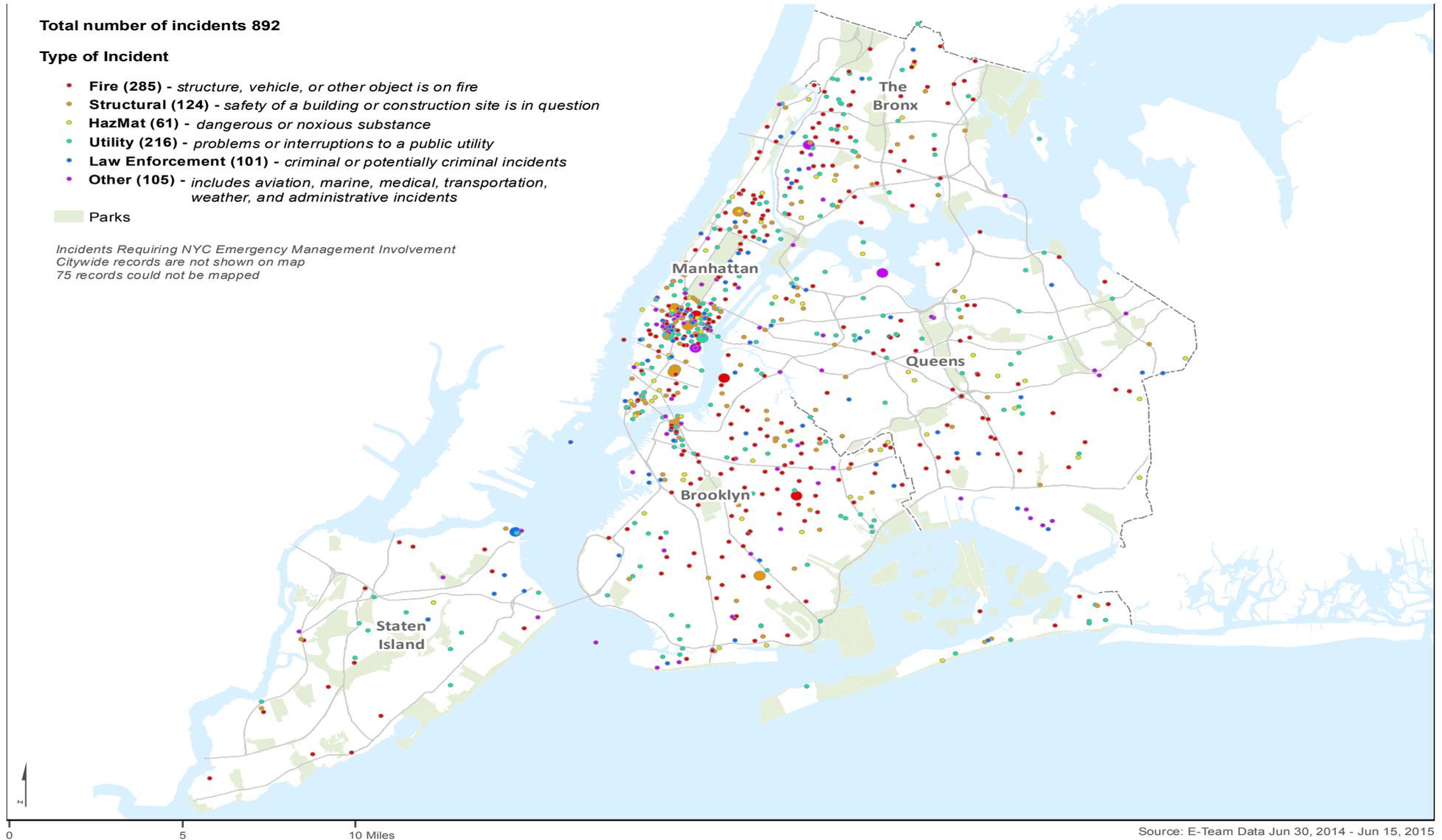
54,000: Number of New Yorkers educated through the Ready New York program last year.

What's in a name?

NYC Emergency Management (formerly the Office of Emergency Management or OEM) is undergoing a rebranding process as part of a comprehensive effort to increase the public's awareness of our presence and role in the city. This rebranding includes phasing out the use of the OEM title, acronym, and logo. In line with this effort, this report reflects the agency's new branding.

Map of Incidents

Incidents requiring NYC Emergency Management response over the past year.



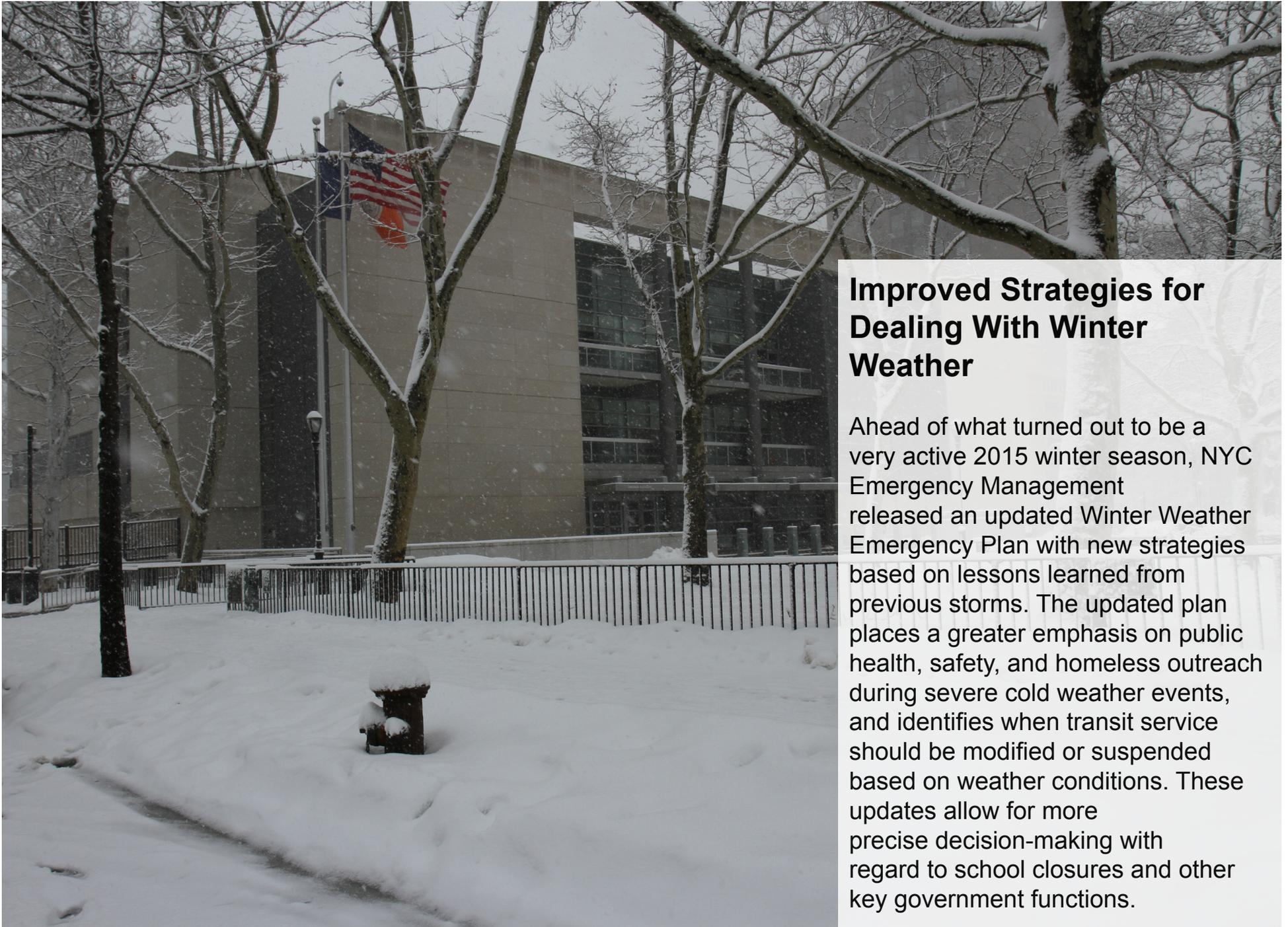
Keeping NYC Ready

Improving plans and resources that help the public be prepared and stay safe.

An Updated Approach to Cyber Security

To address the City's growing need to identify and defend against cyber security threats, NYC Emergency Management worked with partners including the NYC Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications and the NYPD to finalize the City's Cyber Incident Response Protocol. The updated document strengthens interagency tactics and techniques for handling security threats that require collaboration among City, state, and federal partners to minimize the damage from a cyber attack.





Improved Strategies for Dealing With Winter Weather

Ahead of what turned out to be a very active 2015 winter season, NYC Emergency Management released an updated Winter Weather Emergency Plan with new strategies based on lessons learned from previous storms. The updated plan places a greater emphasis on public health, safety, and homeless outreach during severe cold weather events, and identifies when transit service should be modified or suspended based on weather conditions. These updates allow for more precise decision-making with regard to school closures and other key government functions.

Enhanced Emergency Planning for People with Disabilities and Access and Functional Needs

A newly formed division within NYC Emergency Management strengthens the agency's commitment to people with disabilities and access and functional needs across all facets of emergency management. This division includes staff members that specialize in accessible sheltering, transportation, communication, outreach, logistics, and Americans with Disabilities Act compliance. It also has made way for the creation of a new high-level advisory panel that is made up of City employees with knowledge about issues regarding emergency planning for people with disabilities and other vulnerable populations, and New York City's disability community and its advocates. The panel will provide guidance to the agency and the City about emergency plan development and outreach.



New Emergency Preparedness Resources for All Ages

NYC Emergency Management is expanding its suite of emergency preparedness resources, including a multifaceted “Know Your Zone” hurricane awareness campaign, a children’s coloring book and interactive “tween” preparedness guide, a new *Ready New York for Business* guide and toolkit, and a Ready NYC mobile application — so that New Yorkers of all ages are ready for an emergency.

Photo: NYC Emergency Management’s Frank Lowe (pictured) was honored as a 2014 White House Champion of Change for his innovative work to educate seniors about emergency preparedness. Frank single-handedly visited over 70 NYC senior centers, nursing homes, and residences last year alone in his quest to make sure every New York City senior is prepared!



Helping Tweens Become Ready New Yorkers

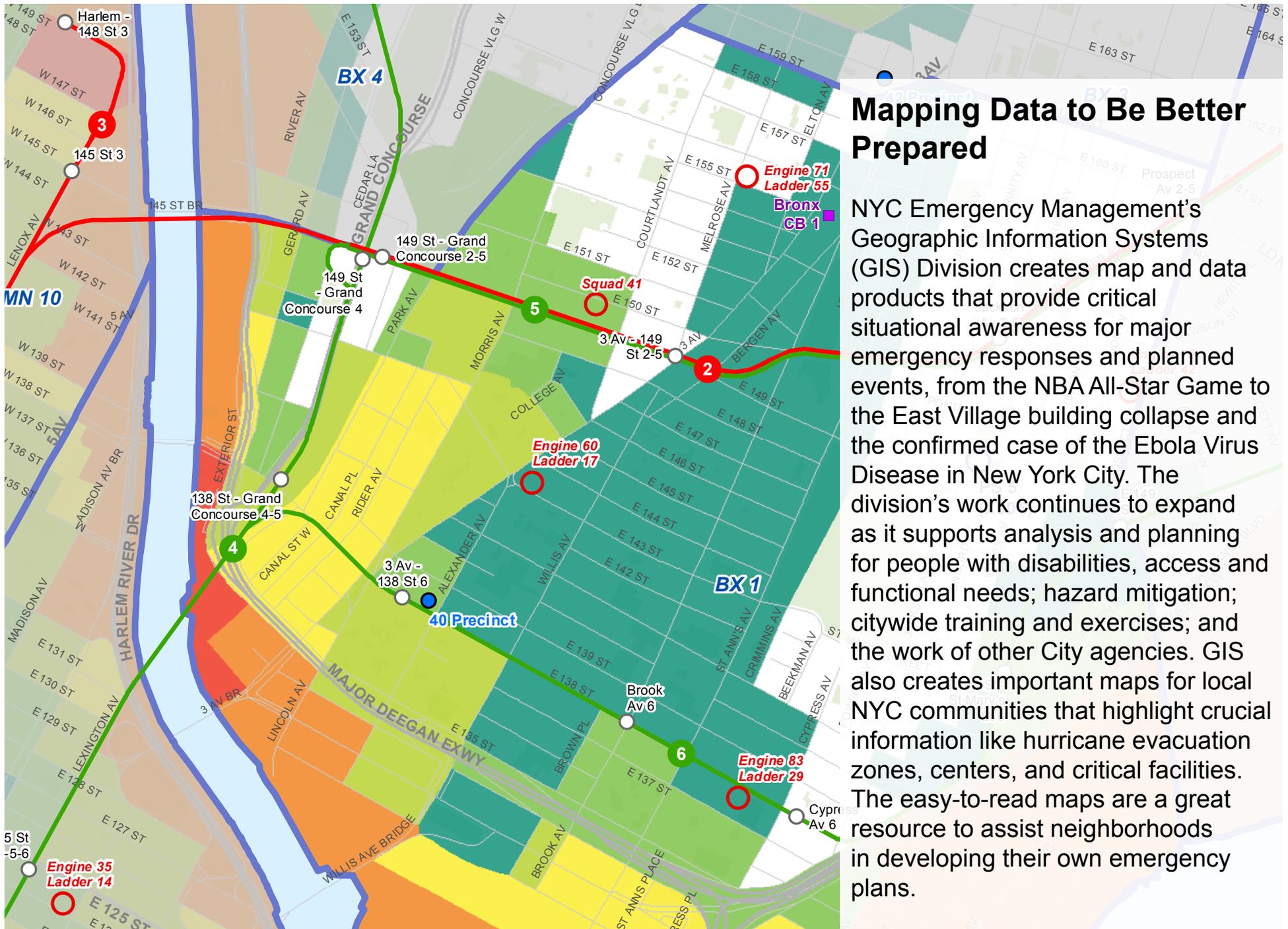
Building on the success of the robust elementary school program, the Ready New York program launched its “tween” outreach program for students in sixth through eighth grades in 2014. The initiative marks the first step in the plan to teach middle schoolers about emergency preparedness by empowering them to make good decisions when emergencies occur, and highlights the importance of these decisions for their own personal safety. Looking forward, Ready New York will focus on increasing its outreach to children; people with limited English proficiency; and people with disabilities, access and functional needs. The program also will further collaborate with ethnic and local media to ensure all New Yorkers are prepared for emergencies.





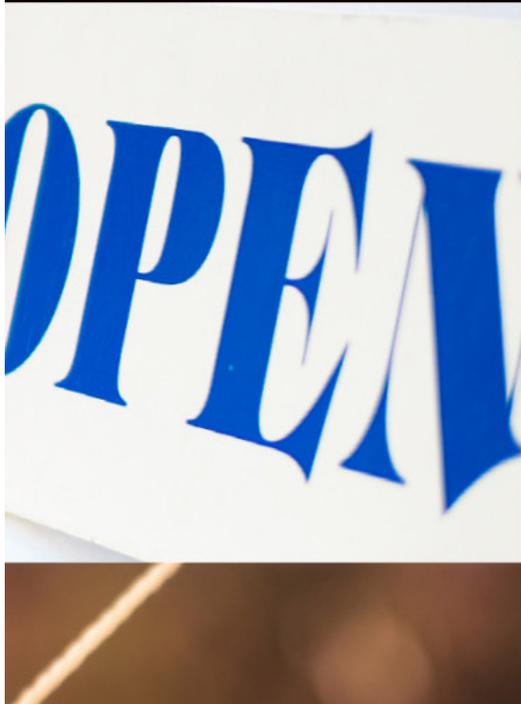
Working with the Nation's First-Ever High School for Emergency Management

NYC Emergency Management is also committed to creating the City's next generation of emergency managers. The agency works closely with the Urban Assembly School for Emergency Management, a public career and technical high school focused on teaching the skills necessary for entry into the field of emergency management. NYC Emergency Management Academy supports the development and delivery of course curriculum and will continue to work with staff and students to define career paths in this emerging field.



Mapping Data to Be Better Prepared

NYC Emergency Management's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Division creates map and data products that provide critical situational awareness for major emergency responses and planned events, from the NBA All-Star Game to the East Village building collapse and the confirmed case of the Ebola Virus Disease in New York City. The division's work continues to expand as it supports analysis and planning for people with disabilities, access and functional needs; hazard mitigation; citywide training and exercises; and the work of other City agencies. GIS also creates important maps for local NYC communities that highlight crucial information like hurricane evacuation zones, centers, and critical facilities. The easy-to-read maps are a great resource to assist neighborhoods in developing their own emergency plans.



Private Sector Outreach

Additional emphasis is being placed on helping organizations — especially small businesses — prepare for and recover from emergencies. With the updated *Ready New York for Business* guide and toolkit, NYC Emergency Management will be able to provide small businesses and organizations with essential tools to help them be resilient. Through the expanding Partners in Preparedness program, private sector partners have access to timely information and resources that will help them support their employees and their communities before, during, and after an emergency. The agency's Public-Private Initiatives Unit also supports organizations affected by emergencies by working with the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services and the United States Small Business Administration to make low-interest disaster loans available for individuals and businesses affected by various emergencies. This has included such incidents as the flooding event in Howard Beach and Lindenwood in 2014, and the explosions in East Harlem and the East Village.

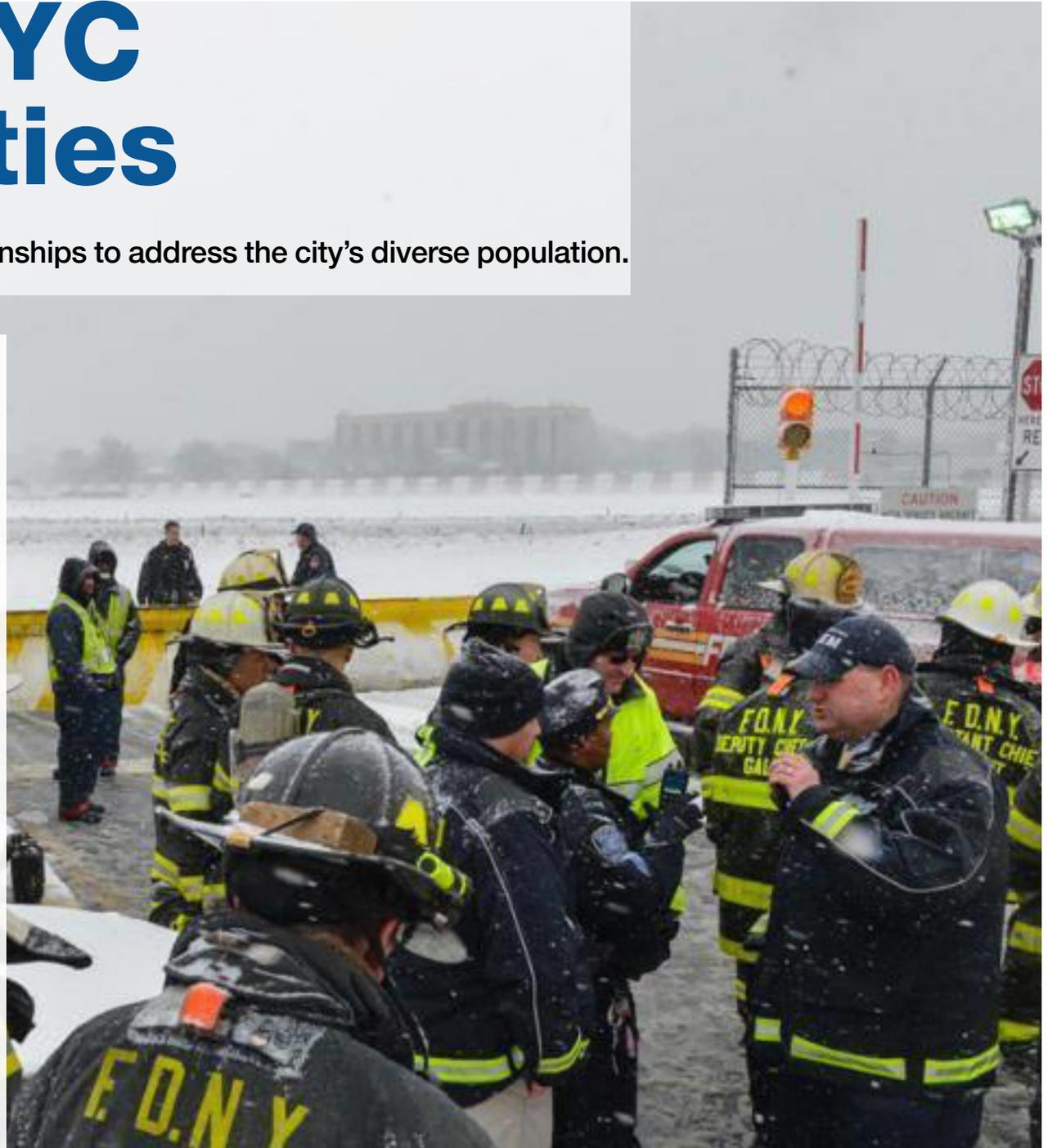
Helping NYC Communities

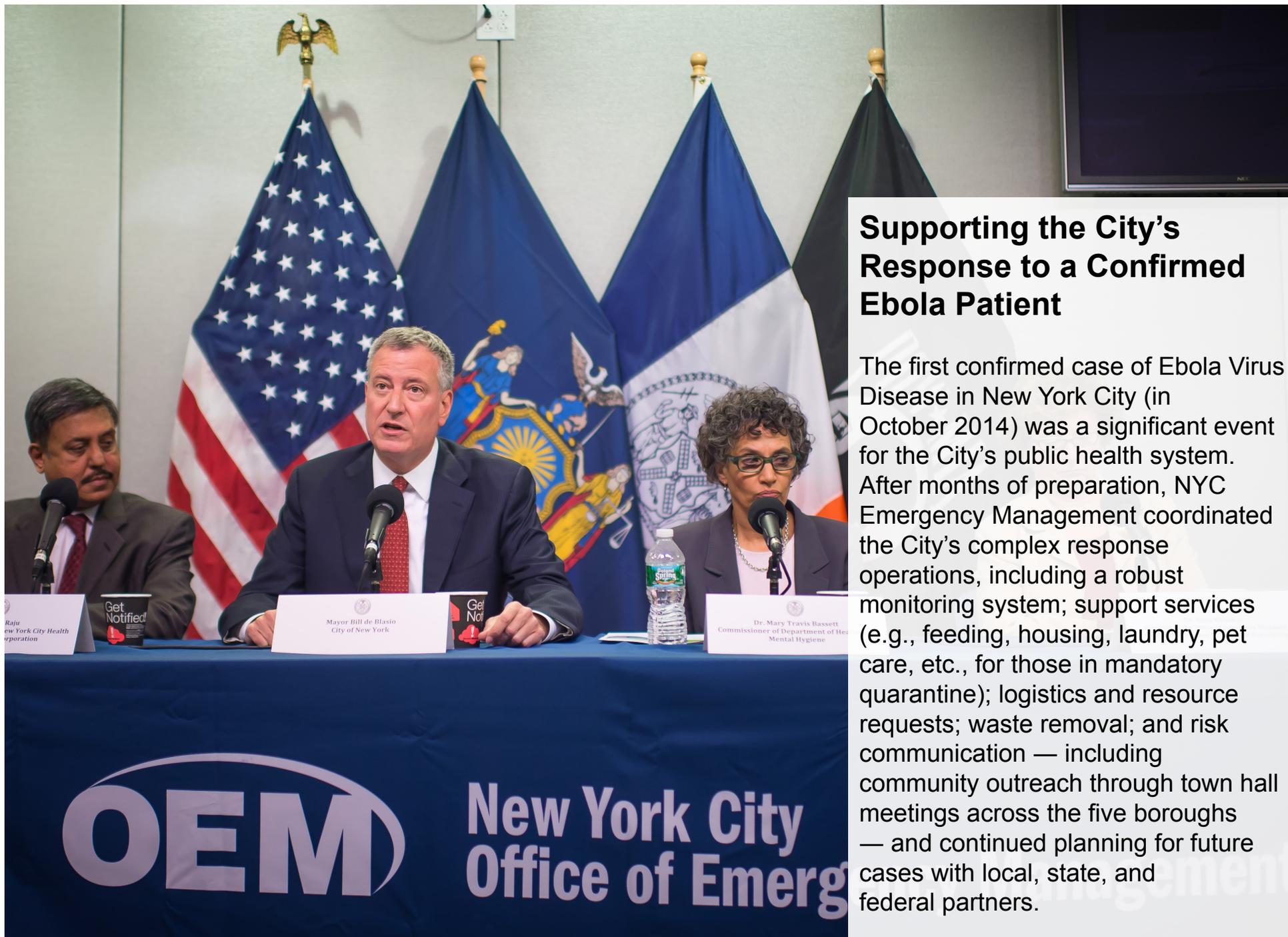
Enhancing response and building relationships to address the city's diverse population.

Citywide Interagency Coordinators

With an expanded staff, NYC Emergency Management deploys Citywide Interagency Coordinators (CICs) — seasoned public safety personnel who respond to multi-agency incidents and events in order to coordinate response efforts in each of the five boroughs. CICs can effectively respond from NYC Emergency Management headquarters, its Emergency Support Center, or from borough-specified assignments to serve as liaisons to the City's communities, neighborhoods, and residents.

Photo: CICs at LaGuardia Airport, March 2015.





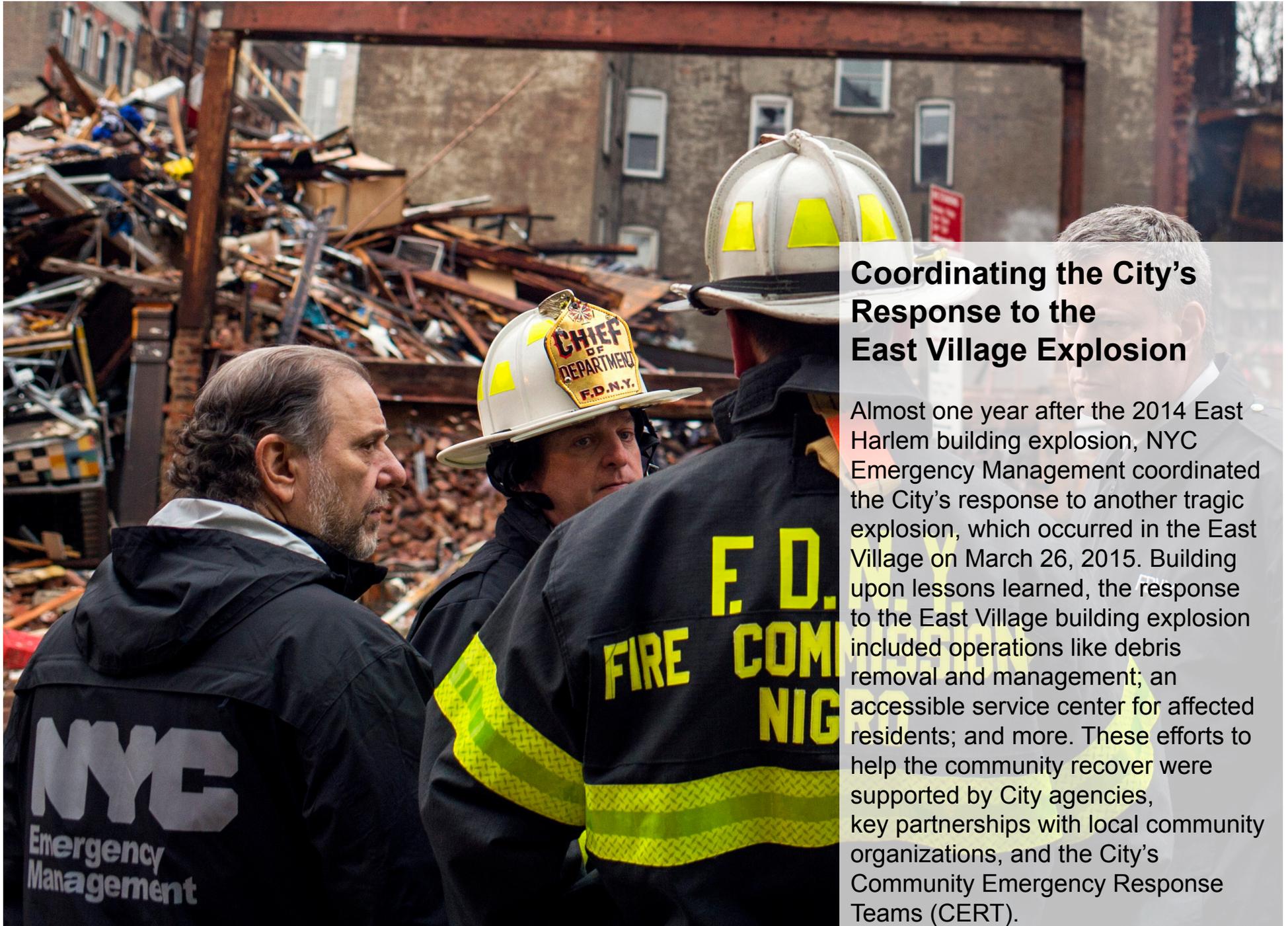
Supporting the City's Response to a Confirmed Ebola Patient

The first confirmed case of Ebola Virus Disease in New York City (in October 2014) was a significant event for the City's public health system. After months of preparation, NYC Emergency Management coordinated the City's complex response operations, including a robust monitoring system; support services (e.g., feeding, housing, laundry, pet care, etc., for those in mandatory quarantine); logistics and resource requests; waste removal; and risk communication — including community outreach through town hall meetings across the five boroughs — and continued planning for future cases with local, state, and federal partners.



Building a Database of Community Space Resources

Using known community spaces is critical to assisting residents during emergency and non-emergency times. To leverage partnerships and local resources, NYC Emergency Management's Community Space Survey identifies spaces in all NYC communities that could potentially support the City's emergency operations and logistics needs, or be used for community outreach events. Organizations citywide are encouraged to participate in the survey. To date, spaces registered with the program include community board offices, volunteer fire departments, houses of worship, and home care service agencies. The spaces have supported various operations, including the City's response to the East Village explosion and building collapse in March 2015.



Coordinating the City's Response to the East Village Explosion

Almost one year after the 2014 East Harlem building explosion, NYC Emergency Management coordinated the City's response to another tragic explosion, which occurred in the East Village on March 26, 2015. Building upon lessons learned, the response to the East Village building explosion included operations like debris removal and management; an accessible service center for affected residents; and more. These efforts to help the community recover were supported by City agencies, key partnerships with local community organizations, and the City's Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT).

Finding a Post-Disaster Housing Solution that Works

New York City took the lead in developing a local solution to a national problem with the debut of the first Urban Post-Disaster Housing Prototype in June 2014 — a multi-story, multi-family interim housing solution for residents who may lose their homes as the result of a coastal storm or other disaster. As it is evaluated for suitability as post-disaster housing (according to design, delivery, maintenance and occupancy), the model will show that cities can opt for short-term interim housing or use rapidly deployable housing for fast but long-term community development.

Photo Credit: Andrew Ruge, Archphoto





Working with Intergovernmental Partners

NYC Emergency Management continues to strengthen its partnership with its intergovernmental partners, including elected officials at all levels of government, to increase the agency's visibility and communication channels throughout the five boroughs. This includes increasing staff attendance at meetings ranging from community boards to town halls; building operational strategies for increased outreach to elected officials and community stakeholders before, during, and after emergencies; and expanding participation of these individuals in agency initiatives. The agency also has initiated programs with the coastal storm at-risk communities to address concerns about preparedness, evacuation, and City plans. This initiative will be expanded to include communities that express interest. During major emergencies, including the East Village explosion and the confirmed case of Ebola, the agency held regular conference calls with elected officials to ensure they had the latest information for their constituents and had a forum to provide response agencies with feedback from the community.



Growing the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Network

With more than 2,000 volunteers citywide, the New York City Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program continues to enhance its relationship with first responder agencies, including NYPD and FDNY, by increasing the involvement of CERT volunteers in local events. Working with the Urban Assembly School for Emergency Management, NYC Emergency Management trained the City's first teen CERT volunteers in spring 2015, and continues to expand the role of these youth.

Grassroots Community Planning through NYC Citizen Corps

Through outreach, training, and volunteer service, NYC Citizen Corps brings together leaders from volunteer programs, community and nonprofit organizations, the private sector, and government to promote preparedness at the local level. This year, the program has spearheaded enhanced efforts to support community-based emergency planning, increase training for community-based nonprofits, and engage organizations that work with people with disabilities and access and functional needs.

Photo: NYC Citizen Corps organizes a wide range of community events, including hurricane preparedness events in neighborhoods like Red Hook (pictured).



Sharing Important Information

Providing crucial information at the right time.

Addressing Concerns About Air Quality

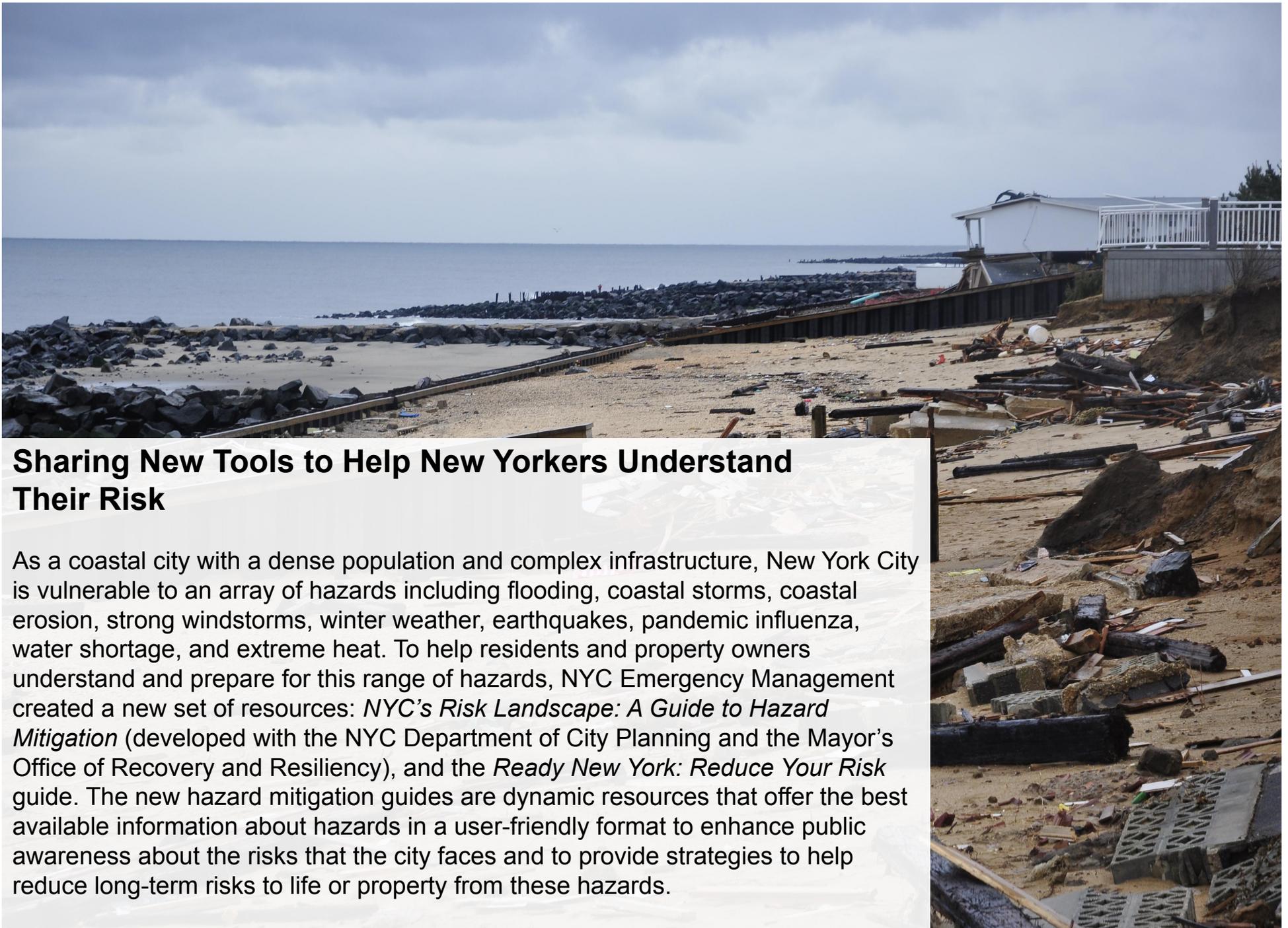
On January 31, 2015, an intense seven-alarm fire in Williamsburg, Brooklyn (pictured), generated concerns about the immediate impact that large fires and smoke have on air quality in nearby areas. This prompted NYC Emergency Management and the Department of Health & Mental Hygiene to develop air quality guidance that is now shared with the public through Notify NYC following every large fire. The improved messages remind residents in the area of the fire to keep windows closed and take precautions to avoid smoke inhalation.





Enhancing Language Access to New Yorkers

NYC Emergency Management has 21 employees who are proficient in 10 different languages. Along with bilingual CERT volunteers, these individuals can provide language assistance during emergencies to New York City's diverse communities and conduct emergency preparedness presentations in languages other than English. When needed, Notify NYC messages and other written material can be translated into alternate languages.



Sharing New Tools to Help New Yorkers Understand Their Risk

As a coastal city with a dense population and complex infrastructure, New York City is vulnerable to an array of hazards including flooding, coastal storms, coastal erosion, strong windstorms, winter weather, earthquakes, pandemic influenza, water shortage, and extreme heat. To help residents and property owners understand and prepare for this range of hazards, NYC Emergency Management created a new set of resources: *NYC's Risk Landscape: A Guide to Hazard Mitigation* (developed with the NYC Department of City Planning and the Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency), and the *Ready New York: Reduce Your Risk* guide. The new hazard mitigation guides are dynamic resources that offer the best available information about hazards in a user-friendly format to enhance public awareness about the risks that the city faces and to provide strategies to help reduce long-term risks to life or property from these hazards.



Free, Customized Emergency Alerts and Important Updates

Notify NYC, the City's official, free emergency notification system, now boasts more than 300,000 subscribers, and is offering innovative new ways for New Yorkers to receive customized emergency notifications. Subscribers can choose up to nine types of updates to receive, including a new beach notification category with up-to-date information about the latest status of the City's eight public beaches. NYC Emergency Management also enhanced the Notify NYC user experience by redesigning the Notify NYC website, adding "Do Not Disturb" and "Vacation" options, and making many notifications available in sign language video messages. In addition to the sign language video format, Notify NYC messages are available via phone, email, SMS, fax, BlackBerry PIN, Instant Messenger and Twitter.

Supporting NYC Agencies & Partners

Improving coordination for normal operations and emergencies.



Urban Area Working Group

NYC Emergency Management recognizes the importance of regional collaboration. Each month, the agency hosts neighboring jurisdictions, including the State and federal government, to discuss regional activities and threats, and participate in training and exercises.



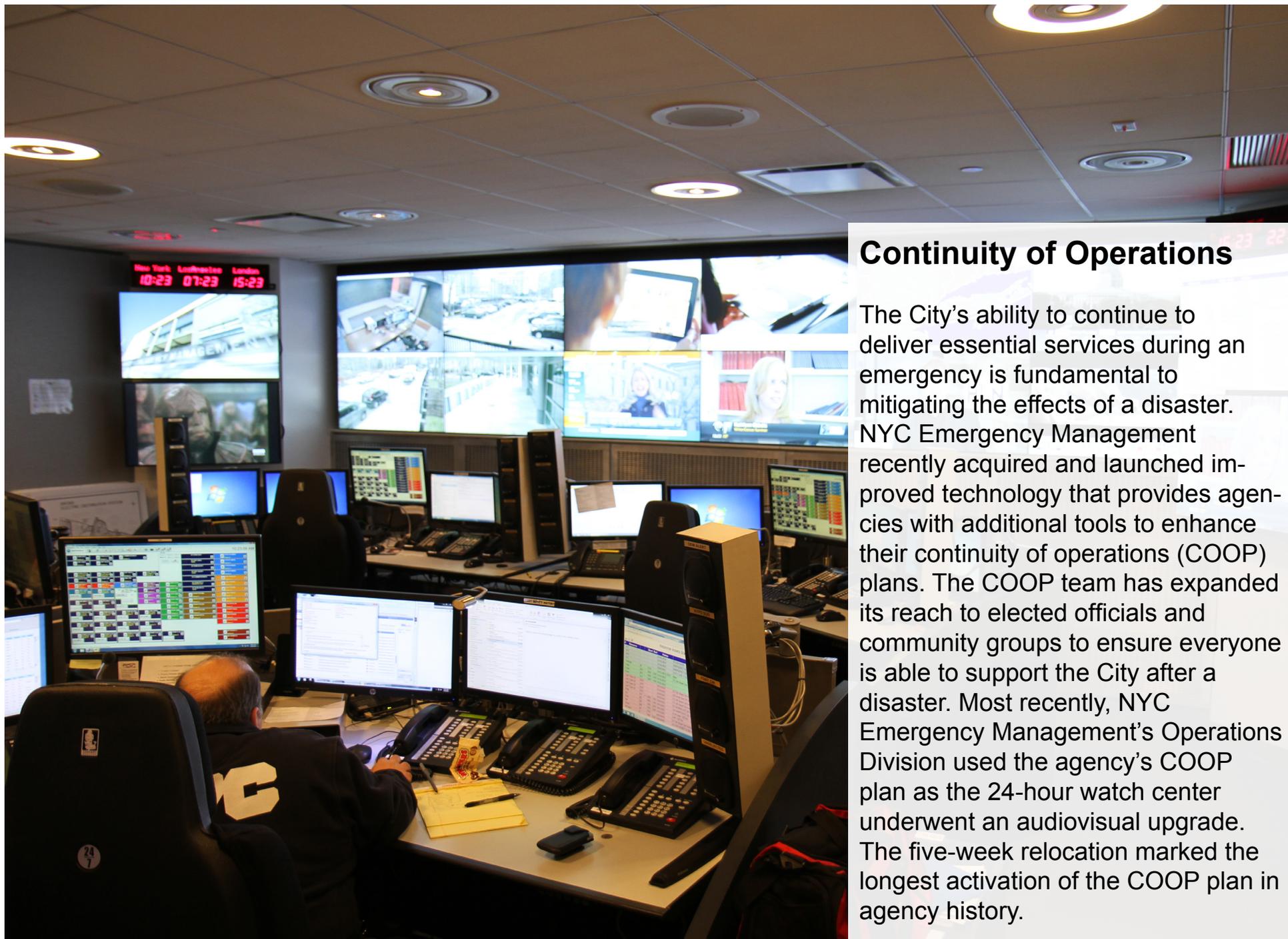
Teaching Emergency Management Principles

NYC Emergency Management is committed to developing a strong workforce both internally and across City government and external partners through effective training. At the foundation of these efforts is the NYC Emergency Management Academy, which provides comprehensive training, exercise, and evaluation programs that build and strengthen the capabilities of the City's emergency preparedness and response community, and coordinate the functions of the City's Emergency Operations Center. The Academy offers both classroom and online courses covering a full array of emergency management topics and skills, including programs like the Emergency Management Certificate Program — designed to give a solid foundation in emergency management principles and concepts, and applying these practices in New York City — which bring together personnel from all sectors, fostering better interagency coordination.



Exercising the Decision-Making Process during Emergencies

Building off its planning and response foundation, NYC Emergency Management, in conjunction with the First Deputy Mayor's Office and many City and outside partners, developed a series of tabletop exercises that review agency responsibilities during an emergency and help agency executives better understand the dependencies that exist between each other's emergency operations. Each exercise brought executives into a facilitated discussion that addressed decision-making, operational coordination and resource coordination during a specific scenario, including seasonal weather, coastal storm, and cyber incidents. Such efforts allow the City to examine its readiness and ensure all populations and sectors are included.



Continuity of Operations

The City's ability to continue to deliver essential services during an emergency is fundamental to mitigating the effects of a disaster. NYC Emergency Management recently acquired and launched improved technology that provides agencies with additional tools to enhance their continuity of operations (COOP) plans. The COOP team has expanded its reach to elected officials and community groups to ensure everyone is able to support the City after a disaster. Most recently, NYC Emergency Management's Operations Division used the agency's COOP plan as the 24-hour watch center underwent an audiovisual upgrade. The five-week relocation marked the longest activation of the COOP plan in agency history.

Getting Resources to the Right Place at the Right Time

The Citywide Logistics Program continues to improve to ensure that New Yorkers continue to have access to necessities like food and water following an emergency. NYC Emergency Management has expanded the City's Emergency Supply Stockpile to accommodate all-hazard events, and is leveraging new technology and programs to effectively deploy resources after a disaster. Enhanced training like Commodity Distribution Point exercises — recognized with the NYC Urban Parks Service Award — allows agency staff members and volunteers involved in these operations to gain hands-on experience managing distribution sites and effectively responding to challenges they may face following a disaster.





Diversifying Contracting Opportunities

NYC Emergency Management understands that diversity should expand beyond its staff. The agency has revised its procurement strategy so that women-owned and minority-owned businesses can gain contracting opportunities on internal and public-facing projects.

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