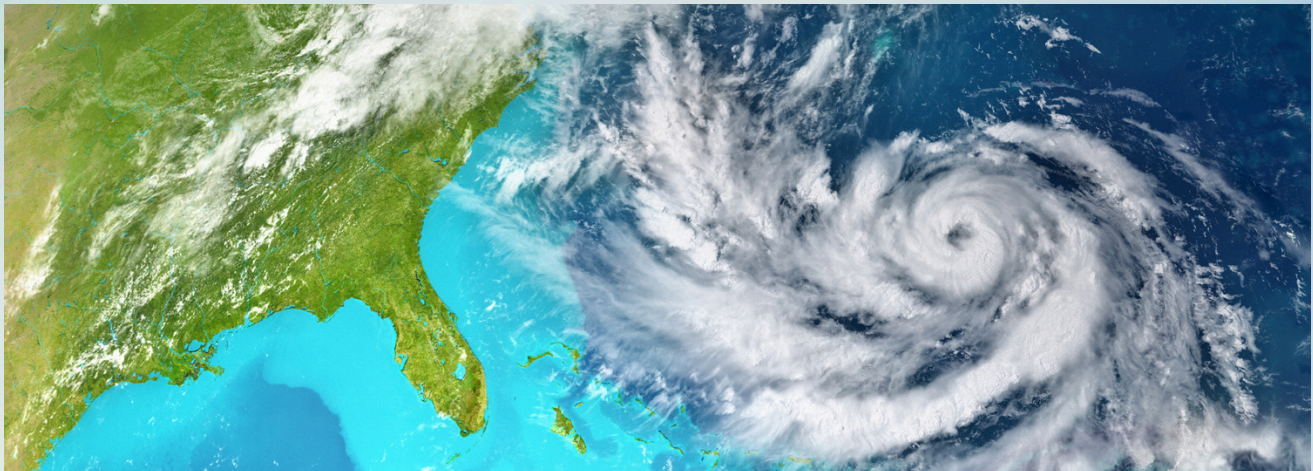




# NEWSLETTER

June 2026 - Bringing Communities Together Since 1977



## Hurricane Season: Being Prepared Together

As hurricane season begins, communities across Northeast Florida are once again focusing on preparedness, coordination, and resilience. At the Northeast Florida Regional Council, preparedness is a year-round effort. Through our Emergency Preparedness programs, Healthcare Coalition partnerships, Local Emergency Planning Committee initiatives, and regional resilience efforts, we work alongside local governments, first responders, healthcare providers, and community organizations to strengthen the region's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

A key part of this work is exercise season, when partners across the region participate in training, workshops, and exercises designed to test plans, strengthen coordination, and identify opportunities for improvement. These efforts help ensure that when emergencies occur, the relationships, resources, and systems needed to support our communities are already in place. As we enter the 2026 hurricane season, NEFRC remains committed to fostering collaboration and supporting the preparedness efforts that help keep Northeast Florida strong before, during, and after a storm.



Thank you for subscribing to our newsletter. We hope you find it informative and useful. Please share it with others, and encourage them to subscribe to stay up-to-date with all the exciting developments happening in the Northeast Florida Region. Together, we can continue to make the Region a better place for everyone.

# Healthcare Coalition Program Update



The Healthcare Coalition (HCC) Program continues to strengthen healthcare preparedness across Northeast Florida by supporting planning, training, exercises, and equipment needs for healthcare and emergency response partners. This fiscal year, the coalition provided nine training and exercise opportunities that engaged 765 participants from across the region, including specialized radiological and nuclear response training, Shelter-in-Place exercises, the Medical Response and Surge Exercise, and preparedness expos designed to increase awareness and readiness.

In addition to training and exercises, the coalition invested more than \$215,000 in regional preparedness projects and fulfilled all equipment requests submitted by healthcare partners. Resources distributed included Med Sleds, disaster stretchers, pediatric restraint devices, and evacuation sleds to support hospitals, EMS agencies, and long-term care facilities. With a funding increase beginning July 1, 2026, the coalition will continue enhancing the region's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies while ensuring healthcare services remain resilient when they are needed most.



# Community Development Program Update

The Northeast Florida Regional Council has been selected by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to receive a Brownfields Assessment Grant, providing new resources to help communities in our region identify and prepare underutilized properties for future redevelopment. The Council has formed a coalition with Nassau County and the City of Palatka for this initiative. This funding will support environmental site assessments, planning activities, and community engagement efforts that help transform vacant or underused sites into assets that promote economic growth and community revitalization.

Through this initiative, NEFRC will work closely with local governments and regional partners to identify redevelopment opportunities that attract investment, create jobs, and improve quality of life throughout Northeast Florida. The grant reflects the Council's continued commitment to providing technical expertise and collaborative solutions that strengthen communities and support long-term economic development.



## USDA Food Distribution Grant



The Northeast Florida Regional Council has been awarded a \$100,000 grant through the USDA Local Food Promotion Program to support a new two-year marketing initiative focused on strengthening the region's shrimping industry.

Building on previous work completed through the Northeast Florida Shrimping Market Study, this project will help develop a comprehensive marketing strategy designed to increase consumer awareness, expand market opportunities, and improve pricing for locally harvested shrimp. The initiative will bring together industry stakeholders, community partners, and regional leaders to identify opportunities that support the long-term sustainability and economic vitality of Northeast Florida's shrimping communities. Through strategic marketing and regional collaboration, the project aims to enhance the visibility and competitiveness of one of the region's most historic and important industries.

# Exercise Season Strengthens Regional Preparedness

As hurricane season begins, NEFRC's Emergency Preparedness team has been actively supporting annual exercises that strengthen readiness across Northeast Florida. This spring, staff participated in both the St. Johns County Annual Hurricane Exercise and JEA's Annual Hurricane Exercise, helping to facilitate coordination among local governments, emergency management partners, utilities, and response agencies.

During JEA's exercise, participants responded to "Zora," a simulated Category 2 hurricane modeled after Hurricane Dora, which impacted Northeast Florida in 1964. Over three days, teams practiced emergency response operations, incident command, logistics coordination, and large-scale restoration efforts. NEFRC's role in these exercises helps foster regional collaboration, strengthen communication among partners, and ensure communities are better prepared to respond to and recover from disasters. These exercises are a critical component of the region's preparedness efforts, helping build the relationships and capabilities needed before an emergency occurs.

