*Ken Blair (Voiceover):* Everybody, welcome to the Federal Proposal Podcast.

Ken Blair: As I record this special edition of the Federal Proposal podcast on Labor Day, two named tropical storms, Danielle and Earl, are out in the Atlantic presenting no apparent danger to the coastal United States. Danielle is rapidly going extra-topical, approaching the southwestern UK coast, while Earl will most likely dissipate out in the open Atlantic after bringing substantial rainfall to Puerto Rico. On the Pacific side of the continent, Tropicl Storm Kay is off the coast of Mexico and isn’t prenting a serious threat as of yet, While these three storms die out in the next few days, history says this will not be the end of the storms we see this year. September is the month of peak tropical activity and has seen some of the most violent and damaging storms in the past few years.

I bring this up because the part of the Federal Government most readily associated disasters and disaster recovery is the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA. Today we’re going to explore how your organization can do business with FEMA in their disaster recovery operations. Most of the material presented in this episode will be a synopsis of a webinar presented by FEMA small business representatives to a group of vendors through the Maryland Procurement Technical Assistance Center, or PTAC, along with some original research on the FEMA website, and some opinion. We’ll discuss the FEMA aspect first and then I’ll discuss the PTAC afterward.

First a little history. The recorded instance of the Federal Government providing disaster aid was in 1803 by Congressional Act following a devastating fire seriously affecting the Portsmouth New Hampshire seaport. Beyond that emergency support services were somewhat erratice until President Jimmy Carter signed Executive Order 12127 establishing FEMA in 1979. A later Executive Order that same year gave FEMA the dual mission of emergency management and civil defense. The missions of FEMA were futher defined and clarified in 1988 with the passage of the Stafford Act. There were a number of acts, normal passed after natural disasters that have further defined FEMA’s role and responsibilities since 1988. Each has provided specific relief measures and funding for those disasters and further defined the mission of FEMA.We are going to focus on the emergency management mission in this episode.

While FEMA does provide some direct aid to disaster victims, primarily through grants, it bigger role is the coordination of resources generally provided by local or regional contractors. This can involve a broad range of support services and supplies to include the provision of shelters whether fixed (think apartments) or trailers, the contracting for debris removal, food supplies, etc. These disaster services are only provided in those cases where the President of the United States has made a disaster declaration based upon the request by a State’s Governor, or leadership of the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Native American tribal governments also have the option of requesting an emergency declaration. There are a number of steps a requesting entity must take prior to the declaration and some larger states handle smaller disasters rather than ask for Federal involvement. Increasingly, the economic impact of disasters resulting from natural causes, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, or fires ultimately result in Federal disaster declarations.

Earlier, I pointed out that FEMA’s major role is as a coordinator of disaster response and now I want to point out how that coordination takes place and show the tie into some activities contractors should take if the want to contract with FEMA.

FEMA maintains an internal group called the Industry Liaison Program or ILP. This program manages the strategic relations ships with suppliers and stakeholders, and privides information for suppliers who want to do business with FEMA. In addition, they enure that vendors are connected with program offices in support of FEMA’s mission

After a disaster is declared, FEMA stands up a Local Business Transition Team or LBTT act act as the “on-site” liaison with vendors working with FEMA in the disaster area.

With that as background, let’s look at the four steps that will put your organization to do business with FEMA. These steps are skewed toward small business but larege business will follow a similar path.

The first step in to get involved with your local PTAC organization. The ae more than 300 PTACs worldwide in both CONUS and OCONUS locations. The PTACs exist under a program managed by the Defense Logistics Agency and exist to assist local business to successfully compete in the Federal marketplace. Your PTAC will assist your organization in presenting your capabilities to the Federal Government not just FEMA. The transcript of this podcast will provide a link to assist in identifying your local PTAC.

The second step is to register your organization with the System for Award Management otherwise known as SAM. The website forf this is [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov). SAM will assign your organization a Unique Entity Identifier which will be your primary identification within SAM. You’ll provide a fair amount of information about your organization to include your company name and contact information, your payment acceptance methods, and your agreement to some baseline terms and conditions of doing work with the Government. You will need your TIN/EIN, if available. If you don’t have either, go to [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) to start the process. One of the other things you can do within SAM is indicate your willingness to participate in the Disaster Response Registry. This is the registry FEMA uses to identify potential vendors who are willing to work with FEMA under disaster conditions.

Obviously, you need to understand FEMA’s mission and goals. This is the third step. The most important thing for you to remember is that FEMA’s goal is to seek local companies within the disaster area for goods and services related to a specific disaster when practical and feasible. In the transcript, I’ve provided the major law’s and procurement regulations with which you should become familiar to do business with the Federal Government.

The fourth step is to monitor the the sites that showcase the myriad of contracting opportunities available through the Federal Government. These include SAM, the Unison Marketplace, and the DHS Acquisition Planning Forecast System maintained by DHS. Link for these three are included in the transcript. I’ve also included contact information for the FEMA Industry Liaison Program in the transcript.

Finally, I’ve included a graph from the FEMA presentation that shows the ttop commodities procured by FEMA during a disaster. Services obviously vary by the situation but obviously debris removal is always a top consideration.

That’s it for the special episode. I would like to thank all the folks that have taken the time to listen or download this podcast. The numbers are growing with each episode. We’ll be releasing our major Episode 2 on September 7th (this Wednesday) and we will also have a breakdown of the OASIS+ solicitation in the next few days.

As always, feedback is appreciated at ken.blair@fedprops.com. Suggestions for improvements or suggested topics are always welcome

Thanks for listening.

**Resources:**

Find your local PTAC at [www.aptac-us.org](http://www.aptac-us.org)

Laws and Rule to Understand”

Stafford Act: Sec. 307 – Use of Local Firms and Individuals

Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR): 26.202 – Local Area Preference

FAR: 52.226-3 – Disaster or Emergency Area Representation

FAR: 26.203 – Transition of Work

Contracting Opportunity Websites

[www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)

[www.unisonglobal.com/product-suites/acquisition/sourcing/marketplace](http://www.unisonglobal.com/product-suites/acquisition/sourcing/marketplace)

<http://apfs-cloud.dhs.gov>

Industry Liaison Program Contact Information

[www.fema.gov/business-industry/doing-business](http://www.fema.gov/business-industry/doing-business)

Email: FEMA-Industry@fema.dhs.govdhs

Top Commodities Procured During a Disaster

