

URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE APPROPRIATIONS

The 28-team USAR system is a critical federal-local partnership that provides lifesaving assistance during major hurricanes, tornadoes, wildland fires, and other disasters.

Background

Since 2012, the USAR System has seen an increase in operational scope and responsibility, with a 33% increase in disaster response.

As costs for labor and equipment increase, the local fire departments that host the USAR teams are now providing half of the cost of maintaining the teams for a program that was not supposed to require a cost-share.

While FEMA provides \$1.2 million for each team, the cost of maintaining them has risen to \$2.4 million.

Recently, local fire departments have expressed concerns about the slow process of FEMA reimbursements and how they will affect the readiness of the USAR teams.

Ask



Provide \$56 million for the USAR system in FY2027.

Talking Points

▶ **Key Component of National Preparedness**

USAR teams play a pivotal role in coordinated federal-state-local disaster operations. Strategically located across the U.S., USAR teams can be deployed quickly to any disaster zone, delivering immediate assistance when every minute counts.

▶ **Force Multiplier for Local Departments**

USAR teams supplement and reinforce local fire and rescue agencies, bringing advanced skills, tools, and personnel to the front lines of disaster response, especially when local departments may be overwhelmed or lack the equipment, personnel, or training to respond to an emergency.

▶ **Protecting Local Economies**

By enabling rapid rescue operations and stabilizing critical infrastructure, FEMA USAR teams help minimize business disruptions, preserve local jobs, and speed up community recovery—reducing the economic fallout that often follows major disasters.

