



MALEM Membership Survey: Results & Recommendations

Final Report

May 8, 2022

Introduction

The Maine Association of Local Emergency Managers (MALEM) is a 501c3 non-profit organization supporting and enhancing local emergency efforts in the state. MALEM's mission is to promote and represent the field of emergency management in order to enhance the safety of all citizens and visitors to the state of Maine. In pursuit of this mission, MALEM strives for continuous improvement and solicits input from its membership on a regular basis. During Q1 2022, MALEM developed and distributed a survey to ensure the Association is meeting the needs of emergency managers in Maine.

Methodology

The MALEM survey and this report were prepared by MALEM member Emily Kaster, in coordination with the Executive Board.

The question set mirrored the survey produced by the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) in 2022, leveraging the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) methodology. The MALEM survey was facilitated through a Google Form linked in a PDF flyer advertising the project. The survey's response period ran March 7, 2022 - March 28, 2022. Eligible respondents included students, academics, volunteers, and career emergency managers (local, county, state, private sector) in Maine. The survey was marketed to members and non-members of the Association, with slight variances in their respective question sets.

Survey distribution included:

1. An email to MALEM members via President Dale Rowley.
2. An email via Dale Rowley, requesting pass-through distributions: 16 County Emergency Management Agency directors, the Maine School Safety Center, and the Healthcare Coalition of Maine.
3. An email to Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) Deputy Director via Emily Kaster, requesting distribution to MEMA staff and state emergency management partners.
4. Program chairs at the University of Maine at Augusta's Trauma-Informed Emergency Management (TEM), and the Graduate Certificate in Emergency Management at the University of New England.
5. Marketing on Twitter and LinkedIn, including "shares" from the IAEM Region 1 pages.

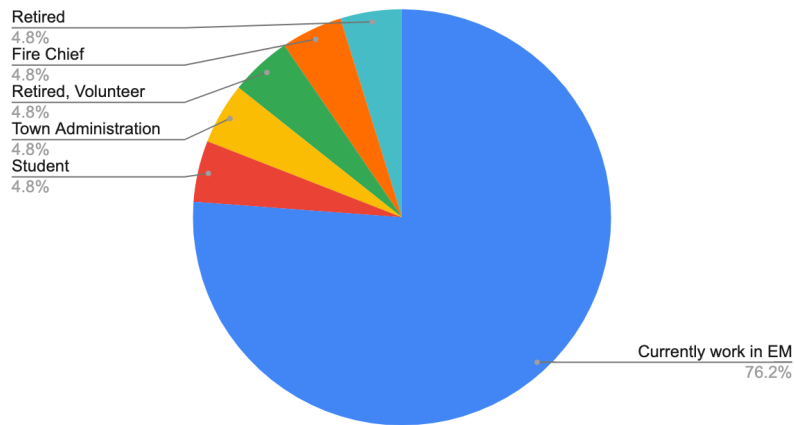
Analysis : MALEM Membership Responses

21 survey respondents self-identified as MALEM members. This chapter summarizes and analyzes their survey responses.

1. Occupation

The majority of MALEM members are current emergency management practitioners (76.2%), however nearly a quarter of membership is represented by retirees, volunteers, fire chiefs, town administrators and students.

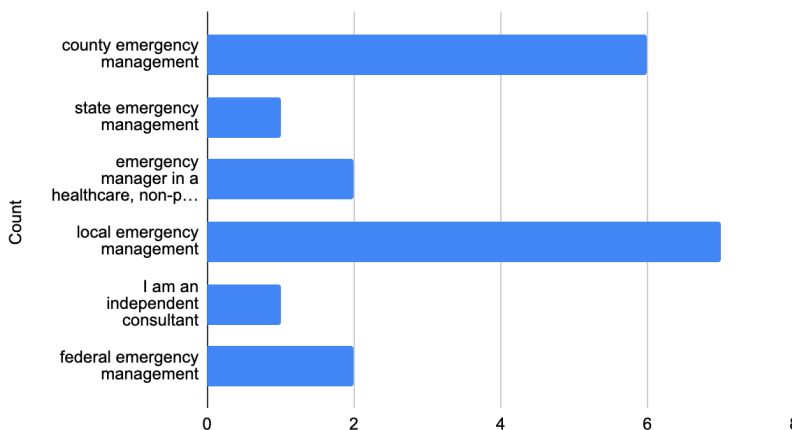
MALEM Member Occupation Status



2. Sectors

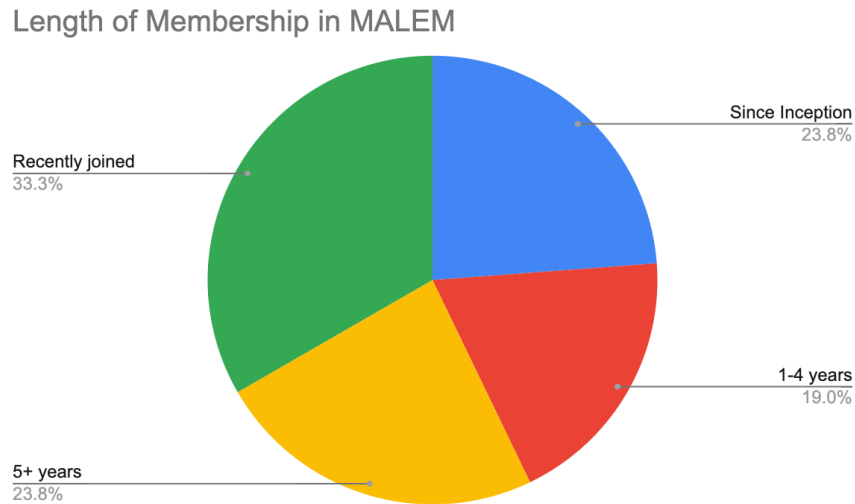
MALEM members predominantly represent government (local, county, state or federal emergency management). A minority of MALEM members are emergency managers in healthcare, nonprofits or consulting firms.

MALEM Member Sectors



3. Membership Tenure

Nearly half (47.6%) of MALEM members joined the Association 5+ years ago. Slightly more than half of members (52.4%) joined the Association within the last 4 years.



4. Why did you join MALEM?

When asked why they joined MALEM, 19 members responding to this question indicated that supporting the profession, learning, networking, and/or peer encouragement served as catalysts. Note: some member commentary aligned with multiple themes, resulting in a count above 19.

Supporting the Profession (Count = 9): members reported interest in increasing professionalism, supporting emergency management partners, and serving Maine’s communities.

Learning (Count = 8): members reported interest in staying informed, accessing training, pursuing certification and increasing their job knowledge.

Networking (Count = 6): members reported interest in group work, peer support systems, learning from experienced colleagues, and networking opportunities.

Encouragement (Count = 2): members reported that they were encouraged to join the Association as they started new roles.

5. What did you want to get out of your membership?

When asked what they hoped to gain from their MALEM membership, the 19 respondents reported similar themes to Question #4: supporting the profession, learning and networking. Respondents wanted to gain a sense of “community” to bridge the gaps

between organizations and counties, and peer support networks they could rely on as they approached new projects or roles.

6. MALEM Strengths

From your own point of view, please tell us the top strengths of the Association overall. Strengths are INTERNAL; thinking about the Association: What do we do very well as an organization? Where do we excel as far as our members are concerned?

The 15 respondents to this question indicate MALEM's strengths include creating networking opportunities (Count = 5), its existing events (training) and programs (scholarships) (Count = 2), and organizational operations (Count =1). MALEM's organizational culture was highlighted by several respondents; members felt there is a "small town feel," noted their appreciation for dedicated leadership, and enjoyed the knowledgeable membership base. Two respondents highlighted MALEM's potential as an organization as strengths; they cited MALEM's potential to lead advocacy efforts and the ability to bring a statewide voice on emergency management topics. Four respondents felt they had not been members long enough to provide adequate commentary.

7. MALEM Weaknesses

From your own point of view, please tell us the top weaknesses of the Association overall, the working groups of the Association, and/or your membership in the Association. Weaknesses are INTERNAL; think about: Where do you think we need to improve? What do we do less effectively than we should? Does the current MALEM community include a satisfactory representation of diverse expertise and interests? Is there a negative perception of the organizational culture?

The 17 respondents' comments cited organization, strategy/direction, membership, engagement, geography and other factors as MALEM's weaknesses.

Membership and/or engagement: (Count = 7) members expressed concern that there are seemingly few members willing to assist. At the same time, another member acknowledged MALEM could do a better job at recruiting new members and then engaging them. Of note, four new members remarked that they are unsure how to get involved in the organization.

Other: (Count = 4) Two members were unsure.

Strategy and direction: (Count = 3) members commented that MALEM has not followed through on achieving goals and has a lack of focus. Another member remarked that it is challenging to find MALEM's purpose and direction with the Maine Emergency Management County Directors Council in existence.

Geography: (Count = 2) Two members commented that Maine's vast geography hinders the organization (hard to convene in person).

Organization: (Count = 2) One member suggested there should be more positions on the MALEM executive committee. Another shared the following insight regarding the MALEM monthly meetings; "The association's meetings need to be more engaging, with, respectfully suggested, that the the monthly meetings not be referred to as the monthly 'executive

committee' meeting; while it may technically be so and serve as such, this titling potentially dissuades persons with interest from attending or actively participating in our meetings. I suggest we instead advertise and convene our monthly meetings as such, with the executive committee's needs and functions embedded into the meeting's routine conduct."

One respondent shared the following, *"Like any organization you will have a roster made of like-minded people doing the like-minded thing. Diversity in thinking and experience could be an issue. I have realized that many [Mainers] are "home grown". This is not just EMA, this is in fire, EMS and all emergency entities. This homegrown leads to a lack of experience diversity. I have heard in all venues of public service in Maine - We have always done it this way and that will not work here. I do not know specifically of this group but something of note."*

Another MALEM member commented that *"With the challenges of the times [I] believe MALEM has suffered like most in that there isn't enough time or hands to go around with all the needs of the time. EMA has always been underfunded at most levels. I believe MALEM has served as a valuable voice to support the efforts of EMA across the state at all levels."*

8. MALEM Opportunities

From your own point of view, please tell us the top opportunities of the Association overall, the working groups of the Association, and/or your membership in the Association. Opportunities are EXTERNAL; think about: Where could we improve our new member intake/orientation? Are there opportunities to access parallel EM professionals? What other professional associations are you a member of?

16 respondents shared a wide variety of opportunities for MALEM in the years ahead; the most popular opportunity noted was networking.

- **Unsure:** (Count =4)
- **Networking:** (Count = 3) One of the respondents shared that MALEM can provide not only networking, but a sense of belonging among emergency managers.
- **Social Media:** (Count =1) Recommended that MALEM start a presence on Twitter and Facebook.
- **Training:** (Count = 2) Suggestions that MALEM should coordinate training.
- **Outreach:** (Count = 2) One respondent believes MALEM has an opportunity "to educate our local, county and state elected officials about what Emergency Management is and what it can do for the jurisdiction."
- **Attracting new members:** (Count =1)
- **Organizational management:** (Count =1) This respondent suggested that MALEM should have a clear vision, focus, project list, and concept of how the association impacts emergency management in Maine.
- **Membership Orientation:** (Count =1) A new member appreciated the MALEM patch and meeting invitation upon joining the group, and suggested that an orientation packet or member roster would be helpful while getting acquainted.
- **Professionalization:** (Count =1) This respondent noted that the profession of emergency management has formalized in the last decade, and cited the growth of

higher education programs as a career path for students, and an opportunity for MALEM.

- **Healthcare:** (Count =1) This respondent commented “the pandemic has opened a whole new area for MALEM as health care is a valuable part of [the] EMA world these days...”
- **Partnering with similar associations:** (Count = 1) This respondent suggested that as emergency management broadens, MALEM should coordinate with similar associations such as the International Association of Emergency Managers, the National Association for Amatur Radio, or the National School Safety Alliance.

9. MALEM Threats

From your own point of view, please tell us the top threats to the Association overall, the working groups of the Association, and/or your membership in the Association. Threats are EXTERNAL; think about: What should be our biggest concern about our membership? Has a competitor created a more attractive program? What external factors threaten the members of the Association (this could be anything - from budgets to technology to stress on the job)?

16 respondents shared a variety of perceived threats that could impact MALEM’s success.

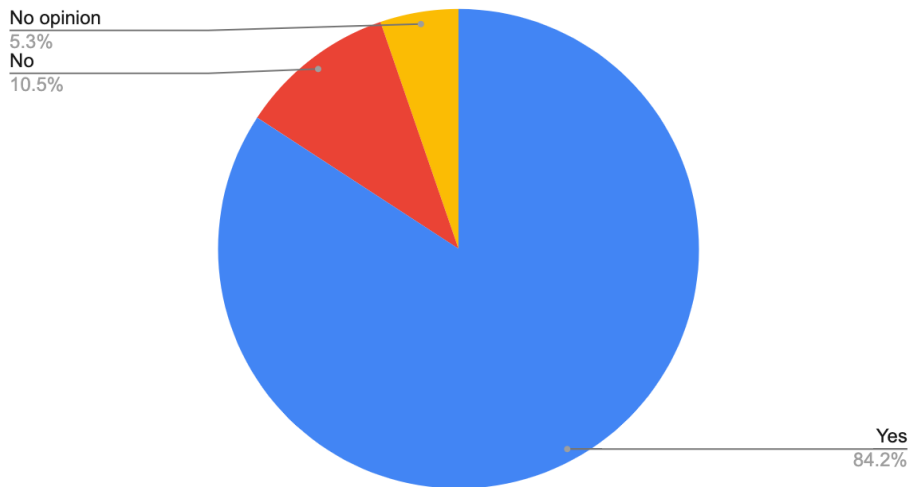
- **Time:** (Count =3) Respondents stated that our time is limited, so there needs to be value added. Others commented that Maine emergency managers are dual-hatted, placing further constraints on their time.
- **Organizational management:** (Count =3) Comments in this category focused on a lack of direction/impact as a threat. Two members remarked that losing current MALEM leadership, or failure to plan for succession are concerns.
- **Engagement:** (Count =3) Members feel it is critical to have a sense of belonging and engagement opportunities or they will migrate elsewhere.
- **Complacency:** (Count =2) Respondents are concerned about complacency or inactivity which result in MALEM dissolving.
- **Don’t know:** (Count =2)
- **Geography:** (Count =2) Again, members noted that Maine is a vast state but virtual platforms could overcome that.
- **Funding:** (Count =1)
- **Other:** (Count =1) This member shared that (in their opinion), “Maine is behind the Nation. The division can be attributed the complexities of Maine (Southern vs Northern), the chronic age of Maine, the limited professional potential and experience in Maine. During [a] training the [instructors] said this will never be used in Maine. The threat to the Association is the mindset that Emergency Management is different here than elsewhere. That is a lack of progression of professionalization.”

10. Legislative Action

Do you think MALEM should take positions on (relevant emergency management) legislation?

The majority of MALEM members responding to this survey (84.2%) agree that the association should take positions on relevant emergency management legislation. One respondent shared that legislative action is the point of an association, and a second respondent highlighted successes in legislative action taken by police and fire associations.

Should MALEM take positions on legislation?



11. Challenges in Maine

What do you see as the greatest challenges in emergency management in Maine in the next five years?

Twenty members indicated that funding, emerging threats, buy-in, lack of collaboration, or professionalism-related challenges are at the forefront in Maine.

- **Funding:** (Count = 9) By a landslide, respondents are concerned about lack of funding from local, state and federal sources to support Maine programs. One respondent remarked that salaries cannot retain quality emergency managers in Maine. A second respondent reflected on their experience with federal funding reimbursement, *"When I consider what it takes to go through a FEMA disaster declaration today versus a decade or more it is mind boggling at the paperwork and regulations being imposed."*
- **Emerging threats:** (Count = 3) Members cited cyber threats, aging infrastructure, climate change and extreme weather as the greatest challenges to be faced. One member is concerned about the reactive approach to threats.
- **Buy-in:** (Count =3) Members feel they lack buy-in from local and state officials into emergency management programming, town emergency managers, and/or the community.
- **Collaboration:** (Count =2) Two members cited that collaboration is critical to success, and they are not experiencing that in their daily practice. The first respondent wants to see "a collaborative network that is forward thinking" but works with many emergency managers who are unwilling to change (in their

opinion). A second respondent highlighted the silos between local, county and state EM and the need for more collaboration.

- **Professionalism:** (Count = 4) Respondents feel that knowledge and understanding of the profession is lacking, and that mediocrity is a threat. One outlier remarked that increasing qualifications and certifications are a threat. Finally, one respondent suggested that “the progression of EM in Maine needs to be professionalization to go with experience. There needs to be tabletops, drills and exercises...”
- **Other:** (Count =2) Aging members and emergency managers, coupled with a lack of members was cited as a threat.

12. Strategies to Mitigate Challenges

What strategies would you recommend MALEM take to mitigate those challenges in the next five years?

18 members shared feedback, 16 of substance.

- **Outreach:** (Count =2) Presumably to new/prospective members.
- **Legislation:** (Count =2) to increase resourcing for EM

Direct quotes from survey responses:

- *Serve as a liaison.*
- *Create a Strategic Plan that includes training and education.*
- *Utilize the network of SME in the state to inform and help folks adapt to the changes. Some mindsets can't be changed, but no mind can grow without education.*
- *Enhance public information of concerns and future disaster potentials if left untouched.*
- *Be a front runner.*
- *A representative on the climate change panel at the state level, if not already there.*
- *Hold MEMA toes to the fire.*
- *Stipends for emergency managers.*
- *Mentorship, collaboration with other organizations that support EM.*
- *begin locally, community involvement, cert teams, parades.*
- *Professional development within the communities and association. Making the association an entity that spawns partnerships. Painting a real world picture because when you talk EM to people they generally think World Trade not the 2017 ice storm. We need to make community education relatable to our audience.*
- *Prepare and stock resources.*
- *Building membership requires providing events to bring members together and offer tangible and worthwhile subjects and comradery.*

13. Are there any events or initiatives you'd like MALEM to see MALEM run in 2022?

12 members responded to this question, with 8 comments of substance:

- Training (webinars or other) (Count =3)

- Training: Development and delivery of a "New Maine LEMA orientation" that can be widely disseminated to each municipal jurisdiction's EM throughout Maine. This can be tied to a membership appeal and ongoing engagement with MALEM.
- Preparedness conference (Count =2)
- Preparedness expo
- A day at Maine's Legislative Session
- Workshops
- Community exercise participation
- Another MALEM annual meeting with lightning talks or training

14. Are there any virtual training classes you'd like MALEM to offer?

Ten members noted specific virtual training classes they'd like to see.

Responses included:

- Local Emergency Management 101 (Count =2)
- Threat and Hazard Assessments
- Informational training about MALEM
- "Online versions of courses required for municipal leaders would give the organization credibility at muni level"
- Training towards certification (unclear which certification)
- Courses that help members maintain their CEM-ME
- Strategies for emergency managers to coordinate with administrators/officials
- Continuity of Operations Planning
- Anything!

15. Additional items to share?

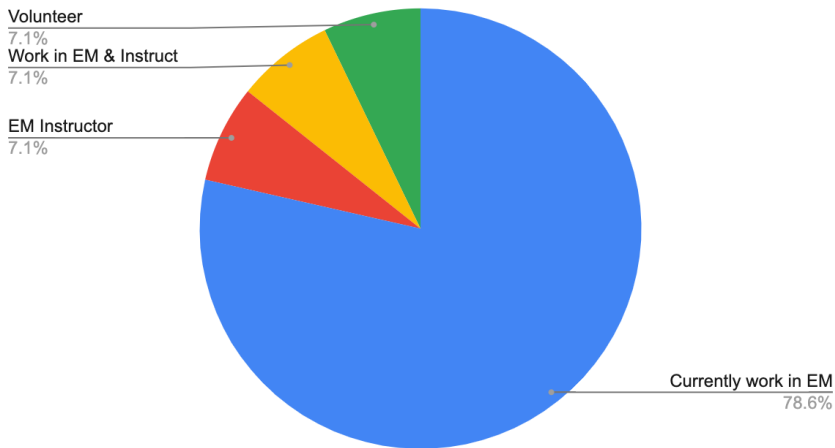
One member shared appreciation for current and past members. A second member suggested association polo shirts.

Analysis: Non-Member Survey Responses

1. Occupation Status

The majority of non-member respondents are current emergency management practitioners (78.6%), with the remainder serving as instructors or volunteers.

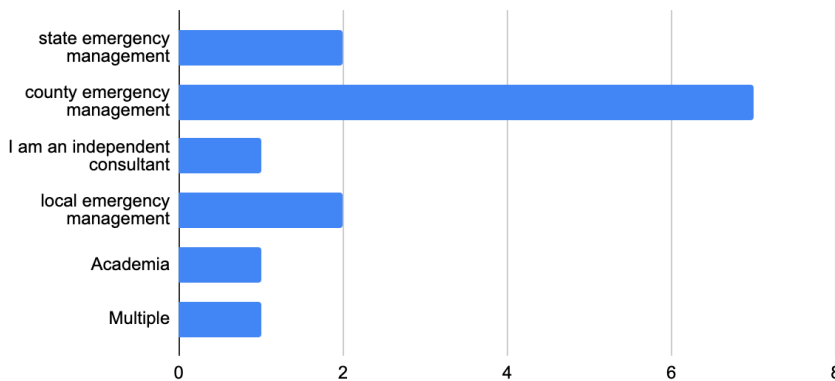
Non-Member Occupation Status



2. EM Sector

Non-member respondents predominantly represent government (local, county, state or federal emergency management). A minority of non-member respondents are consultants or academics.

Count of If you currently work in emergency management, please select the sector that is most applicable.



Count of If you currently work in emergency management, please select the sect...

3. Factors to describe why you are not currently a member

The survey asked respondents to describe why they are currently not members of the association. Among the 16 respondents, the most common reason was lack of visibility (Count =6). Three respondents indicated that time is a limiting factor, while another noted cost as a deterrent. Two respondents were unclear of membership value (“I’m not sure what joining MALEM would do for me”), and one was not sure what MALEM’s mission and goals are. One respondent believed MALEM was intended for “those who held director positions.” Two respondents simply hadn’t considered joining MALEM before. Finally, one respondent noted that “the majority of the state does not, and will not, have local EM programs.”

4. What would prompt you to join?

The survey asked non-members what would prompt them to join MALEM. The fourteen respondents cited a number of factors that could motivate them; networking (Count =2) or details on MALEM’s purpose and prior/future projects (Count = 3) were the most common responses. One respondent stated they’d complete their application that day.

Other respondents listed the following factors that would prompt them to join (direct quotes):

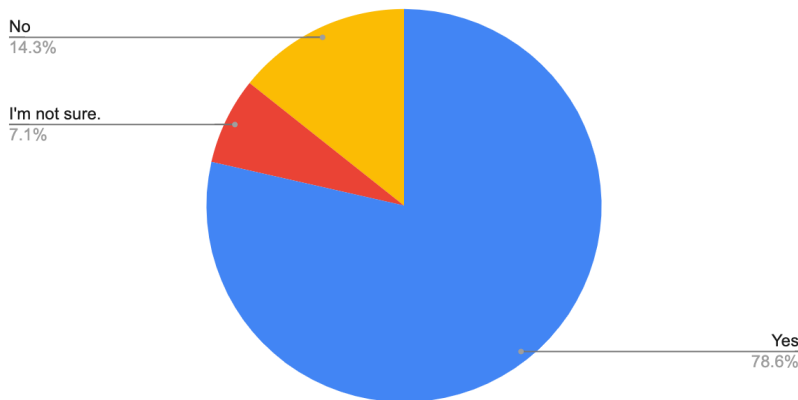
- *Nothing*
- *Benefit from time invested*
- *Just need to take the time to look into it/do it*
- *Some incentive*
- *It would depend upon training resources*
- *Educational opportunities for students; better contacts with potential intern hosts; improve my teaching*
- *When the information / activity is no longer funneled down from our county end. Would also have to consider time involved and costs*
- *I currently don't have a robust program of my own. Until my own capacity and capabilities increase, I don't want to approach local programs to do the same. Also, I'd look to IAEM R1, Maine state representative, to encourage IAEM participation, affiliation, and programs as the local EM focal point. IAEM has more clout and potential members would see more "value" in joining IAEM R1 as opposed to MALEM.*

5. Legislative input

Do you think MALEM should take positions on (relevant emergency management) legislation?

The majority of non-member respondents (78.6%) agree that the association should take positions on relevant emergency management legislation. One respondent shared their thoughts, "...without strong local programs, I don't believe this would have much value. The MEMCDC already has this in place and has little to no influence in legislation. Or MEMA for that matter."

Should MALEM take positions on (relevant emergency management) legislation?



6. Greatest Challenges for EM in Maine next 5 years?

What do you see as the greatest challenges in emergency management in Maine in the next five years?

14 respondents indicated that funding, public awareness, local programs, education and specific hazards are the top challenges Maine will face (among others).

- **Funding:** (Count = 4) respondents are concerned about the loss or reduction of state share programs and/or federal grants, noting that programs are currently understaffed and underfunded.
- **Public awareness:** (Count =3) three respondents recognize that public awareness of emergency management and/or disaster preparedness are currently lacking.
- **Local programs:** (Count =3) respondents believe that capacity of local emergency management programs in Maine are a challenge.
- **Education:** (Count =2) one respondent noted a growing need for continuing education, the second believes education opportunities are currently lacking.
- **Specific hazards:** war, fuel shortages, food security, long term power outages, climate change, public health incidents, and cybersecurity concern respondents.
- Miscellaneous: (Direct quotes)
 - *Defining the scope of emergency management - a balance between being broad enough for all-hazards, but not at the cost of the fundamentals (EOC, ICS, etc.).*

- *Complexity of the field*
- *Resources, (un) willingness to adapt policies/procedures to advances in response/management/etc*
- *Relevance of state EMA*
- *Getting public and local officials buy in and support*
- *A lack of strategic vision in all phases of EM at the state level*

7. Strategies for MALEM to mitigate those threats?

What strategies would you recommend MALEM take to mitigate those challenges in the next five years?

13 respondents suggested that MALEM focus on collaboration, training, outreach and incentives to mitigate these challenges (among other ideas).

- **Collaboration:** (Count =4) respondents suggested including various levels of emergency managers in committees; one suggested a coordinated pitch to legislators.
- **Training:** (Count = 4) respondents suggested centralized training, training customized for small-town governments, training for public officials, and training resources in general.
- **Outreach:** (Count = 3) three respondents suggested additional marketing or public relations efforts to promote MALEM to emergency managers and raise awareness of emergency management.
- **Incentives:** (Count =2) two respondents suggested incentives to joining MALEM, or incentivizing local emergency management through paid positions.
- **Miscellaneous:** (Direct quotes)
 - *Mitigation of the above challenge may not be possible if society does not understand the risk. The first step would be education on the realities of high cost, low probability disasters.*
 - *State resilience test, contingency planning and preparedness*
 - *Push MEMA to be transparent with counties and revise their funding model so MEMA actually budgets for their expenses instead of most of it being grants and shared costs with Counties*

8. Are there any events or initiatives you'd like MALEM to see MALEM run in 2022?

The nine responses to this question varied widely, and are provided below (direct quotes):

- *Fair, expo.*
- *Public consultation on fears, then a Conference of state EMA to discuss then contingency to mitigate were possible...before the mid terms*
- *Public Safety Expos, one per county*

- *Emergency management convention*
- *More networking events as COVID restrictions loosen.*
- *Coordinate with New England Prehospital and Operational Medicine for conferences (2020 and 2021 NEPOM events were canceled due to COVID-19)*
- *Push for legislation to provide pay for local EMA positions in order to make relevant*
- *Make a plan for attending/presenting every towns select board meetings at least twice a year - suggest right after town meeting (they are too busy just before them) and at end of year (when they start thinking about next year's budgets and planning)*
- *I saw IAEM R1 is working with MEMA STO on revising G-courses to make them virtual. I'd like to see this promoted better across the state and get some local directors involved in the process; increasing IAEM R1 presence in the state; promoting Maine Basic EM program.*

9. Are there any virtual training classes you'd like MALEM to offer?

The nine respondents shared their insights, listed below (direct quotes):

- *Not really, it's the connection, mentoring and experience that is vital*
- *No everything has to be face to face*
- *Can't think of any, virtually burnt out to online courses. Get more from in person networking*
- *A walkthrough of what's needed and how to apply for ME CEM would be helpful*
- *Any*
- *Leadership, best practice briefings from jurisdictions in and out of Maine, EMAP*
- *EM leadership development*
- *I personally cannot take any more training. Taking too many now.*
- *A difficult overlap with County EMA and their T&E program.*

10. Additional Comments

One respondent thanked MALEM for sharing this survey. A second respondent offered the following insight, *"I believe that in order for MALEM to be successful, County EMA needs to be removed from executive leadership. We all know that not all County EMA programs are successful and there may or may not be pre-existing opinions/experiences with County EMA that may keep local directors from participating. MALEM's executive committee should be comprised of all locals, with their own vision and direction for LEMA's here in Maine. Unfortunately, for the foreseeable future, it'll just be viewed as another meeting with no strategic direction or validity in the cause. Do we need MALEM - yes. Do we need robust local programs - YES. Is MALEM viable in Maine given the current structure of designating the fire chief as the LEMA with no stipend or resources to build a program - no. Until we somehow morph the LEMA position into a bona fide*

role, supported by local elected officials politically, financially, and administratively, rural Maine will never embrace professionalizing EMA. "

Recommendations

Short-Term Courses of Action

1. Create a “new member orientation.” This orientation could be offered virtually and on a recurring basis (or recorded and updated annually). The orientation should introduce MALEM leadership, provide an introduction to the association and a clear path for how new members can become (and stay involved).
2. Create a Standard Operating Procedure for processing and welcoming new MALEM members. Once documented in the SOP, this process could be supported by a volunteer or new committee position.
3. Create/update a flyer to recruit prospective MALEM members.
4. Re-title and restructure MALEM’s monthly meetings to increase membership attendance and participation.
5. Identify priority areas that could be supported by volunteers/MALEM members. Draft position descriptions and recruit for the roles. Options for considerations include: membership engagement and communications officer.
6. Create and distribute a quarterly membership pass-down. Whether an email, recorded video, or short newsletter, MALEM should communicate to its membership quarterly on what has been accomplished, what is upcoming, and any association news to share.

Long-Term Courses of Action

1. Create position descriptions for each of the (existing) MALEM executive board roles.
2. Draft a position description and recruit a legislative affairs liaison for MALEM. Develop relationships with key legislative partners to emergency management in Maine.
3. Develop a mechanism to host recurring networking events (quarterly in-person events that rotate geographic areas, virtual happy hours, etc).
4. Develop an outreach campaign to share marketing materials with local/county ems, higher ed, affiliate organizations, etc. This could be tasked to the communications officer, if in existence.
5. Develop an annual MALEM work plan to implement the strategic plan. Work plan tasks should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound.
6. MALEM executive board members should develop strategic partnerships with the Maine Municipal Association and affiliate organizations, meeting at least annually to introduce leadership and areas for collaboration in the year ahead.
7. Research additional funding streams for the association to sustain and grow programs. Examples may include: annual fundraising events, hosting a training for a cost, selling association merchandise, etc.