

National Qualification System Implementation Objectives

FEMA was tasked with implementing 6 USC 320 Credentialing and Typing in the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA) and developed the National Qualification System (NQS). The NQS provides:

- Foundational guidelines for jurisdictions on the qualification of personnel resources within the National Incident Management System (NIMS);
- A common language and standardized approach for qualifying, certifying, and credentialing incident management and support personnel; and
- Tools for jurisdictions and organizations to share resources seamlessly.

The ability to provide mutual aid accurately and rapidly is critical during disasters, but mutual aid partners often lack a common language and standardized approach to support the sharing of qualified personnel. Using the NQS ensures personnel deploying have demonstrated the minimum capabilities to perform the duties of their assigned incident roles.

Benefits of NQS Implementation

By using the same terminology and qualification criteria, Authorities Having Jurisdictions (AHJs) can:

- Request and deploy personnel who have the qualifications needed for the job;
- Supplement their teams with confidence; and
- Strengthen their recruitment, hiring, training and professional development programs.

Emergency Management Performance Grant

The NQS Implementation Objectives reflect the concepts and principles contained in NQS doctrine and aim to promote consistency in NQS implementation nationwide. The NQS Implementation Objectives provides guidance for implementation in the 2021 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) Notice of Funding Opportunity.

EMPG Program recipients are strongly encouraged to implement components of the NQS and may use their EMPG Program funds to support NQS implementation efforts. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2022, FEMA intends to make NQS implementation a requirement of award for EMPG Program funding. In a phased approach over four years, EMPG recipients should work toward achieving each of the objectives listed in this document in order to be considered NQS-compliant.



National Qualification System (NQS) Implementation Objectives Fact Sheet

For the purposes of these Implementation Objectives, “incident workforce” is defined as **frequently deployed** incident management, incident support or emergency management personnel, as identified by the jurisdiction. For purposes of these Implementation Objectives, FY22 is Phase 0 during which only the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico develop an Implementation Plan. All other jurisdictions may begin working toward implementation. In FY23, during Phase 1, all jurisdictions begin development of their implementation plans. By FY24, Phase 3, all jurisdictions will have completed an Implementation Plan and begun implementing NQS.

Federal departments and agencies can refer to the [NIMS Implementation Objectives for Federal Departments and Agencies](#) for information about NQS implementation.

NQS Guidance and Tools

FEMA provides NQS guidance and tools to assist the AHJ and to help ensure the integrity of the resource management and mutual aid system.

- The 2017 NIMS Guideline for the National Qualification System provides guidance on building and maintaining a process for creating a deployable workforce of qualified, certified and credentialed personnel to manage and support incidents of all types and sizes.
- NQS Job Title/Position Qualifications define the minimum criteria that personnel serving in specific incident-related positions must attain before deploying to an incident.
- NQS Position Task Books (PTBs) identify the competencies, behaviors and tasks personnel must demonstrate to qualify for specific incident-related positions.
- Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Skillsets provide a modified PTB approach to qualify EOC personnel while remaining flexible to accommodate diverse EOC organizational structures.
- OneResponder and Other Supporting Technology provide tools that jurisdictions and organizations can use to implement qualification and certification processes.

NQS Implementation Phase

NQS Implementation Phase Objectives	
Phase 0: NQS Implementation Objectives for FY22	Example Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Only the 50 States, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico shall work toward implementation of NQS by developing an Implementation Plan, using the FEMA-provided two-page template. ▪ The Implementation Plan will identify a jurisdiction's timeline for implementing NQS by FY25. ▪ All other jurisdictions are encouraged to begin working toward identifying, at a minimum, frequently deployed positions and implementation but will not be required until FY23. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completion of a jurisdiction implementation plan. ▪ Identification of implementation challenges.
Phase 1: NQS Implementation Objectives for FY23	Example Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All jurisdictions shall work toward implementation of NQS by developing an Implementation Plan, using the FEMA-provided two-page template. ▪ Jurisdictions that began implementation in FY22 shall have designed and adopted organizational qualification system procedures, a certification program and credentialing standards for incident workforce personnel in alignment with the NIMS Guideline for the National Qualification System. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completion of a jurisdiction implementation plan. ▪ Identification of implementation challenges. ▪ Qualification policies and procedures approved by the jurisdiction. Procedures may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Establishment of a Qualification Review Board, or equivalent review processes for incident workforce personnel qualifications. – Individual and team coach and evaluation processes for incident workforce personnel qualifications.
Phase 2: NQS Implementation Objectives for FY24	Example Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All jurisdictions shall have designed and approved organizational qualification system procedures, certification program and credentialing standards for incident workforce personnel in alignment with the NIMS Guideline for the National Qualification System. ▪ Jurisdictions that began implementation in FY22 shall have issued position task books (PTBs) to incident workforce personnel, as designated by the jurisdiction, and ensure incident workforce personnel show progress in working towards task endorsements and minimum training requirements. ▪ In FY24, all jurisdictions partially satisfy the requirement by ensuring incident workforce personnel, which they designate, meet the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Qualification policies and procedures approved by the jurisdiction. ▪ Minimum criteria that trainees must meet to be qualified in a specific position is outlined in the NQS Job Title/Position Qualification. ▪ PTB issuance and completion data. ▪ Adoption of a resource management system such as OneResponder, which is a web-based application hosted in a cloud environment. It allows AHJs to management qualifications of personnel.

NQS Implementation Phase Objectives	
<p>minimum training requirements from the Job Title/Position Qualification.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jurisdictions that began implementation in FY22 shall have issued PTBs to incident workforce personnel, which they designate, and ensure incident workforce personnel show progress in working towards task endorsements and minimum training requirements ▪ Jurisdictions shall use a resource management or qualification tool system to track the qualification, certification and credentialing of incident workforce personnel. 	
Phase 3: NQS Implementation Objectives for FY25	Example Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All jurisdictions shall have issued PTBs to incident workforce personnel, which they designate, and ensure incident workforce personnel show progress in working towards task endorsements and minimum training requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PTB issuance and completion data.