# FEDERAL MISSION RESILIENCE STRATEGY

2020

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON, DC

Federal Executive Branch:

In support of my Administration's National Security Strategy, I am issuing the *Federal Mission Resilience Strategy* (hereafter, "the Strategy") to address the long-term challenges of political, economic, and military competition from near peer adversaries as well as disruptions from natural disasters and pandemics.

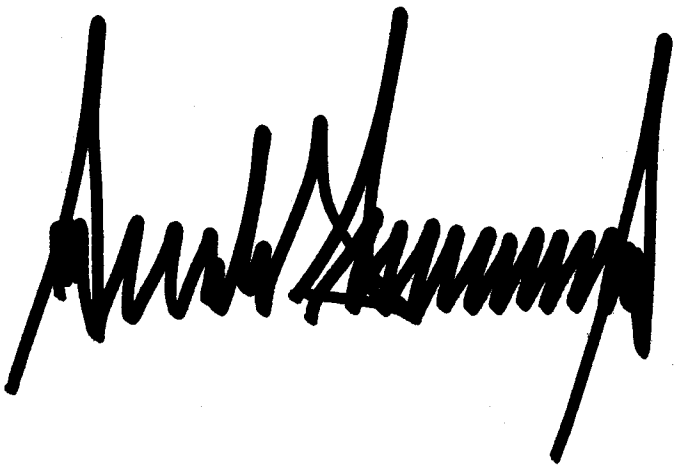
Our adversaries will not attempt to fight us on our terms. They have studied our way of war, invested in capabilities to target our strengths, and are adept at competing below the threshold of armed conflict. Adversarial threats are not the only source of disruption. Disruptions from wildfires, natural disasters, and pandemics such as the COVID-19 pandemic highlight the importance of an integrated risk management approach to prioritize essential functions and services.

This *Strategy* accelerates our collective efforts to fully implement *National Continuity Policy* and make risk-informed decisions to maintain a comprehensive and effective capability that ensures the continuous performance of essential functions and services to preserve our constitutional form of government, under any and all conditions. As the executive branch, we must recommit and sustain leadership's attention on meeting the needs of the American people in the face of disruptions and preserving our form of government.

Despite our best efforts, the government cannot prevent all dangers. We recognize, and must prepare for, the possibility of unforeseen events including natural disasters, pandemics, cyber threats, and kinetic or electromagnetic pulse attacks. We must be prepared as a Nation, as a Federal Government, and as individual citizens to preserve, protect, and defend our way of life.

The *Strategy* builds on the *National Continuity Policy* and provides guidance to the Executive Office of the President and Federal executive departments and agencies to increase the executive branch's resilience. Our current and future prosperity depend on our ability to reduce the vulnerability of our critical infrastructure to cyber, physical, and electromagnetic attack. The government and private sector must work together to reduce vulnerabilities and design infrastructure that addresses preparedness and resilience from the start.

The follow-on *Federal Mission Resilience Implementation Plan* will ensure that our Nation's efforts and resources will be brought to bear in a coordinated manner through integrated Continuity of Operations and Continuity of Government programs interwoven into routine, day-to-day government operations. Working together, we will prioritize the security, prosperity, and interests of the American people to confront the challenges of tomorrow.



**President Donald J. Trump**

**The White House**
**December 2020**

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Federal Mission Resilience Strategy (hereafter, "Strategy") builds on existing continuity policy to accelerate the evolution of our Federal Government to become more resilient against all threats and conditions through an enduring structure of distributed risk and capabilities. The Strategy was developed in response to direction from the National Security Council Principals Committee and supports the National Security Strategy by refocusing national continuity policy implementation to better address emerging threats to the performance of essential functions and services.

Federal Mission Resilience is the ability of the Federal executive branch[1] to continuously maintain the capability and capacity to perform essential functions and services, without time delay, regardless of threats or conditions, and with the understanding that adequate warning of a threat may not be available. Federal Mission Resilience will be realized when preparedness programs, including continuity and enterprise risk management, are fully integrated into day-to-day operations of the Federal executive branch.

The Strategy model of "Assess, Distribute, and Sustain" reduces the reliance on reactive relocation of personnel to alternate locations and emphasizes a more proactive full-time posture of distribution and as necessary, devolution to minimize disruptions to essential functions and services. This shift in policy implementation is supported by three lines of effort (LOE). Through these LOEs, Federal executive branch Principals will drive efforts within their components to increase the capability and capacity to continuously perform essential functions and services to mitigate against all threats, including adversarial actions and regional disruptions. The increased resilience of day-to-day mission operations will ensure continuous performance of essential functions and services regardless of circumstance through the application of holistic risk management and continuity of operations principles. "Essential functions and services" refers to the functions (i.e., National Essential Functions, as defined by Presidential Policy Directive – 40 (PPD-40), *National Continuity Policy*, and Primary Mission Essential Functions, developed through Federal Continuity Directive 2, *Federal Executive Branch Mission Essential Functions and Candidate Primary Mission Essential Functions Identification and Submission Process*) and capabilities necessary to preserve and sustain the American way of life.

Further, this Strategy:

- Acknowledges the efforts of our adversaries to limit United States advantages; the vulnerability of our critical infrastructure; and the need for a unifying construct to shift continuity implementation from reactive relocation (i.e., with indications and warning) to a proactive sustained distributed model (i.e., leverage existing distribution of Federal missions).

[1] The Executive Office of the President and Executive Departments, as defined in 5 U.S.C. 101, government corporations as defined by 5 U.S.C. 103(1), independent establishment as defined by 5 U.S.C. 104(1), the Intelligence Community as defined by 50 U.S.C. 3003, and the United States Postal Service.

- Leverages decades of principles, practices, and capabilities that form the foundation of our continuity mission, while promoting evolutionary steps that also address the long-term challenges of non-kinetic threats (e.g., cyber, pandemic) to our governmental functions, critical infrastructure, and economic and political systems.

- Highlights the need for sustained Federal executive branch leadership attention and commitment to bring together continuity, preparedness, and risk management policy and budgeting decisions.

- Increases resilience by leveraging existing Federal executive branch facilities and locations to enable distribution and diversification of risk to those essential functions and services.

- Recognizes the necessity of congressional engagement, as appropriate, and fiscal prioritization.

- Reinforces and expands engagement with industry and State, local, territorial, and tribal governments, for technical, operational, and logistical support through all lines of effort.

## 2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Today, we face a dynamic threat environment that challenges our Nation's safety, security, and resilience. Adversaries and strategic competitors present new and emerging threats, empowered by technology and often operating below the threshold of armed conflict, to place our critical infrastructure and essential functions and services at risk. Building a culture of preparedness and resilience across government will require increased awareness and cooperation between leadership, continuity staff, risk management practitioners, mission owners/operators, policy makers, and budget staff. The integration of continuity, preparedness, and risk management policies and procedures across day-to-day operations with renewed emphasis on the distributed execution of essential functions and services will enhance the Federal executive branch's ability to proactively adjust performance of essential functions and services during disruptive incidents.

Existing continuity policy supports Federal executive branch efforts to meet adversarial challenges and other no-notice disruptions. However, sustained leadership by the Executive Office of the President and executive branch is necessary to fully incorporate mission resilience requirements into daily operations. The Federal Mission Resilience Strategy calls for the Federal executive branch to recommit implementation efforts to address kinetic (e.g., conventional military force or active warfare) and non-kinetic threats. The knowledge and expertise of essential function and service mission owners and decision makers must be incorporated with continuity processes as we reframe actions to better implement resilience policy. We must take full advantage of existing authorities related to risk and preparedness frameworks. We cannot allow the successes of our past to preclude implementation of innovative approaches to address current threats.

The Federal Government's increasing reliance on critical infrastructure and critical infrastructure's vulnerability to kinetic and non-kinetic attacks or disruptions means that adversaries could disrupt, or take advantage of disruptions to Federal executive branch essential functions and services. Disruptions could prevent the ability to preserve our form of government, provide visible leadership, defend the Nation, maintain foreign relations, protect the homeland, manage emergencies, provide emergency management, maintain a stable economy, and provide critical government services. This Strategy relies on broader United States Government efforts to improve our ability to provide uninterrupted and secure communications and services under all conditions. Additional efforts to strengthen the Nation's communications and technology infrastructure will further increase the resilience of day-to-day operations and the continuous performance of essential functions and services.

Table 1 on Page 4 provides a summary of existing continuity policy, which is an evolving resilience environment that leverages continuity, response, and risk management efforts and provides a future vision of Federal Mission Resilience.

The environment depicted in the left column represents the current implementation of continuity policy, as identified in PPD – 40.

The evolving environment, highlighted in the middle column, describes the Federal executive branch's efforts to increase the alignment of budgetary, legislative, and other policy/authority changes necessary to fully implement this Strategy. In this environment, the Federal executive branch takes a holistic approach to manage disruptive incidents, through the leveraging of existing risk management approaches that provide a commensurate degree of preparedness necessary for a response to a no-notice threat environment.

The mature environment, shown in the third column, is achieved when the Federal executive branch has successfully distributed authorities and capabilities to seamlessly shift the direction and performance of essential functions and services to surviving, effective leadership and capabilities under all circumstances.

| Existing Continuity Policy | Evolving Continuity/Resilience | Federal Mission Resilience |
|---|---|---|
| A rapid and effective *response to and recovery from* a catastrophic emergency. | Proactive continuity of operations efforts that reduce risk to essential functions and continuity of government. | Continuity and risk management incorporated into all aspects of preparedness planning, operations, and day-to-day mission performance. |
| A planning model that uses the *existing geographic dispersion* of the executive branch. | Plans and agreements that leverage Federal executive branch geographic dispersion to reduce risk. | Routine and seamless transfer of Federal executive branch essential functions and services and decision support without the need to relocate personnel. |
| The ability to be *fully operational at alternate locations as soon as possible, but not more than 12 hours after continuity of operations activation.* | The ability to reduce downtime of essential functions and services to near zero, through the better use of existing locations and/or sustained use of devolution sites. | The ability to ensure uninterrupted decision making authority, continuously provide essential functions and services, and deliver uninterrupted decision support services to the President. |
| Budget resources are required to meet continuity requirements. | Establish fiscal policy for Federal Mission Resilience that includes continuity, preparedness, and risk management. | Established Federal executive branch fiscal policy that enables risk management decisions based on impacts to National Essential Functions. |
| Implementation *based on warning with a bias toward kinetic incidents.* | Account for non-kinetic impacts to critical infrastructure and communications. | Multiple geographically and technologically diverse communication nodes form a resilient mesh. |

**Table 1: Evolution to Federal Mission Resilience**

## 3. THE "ASSESS, DISTRIBUTE, AND SUSTAIN" PLANNING MODEL

The "Assess, Distribute, and Sustain" planning model supports a cultural shift from continuity as an additional mission to continuity as a key enabler to increase resilience and ensure prioritized essential functions and services are performed without interruption. This planning model enhances resilience by purposely embedding continuity, preparedness, and risk management processes and procedures into day-to-day operations to ensure Federal missions are resilient to disruptive incidents. The Strategy requires the Federal executive branch to logically distribute risk to the performance of essential functions and services and ensure Presidential decision support in all conditions. This distributed system may demand targeted investment, in consultation with the Office of Management and Budget, in the technology and communications infrastructure necessary to enable secure, robust, and reliable communications in all conditions.

## A. Assess

***The act of routinely and systematically reviewing, validating, and prioritizing: (1) existing continuity requirements; (2) essential functions and services; and (3) identifying the risk posed to them by current and emerging threats.***

"Assess" is an ongoing process. The Federal executive branch must routinely review and prioritize: (1) the essential functions and services required before, during, and after disruptive events (i.e., triage of essential functions); (2) the continuous national-level leadership, accountability, coordination, and risk management of essential functions and services; and 3) executive decision support services and operational capabilities that support Presidential decision making. The biennial review of Primary Mission Essential Functions must drive the routine top-down review and reprioritization of Federal executive branch essential functions and services required to defend the country, maintain foreign relations, protect the homeland, provide emergency response and recovery, maintain a stable economy, provide critical government services, and provide leadership to the Nation before, during, and after disruptive incidents in order to preserve our constitutional government.

"Assess" includes the routine review of policy to examine unmet requirements, barriers to satisfying requirements, and identifying and then implementing solutions. The Executive Office of the President and each Executive eepartment or agency must conduct enterprise risk management and identify the risk acceptance authorities on behalf of the organization.

## B. Distribute

***The logical disbursement of risk to the performance of essential functions and services to minimize single points of failure.***

"Distribution" is achieved through the diversification of elements involved in a function's performance. These elements include people, processes, and systems. Activities that reduce risk to a function's core components enable proactive mission continuity without need to reactively relocate personnel. The mixed use of physical and appropriately secure cyber capabilities to enhance the availability, integrity, security, and confidentiality of essential functions and services may include proactive physical relocation outside of a threat area and/or relying on the distribution of capabilities to enhance the resilience of critical infrastructure, vital supply chains, and secure and redundant equipment and systems. Distribution methodologies will and should differ across the Federal executive branch, based on the unique aspects of missions, operations, and the results of holistic organizational risk assessments.

### C. SUSTAIN

***The routine and regular performance of "Assess" and "Distribute" managed through a governance structure which reinforces accountability at all levels of government. Sustainment depends on the successful conduct of Assessment and Distribution.***

"Sustain" refers to the ability to continue the direction and performance of essential functions and services to the required minimum performance levels throughout the course of realized impacts from one or more threats. Sustainment throughout disruption can be implemented at proactively distributed operational locations, devolution locations, or through other mitigation efforts. Under day-to-day operations, sustainment could be carried out at multiple distributed locations, while other locations (e.g., relocation, devolution) and alternative processes are leveraged to support realized threat operations.

## 4. LINES OF EFFORT

This Strategy is centered on Federal executive branch implementation of three lines of effort:

- **Line of Effort One –** Ensure the performance of essential functions and services before, during, and after disruptive incidents (i.e., Federal executive branch organization-level essential functions and services);

- **Line of Effort Two –** Ensure continuous national-level leadership, accountability, coordination, and risk management of essential functions and services (i.e., Federal executive branch leadership assigned responsibility to determine risk to the essential function or service); and

- **Line of Effort Three –** Ensure executive decision support services and operational capabilities support the President under all circumstances, to include a no-notice disruption or direct threat environment (i.e., Federal executive branch communication with the Executive Office of the President).

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***"In the event of a disaster, Federal, State, and local agencies must perform essential functions and have plans in place to ensure the continuation of our constitutional form of government." – National Security Strategy, December 2017***

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### A. LINE OF EFFORT ONE – ENSURE THE PERFORMANCE OF ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS AND SERVICES BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER DISRUPTIVE INCIDENTS

The Federal executive branch shall maintain the capability to perform essential functions and services, including the ability to transfer, devolve, defer, distribute, or shift operations, assets, and authorities under all conditions. This requires tailored distribution methodologies, including

diversity, redundancy, and hardening of capabilities based on the assessment of risk, to mitigate the effects of any disruptive incident to the performance of essential functions and services.

**Objective:** Identify, revalidate, and prioritize those functions and services that, if significantly degraded or disrupted, would weaken the Nation.

***Priority Action:***

**Advance a holistic risk management approach to identify essential functions and services** that support defense of the country, maintaining foreign relations, protecting the homeland, providing emergency response/recovery, maintaining a stable economy, and providing critical government services, to provide visible leadership and preserve our constitutional government before, during, and after disruptive incidents.

Numerous Federal programs exist to address various aspects of risk to Federal executive branch missions. Identifying and de-conflicting existing risk management programs, resources, assets, taxonomies, and requirements to identify gaps and integrate risk management processes into existing business practices, including budgeting and resource allocation processes, are necessary initial actions. Essential functions and services should be assessed to determine if they are sufficiently distributed, hardened, or otherwise resilient to no-notice disruptive incidents, with an agreed-on understanding of risk management programs along with how existing continuity requirements fit within this structure. Federal executive branch organizations should develop and implement resource investment strategies to manage enterprise-wide risk to essential functions and services based on this analysis.

**Objective:** Ensure that enabling capabilities and critical dependencies for essential functions and services are diverse, redundant, dispersed, and/or hardened to mitigate risk and meet objectives.

***Priority Action:***

**Ensure capability diversity and redundancy** to continue essential functions and services by shifting the capability among existing or new organizational structures (i.e., without the need to relocate personnel post-incident). Possible options to achieve this may include developing and implementing resilient capabilities (e.g., communications and information systems, critical infrastructure, supply chains) critical to the performance of essential functions and services; developing disciplined investment plans to modernize key capabilities through geographic diversity or hardening; and revising policy, plans, legislation, and budgetary priorities to reduce risk to essential functions and services.

**Objective:** Ensure continuous Federal executive branch leadership, at the appropriate level, to assume risk-based decision making, oversight, and accountability of the performance of essential functions and services.

***Priority Action:***

**Ensure continuous leadership of the Executive Office of the President and Executive Branch essential functions and services** in a distributed model, with senior officials retaining responsibility for assuming risk in executing their essential functions and services. Ensuring continuous leadership of an organization's essential functions and services may require extensive pre-planning to enable the ability to shift authority to lead or execute essential functions and services without notice. To prepare for the loss of one or more nodes, leadership must be postured to assume the transfer of mission ownership without gaps in performance. As an example, executive branch leadership may choose to distribute resources, authorities, and capabilities to sustain essential functions and services, leadership, and decision making, to include the ability to transfer, devolve, defer, distribute, or shift operations, personnel, equipment, systems, supporting processes, services, and authorities under all conditions. These actions must include regular training and evaluation to validate the procedures and capability to continuously direct the performance of essential functions and services under all conditions. Leveraging and maximizing existing distributed resources and capabilities such as alternate sites and devolution relationships may reduce the cost and time to shift to a distributed model.

## B. Line Of Effort Two – Ensure Continuous National-Level Leadership, Accountability, Coordination, and Risk Management of Essential Functions and Services

This approach acknowledges the additional responsibility of particular Federal executive branch Principals, or their designees, for implementing risk management practices and coordinating/performing essential functions or services at the national level. National-level leadership is needed to drive a holistic risk management based process to ensure the resilience of essential functions and services.

**Objective:** Ensure the deliberate assignment of Executive Office of the President and executive branch leadership accountability for the performance, sustainment, and associated risk management of the designated essential functions and services performed by the Executive Office of the President and the executive branch, as well as other public and private sector partners.

***Priority Action:***

**Distribute authority and responsibility for Executive Branch missions beyond the National Capital Region** and apportion those authorities and responsibilities to facilitate geographic diversity. An example of steps to achieve this priority include:

- determining limitations and gaps of existing statutes, executive orders, policy, and directives;

- recommending legislative changes or revisions to executive orders and policies to ensure appropriate authorities are in place for continuous leadership of essential functions and services;

- revising approaches to Federal training and exercises that address continuation of functions and services agnostic of the operational environment and that test the successful transition of roles and responsibilities;

- ensuring resilience capabilities are incorporated into the day-to-day operations of essential functions and services; and

- identifying and addressing potential resource/human capital/hiring obstacles or how existing personnel and locations may be leveraged.

**Objective:** Ensure leadership located outside the headquarters are trained and have the legal authority for assuming and performing leadership authorities, roles, and responsibilities.

***Priority Action:***

**Minimize the impact of regional or national disruptive incidents** by: enhancing command, control, and communications; distributing critical assets and capabilities; and establishing resilient leadership within the distributed assets with the authority to ensure mission success. Additionally, developing robust, redundant, and resilient communications and other infrastructure capabilities at designated sites or with mobile options to sustain leadership decision making and oversight of essential functions and services is a core component to achieve the distributed model. Leveraging technological advancements will enhance and ensure national leadership has reliable and secure communications capabilities to provide command and control, and will enable governance in a distributed environment. Finally, routinely training and exercising the transfer of capability or functions and the transition of leadership roles and responsibilities without relocating personnel is essential to the success of this model.

**Objective:** Engage Federal executive branch Principals to drive a holistic risk management approach to ensure the continuous performance of essential functions and services.

***Priority Action:***

**Department and Agency Principals must drive the assessment and mitigation of risk**, identify priority missions that must continue, and understand the risks they assume with the decisions they make. A top-down effort to better integrate existing risk management frameworks and continuity programs into a cohesive, coordinated approach to manage risks is fundamental to successfully implementing Federal Mission Resilience. Effectively addressing the risk to the most critical missions ahead of the threats we face will require a shift in policy to reflect a holistic risk management approach, and a revised set of essential functions and services that must be maintained without interruption.

## C. Line Of Effort Three – Ensure Executive Decision Support Services and Operational Capabilities Support the President, to Include a No-Notice Disruption or Direct Threat Environment

This Strategy establishes a framework for enhancing the organizational structures, officials, and processes supporting Presidential decision making, including the coordination of national-level policy development and direction across the Federal executive branch to ensure the President, or his or her successor, is able to effectively manage incidents.

**Objective:** Identify and evaluate risk to the capabilities necessary to enable Presidential decision making throughout an incident.

***Priority Action:***

**Identify and evaluate risk to Presidential decision making in an incident** through activities such as: validation of essential functions and services; identification of Presidential information needs before, during, and after a disruptive incident; and assessment of risks to the capabilities required for departments and agencies to continuously support the National Essential Functions.

**Objective:** Identify and designate national-level accountability and coordination for support to Presidential decision making.

***Priority Action:***

**Establish a process for ensuring support to Presidential decision making during incidents** by de-conflicting existing response, security, law enforcement, critical infrastructure, diplomatic, defense, and financial services crisis management doctrine to identify gaps in their ability to support Presidential decision making.

**Objective:** Ensure communication infrastructure capabilities to provide decision support services to the President in a continuously distributed operating environment throughout an incident.

***Priority Actions:***

**Distribute Presidential decision support capabilities** by identifying and assessing risks to the ability to distribute and sustain decision support leadership, capabilities, and component systems and processes; and if appropriate, apportioning non-Presidential authority and responsibility among multiple stakeholders through geographic diversity.

**Ensure Presidential decision support in a distributed environment** by resourcing Presidential incident management support capabilities to avoid single points of failure and minimize the effect of a regional or national catastrophic emergency on the delivery of executive decision support services and operational capabilities. It is necessary to establish and implement standardized Federal crisis management decision support processes and minimum capability requirements for all departments and agencies in support of Presidential crisis management.

## 5. SUMMARY

Refocusing national continuity policy to a proactive "Assess, Distribute, and Sustain" planning model will better ensure the resilience of the Federal executive branch. Accomplishing the priority actions of this Strategy requires Federal executive branch leadership to drive the rapid assessment of the gaps between existing policy and implementation as well as the re-prioritization, if necessary, of essential functions and services. Additionally, the Federal executive branch must leverage its existing distribution of facilities, locations, and personnel, and/or work across to reduce risk by increasing possible nodes available to perform and manage prioritized essential functions and services. Finally, sustained distribution will require fiscal policy and prioritization that better enables routine distributed, scalable, flexible, and adaptable operations across geographic areas. In accomplishing these goals together, we can ensure the resilience of our constitutional form of government and our American way of life.

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***"We must build a culture of preparedness and resilience across our governmental functions, critical infrastructure, and economic and political systems."***
***– National Security Strategy, December 2017***

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