

**AGENCY NAME:** Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services

## **DELIVERABLES ACHIEVED SINCE 2021**

### **Office of External Affairs**

The Division committed to increasing transparency and public engagement. Primary among the Division's efforts was the creation of a new Deputy Commissioner position to oversee the new Office of External Affairs. The Deputy Commissioner of External Affairs has worked with each individual office within the Division, aligning their work with corresponding internal and external stakeholders. This has increased direct access to information most frequently requested by the public, the media, and our partners and stakeholders.

### **DHSES Website Redesign**

DHSES continues working with the Office of Information Technology Services to ensure the website remains updated, relevant and user-friendly. DHSES executive staff regularly review the content on the website and propose updates that increase the amount of information accessible to the public.

### **Freedom of Information Law Requests**

DHSES Counsel's Office works with internal and external partners to streamline the FOIL process. Additionally, DHSES executive staff participate in ongoing training on FOIL requirements, including the importance of providing timely and complete responses. This training resulted in a better understating of the FOIL process and a decrease in the number of pending FOIL requests.

The Office of External Affairs has partnered with Counsel's Office to review and expedite FOIL requests. The review process has resulted in the Division better meeting stakeholder needs and has reduced staff workload.

### **Expand Use of Social Media**

The Division committed resources to ensure we were maximizing use of all social media platforms. The major commitment was creating, and filling, a Digital Media Marketing Manager specifically charged with communicating pertinent information to the public on agency initiatives and accomplishments through its social media channels. Social media has been an important tool used by the Division to not only quickly disseminate vital safety information during an emergency, but also highlight agency initiatives, funding opportunities, response activities in the field and share information from partner agencies and local governments to followers across the state. The Digital Media Marketing Manager reports to the Deputy Commissioner of External Affairs.

### **Project Sunlight**

DHSES staff members continue monitoring the use of Project Sunlight. Staff receive periodic reminders on the use and requirements for reporting in the Project Sunlight database including the available FAQ, and User Guide documents.

## **Open Data NY**

DHSES currently provides data to be included in Open Data NY.

## **INITIATIVES TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN 2024**

### *Increased Media Outreach*

Perhaps the most important role the Office of External Affairs plays is to provide New Yorkers with the critical safety and preparedness information they need before, during and following any type of emergency. Throughout the past several years, the Division has begun to engage much more regularly with local media throughout the duration of an event, as opposed to past practices where the majority of information was disseminated via press release.

By utilizing television interview and radio call-in opportunities, Commissioner Bray and members of the DHSES team have become trusted voices in impacted communities and the Division will continue utilizing this model into the future in order to not only provide New Yorkers with the information they need, but help keep them safe as well.

### *Emergency Event Webpage*

The Division has created a new webpage Disaster Emergency Event Page to provide enhanced information and resources for New Yorkers to help them prepare for, survive, and recover from a major disaster. The page is activated when a major disaster is predicted or impacting the state. The information and resources presented on the web page are tailored to affected areas and the type of emergency, for example, utility provider information is made available during a power outage vs. shelter locations during a widespread flooding event. Resources include links to real-time weather information, real-time transportation information, statewide utility contacts, food and water distribution information, and medical assistance, when applicable.