

NATIONAL QUALIFICATION SYSTEM (NQS) TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Supplemental Fact Sheet for California Jurisdictions

This fact sheet does not replace any Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Qualification System (NQS) guidance. It supplements FEMA guidance with information requested by California jurisdictions to support compliance.

Introduction (from FEMA's FAQ¹)

The [National Qualification System \(NQS\)](#) strengthens the Resource Management component of the [National Incident Management System \(NIMS\)](#).

NQS Implementation Objectives provide benchmarks and example activities to help organizations and jurisdictions implement NQS and engage with partners. These objectives align organizational qualification procedures, certification programs, and credentialing standards with the [NIMS Guideline for the National Qualification System](#).

Beginning in FY 2022, FEMA is leveraging the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) Program to require NQS implementation as a condition for EMPG funding.

Options for Compliance (from Cal OES [GRANT MANAGEMENT MEMORANDUM \(GMM\) 2023-18](#))

OAs can comply with NQS requirements by choosing one of the following:

- Adopt the FEMA Emergency Management Institute (EMI) 2300 Series Training and FEMA Position Task Book (PTB);
- Adopt the Cal OES Credentialing Program; or
- Implement a custom program using the FEMA Implementation Plan Template.

Applicability (Who Does This Apply To?)

- Deployable EMPG-funded staff must comply with NQS requirements.
- Non-deployable EMPG-funded staff **are not subject** to this requirement, but it may be expedient for them to have baseline emergency management training, at minimum.
- Deployable, non-EMPG-funded positions **are not subject** to this requirement, but it may be expedient for personnel supporting EOC, JIC, JFO, DRC, and LAC to have baseline emergency management training, at minimum, or credential.

¹ NQS Implementation Objectives Frequently Asked Questions,
https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_nqs-implementation-objectives_faq.pdf.

Compliance (How Does My Jurisdiction Demonstrate Compliance?)

- Each OA decides which option for compliance (above) it will pursue.
- Each OA determines its own training plan and who is subject to that plan.
- Forward progress in training/credentialing is required, but there is no strict deadline.
- Considerations for training timelines include disaster response, turnover, and budgeting constraints. E.g., if staff can only attend one training in a given year due to extenuating circumstances, that is considered forward progress.
- The ultimate goal is to build a qualified, interoperable emergency management workforce at local, state, and national levels.

Tracking

- OAs must use their own database, spreadsheet, or other system for tracking training/exercise/activation progress prior to submitting a credential application to Cal OES.
 - Suggestion: Utilize the [Cal OES Credentialing Application](#) as a tracking checklist.
- CSTI maintains a database for Cal OES-conferred credentials. Lists by county are available upon request.
- The [OneResponder](#) tool is available for OAs not using the Cal OES credentialing program to manage staff qualifications.
- OAs choosing to create a custom training program must establish a review and approval process.

Reporting

- EMPG Subrecipients (OAs) shall report compliance through EMPG quarterly reporting.
- EMPG Recipients (States) shall report compliance through the annual Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR).

Cal OES Support for Jurisdictions

- Cal OES/CSTI offers credential courses, both free and for a cost, to all CA jurisdictions.²
- Jurisdictions choosing to utilize the FEMA EMI 2300 Series or create a custom training plan may have to absorb the course costs.

² CSTI, with the SEMS Training, Exercise, and Credentialing Specialist Committee, will be working to expand and prioritize its credential course offerings in 2025.

- CSTI can provide technical assistance and example training plans that meet NQS requirements.
 - Suggestion: The Cal OES Credentialing Program can be tailored to an OA's needs.
- Contact CSTI State Training Operations, Training@caloes.ca.gov, for assistance with:
 - Training plan guidance, including review and approval processes.
 - Access to Cal OES credentialing data.
 - Grant compliance questions.

CSTI Training & Credentialing Opportunities

- CSTI courses are listed on www.csti.org once available for registration.
- Some courses may have priority enrollment but will open to all jurisdictions when space allows.
- The [State Training Bulletin](#), updated monthly, lists courses statewide.
- Notifications for specific courses can be requested through CSTI.
- Details on the Cal OES EOC Credentialing Program can be found on the [CSTI website](#) and in the [EOC Credentialing Resource Guide](#).

NQS Implementation Phase (CY25)

- Beginning October 1, 2024, we are in the final implementation phase (Phase 3).
 - All jurisdictions shall issue Position Task Books (PTBs) to designated incident workforce personnel.
 - Personnel must show progress in meeting task endorsements and minimum training requirements.

For Additional Questions Contact:

- EMPG Unit: EMPG@caloes.ca.gov
- State Training Operations: Training@caloes.ca.gov