SENTINEL RESILIENCE PARTNERS

Senior Resilience Advisor

Solutions Brief

Expert Resilience Capacity for Federal, State, and Local Government Agencies

Prepared for:
Emergency Management Directors | Continuity Officers | County Executives | Agency Administrators

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1. Executive Summary

In March 2025, a federal executive order formally transferred primary disaster preparedness responsibility from the federal government to state and local agencies.

The obligation arrived without the workforce to fulfill it.[1]

Simultaneously, FEMA lost 2,446 employees in the first six months of 2025 – nearly 10% of its total workforce. The experienced practitioners who once supported state and local planning have largely exited the public sector.

Most state and local governments now carry expanded preparedness mandates with depleted capacity and no clear path to fill the gap.[2]

Sentinel Resilience Partners deploys a contracted Senior Resilience Advisor – a practitioner with direct operational experience inside the federal preparedness system – on a structured advisory engagement. Engagements begin with a 30-day ALIGN Audit that produces a board-ready gap assessment and action roadmap, regardless of whether the agency proceeds to a full engagement.

The engagement is structured as a professional services statement of work, available through SAM.gov-registered direct contracting and state procurement vehicles, and eligible for cost-sharing under EMPG and other preparedness grant programs.

The Sentinel Approach	
Differentiator	Founder led CPG 101 development as FEMA project lead – the same doctrine your agency must follow
Engagement Model	ALIGN Audit (Days 1–30), followed by structured advisory engagement through Day 120, with optional steady-state oversight
Entry Point	$15,000 standalone ALIGN Audit – administrator-approvable, credited toward first-year advisory fee if engagement continues
Grant Eligibility	EMPG-allowable advisory costs; BRIC planning cost eligible; engagement structure designed for grant compliance[3]
Procurement	SAM.gov registered: UEI YXQ1KTVBFWR4. Available via state procurement vehicles, simplified acquisition, and sole-source justification. The $15,000 ALIGN Audit qualifies for direct contract execution under most agency administrator approval thresholds.[4]

[1] Executive Order 14239, "Achieving Efficiency Through State and Local Preparedness," March 19, 2025. The order formally devolved primary disaster preparedness responsibility to state and local governments.

[2] FEMA workforce data, January–June 2025. Reported figure: 2,446 employees departed. FEMA began the 2025 hurricane season with approximately 12% of its incident management workforce available.

[3] EMPG FY2025 total allocation: $319.5 million. Allowable costs include planning, training, exercises, and contracted advisory services directly supporting emergency management functions (44 CFR Part 302).

[4] Fully burdened cost estimate for GS-14 Step 5 equivalent (state/local salary parity): $135,000–$175,000 base salary + 36–40% benefits = $184,000–$245,000. Excludes one-time recruitment costs ($18,000–$30,000) and 4–6 month average time-to-fill for credentialed emergency management positions.

2. The Problem: Mandate Without Capacity

Federal Devolution Has Transferred Obligation Without Transferring Resources

For decades, state and local governments operated within a layered federal support system for disaster preparedness. FEMA provided planning doctrine, technical assistance, and surge capacity. Experienced federal practitioners moved between federal, state, and local roles, transferring institutional knowledge throughout the system.

That system has fundamentally changed.

The March 2025 executive order directing “Achieving Efficiency Through State and Local Preparedness” made state and local governments the primary owners of disaster preparedness, continuity planning, and resilience programs. The order eliminated the presumption of federal backstop capacity – and came with no accompanying staffing transfer, no new funding authority, and no transition support.

The Workforce Collapsed at the Same Moment

FEMA lost 2,446 employees in the first half of 2025. Senior incident commanders, CPG 101 technical advisors, exercise facilitators, and continuity specialists – the practitioners most qualified to help state and local governments build capacity – have left the public sector. Many have moved into private consulting or exited the field entirely.

State emergency management agencies now face competing pressures with thinner teams than at any point in the modern preparedness era:

- CPG 101 plan updates required under shifting federal guidance
- THIRA/SPER cycles demanding credentialed facilitation and documentation
- Continuity of Operations (COOP) plans subject to FCD-1 compliance review
- EMPG grant reporting requirements with audit exposure for non-compliant planning documentation
- BRIC project applications requiring sophisticated all-hazards justification
- Increasing incident frequency creating competing demands between operations and planning

Traditional Hiring Cannot Solve This Problem

The instinct is to hire. But the pipeline for credentialed emergency management professionals – those with hands-on FEMA operational experience, CPG 101 fluency, and exercise design capability – does not match the scale of current demand.

For an agency attempting to hire a Senior Emergency Management Specialist or equivalent resilience function:

Hiring Constraint	Practical Reality
Time to fill	4–6 months minimum for credentialed candidates in competitive markets
Talent availability	Most experienced practitioners are now in private sector at higher compensation
Onboarding lag	6–8 additional weeks before a new hire operates independently
Compliance gap	THIRA/SPER cycles, COOP audits, and EMPG reviews do not pause for recruitment timelines

Fully burdened cost	$184,000–$245,000 per year including benefits, plus $18,000–$30,000 in one-time recruitment costs[5]

Agencies facing active compliance deadlines cannot wait six months for a hire. And in a compressed talent market, many cannot find the right candidate at all.

[5]Sentinel Resilience Partners holds active SAM.gov registration: UEI YXQ1KTVBFWR4, CAGE 20LX8. Available via GSA Schedule 84, SIN 426-4F (Emergency Preparedness and First Responder Training and Services).

3. The ALIGN Engagement Model

Sentinel's ALIGN engagement model is built around the federal preparedness framework your agency already operates under. It is not a generic consulting methodology – it is structured around CPG 101, FCD-1, THIRA/SPER, and EMPG compliance requirements, delivered by a practitioner who helped write the doctrine.

Phase 1: ALIGN Audit (Days 1–30)

The engagement opens with a 30-day structured audit of the agency's current resilience posture. Deliverables are produced at Day 30 regardless of whether the agency proceeds to a full engagement.

ALIGN Audit Activity	Description
Decision Architecture Review	Map existing authority lines, notification chains, and emergency action protocols against NIMS/ICS requirements and agency-specific jurisdictional obligations
CPG 101 Gap Assessment	Evaluate current planning documentation against CPG 101 standards, identify updates required under current federal guidance, and flag EMPG compliance exposure
Threat Landscape Mapping	Review current THIRA/SPER documentation, assess hazard profile against current risk environment, identify capability gaps requiring remediation
COOP Compliance Check	Audit continuity plan against FCD-1 and HSPD-51/NSPD-51 requirements; assess alternate facility designations, succession lines, and essential functions documentation
Grant Portfolio Review	Evaluate current EMPG posture and assess immediate eligibility, capability gaps, and data-justification requirements for active BRIC and hazard mitigation grant application cycles.

Day 30 Deliverable: An executive-level briefing for the county administrator, agency head, or governing board – presenting gap findings, EMPG compliance posture, insurance and grant implications, and a 90-day action roadmap. This document is produced whether or not the agency continues the engagement.

Phase 2: ALIGN Build (Days 31–90)

If the agency elects to continue, Phase 2 addresses the gaps identified in the audit. Work is executed against the 90-day action roadmap, with priority sequencing based on active compliance deadlines and grant cycle timing.

- CPG 101 plan updates drafted and reviewed with agency staff
- THIRA/SPER facilitation: hazard scoring, capability estimation, resource gap documentation
- COOP documentation remediation: succession revisions, alternate facility designations, essential functions annex updates
- Stakeholder alignment sessions with elected officials, department heads, and mutual aid partners
- EMPG grant documentation aligned to updated planning base

Phase 3: ALIGN Test (Days 91–120)

Phase 3 validates the work product through structured exercise activity. Sentinel designs and facilitates exercises scaled to the agency's available capacity, from tabletops to full functional exercises where appropriate.

- Exercise design built to Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) standards
- After-action report (AAR) and improvement plan (IP) produced in EMPG-compatible format
- Findings integrated into planning documentation to close the audit-to-action cycle

Steady-State Oversight: Beyond Day 120

Agencies with ongoing compliance calendars – annual EMPG reporting, biennial THIRA/SPER cycles, COOP review requirements – may retain the Senior Resilience Advisor on a reduced quarterly advisory schedule. The Sentinel advisor manages the compliance calendar, monitors changes to federal planning doctrine, and maintains agency readiness between major cycles.

This is not a retainer for general availability. It is a defined quarterly engagement with specific deliverables tied to your agency's active compliance obligations.

4. Methodology: ALIGN Logic and the CPG 101 Foundation

Built on the Doctrine Your Agency Uses

Every federal preparedness requirement your agency faces – CPG 101, THIRA/SPER, FCD-1, HSEEP – was produced within a planning framework that Sentinel's founder helped develop from inside FEMA. Our methodology is not reverse-engineered from federal guidance; it is the product of practitioners who built that guidance.

The ALIGN framework operationalizes that institutional knowledge into a structured engagement model: Assess current posture, identify gaps, build remediation plans, test and validate, and maintain compliance through defined oversight intervals.

Proprietary ALIGN Logic

Sentinel executes its proprietary ALIGN logic through secure, enterprise-grade commercial AI environments. These environments are ring-fenced: data shared within an engagement is not stored, is not used for model training, and does not leave the engagement context. Human review governs every analysis and recommendation before it is presented to the agency. No sensitive planning data is processed outside controlled environments.

The ALIGN system aggregates planning documentation, regulatory requirements, threat data, and grant compliance frameworks to produce gap analysis outputs, compliance scoring, and prioritized action sequencing that would take a solo practitioner significantly longer to develop manually. The advisor remains accountable for every judgment and recommendation – the system extends capacity without replacing expertise.

What This Means for Your Agency

- A 30-day audit that would typically require 60–90 days of internal staff time
- Deliverables formatted for federal reporting requirements, not generic consulting templates
- Analysis grounded in current CPG 101 and FCD-1 standards, not previous cycle guidance
- Findings traceable to specific EMPG allowable cost categories and grant compliance criteria

5. Cost and Procurement Analysis

The Cost of the Status Quo

Agencies often evaluate an external advisory engagement against the cost of not acting. The more precise comparison is against the total cost of filling the function through traditional hiring – including what is lost during the 4–6 month gap before a hire reaches full capability.

Cost Component	Traditional Hire	Sentinel Senior Resilience Advisor
Base Compensation	$135,000–$175,000	Included in advisory fee
Benefits & Overhead	36–40% ($49,000–$70,000)	None
Recruitment Costs	$18,000–$30,000 one-time	None
Time to Full Capability	4–6 months hiring + 6–8 weeks onboarding	Day 1
Total First-Year Cost	$202,000–$275,000[6]	$125,000–$185,000
Grant Eligibility	Partially (salary only, with matching requirements)	EMPG-allowable; BRIC planning cost eligible

Annual Advisory Fee Structure

The full 120-day advisory engagement – ALIGN Audit through ALIGN Test – is structured as a single annual advisory fee with no separate implementation charge. The ALIGN Audit phase is included in the engagement fee; there is no additional onboarding cost.

Engagement Option	Scope	Investment
ALIGN Audit Only	Days 1–30: gap assessment, compliance review, executive briefing	$15,000
Full Advisory Engagement	Days 1–120: ALIGN Audit + Build + Test, including all deliverables	$125,000–$185,000 annually (ALIGN Audit fee credited at continuation)
Steady-State Oversight	Post-Day 120: quarterly advisory cadence, compliance calendar management	Priced per scope; available following full engagement completion

The ALIGN Audit Entry Point

The $15,000 ALIGN Audit is designed for agency-level approval without a lengthy procurement process. At this investment level, most county administrators and agency heads have independent approval authority.

The Audit produces a deliverable – a board-ready gap assessment and compliance briefing – at Day 30, regardless of whether the agency continues. If the agency elects to proceed to a full advisory engagement, the $15,000 audit fee is credited against the first-year advisory fee.

6

Procurement Vehicles

Sentinel holds active SAM.gov registration (UEI: YXQ1KTVBFWR4, CAGE: 20LX8). The $15,000 ALIGN Audit is deliberately priced to qualify for simplified acquisition procedures and direct contract execution under standard county administrator or agency head approval authority, bypassing extended RFP timelines. Engagement pathways include:

- Direct contract under simplified acquisition procedures (FAR Part 13): the $15,000 ALIGN Audit is priced to qualify for administrator-level approval authority, bypassing extended RFP timelines
- State procurement vehicles and cooperative purchasing agreements applicable to professional advisory services
- Sole-source justification available for engagements meeting specialized expertise thresholds

Grant Fundability

Contracted advisory services directly supporting emergency management planning functions are allowable costs under EMPG (44 CFR Part 302). Engagements should be structured with EMPG cost-sharing requirements in mind; Sentinel can assist with allowable cost documentation as part of the engagement.

BRIC funding covers pre-disaster mitigation planning costs, including contractor planning support. FEMA reinstated the combined FY2024–FY2025 BRIC program with $1 billion in available funding. Agencies without current THIRA/SPER documentation or a compliant planning base cannot competitively apply during active open periods. The ALIGN Audit is structured to produce exactly the documentation BRIC applications require.

6. What This Looks Like in Practice

A Mid-Size County Emergency Management Office

A county with a population of approximately 275,000 operates an emergency management office of four staff: a director and three program coordinators. The office manages EMPG grant administration, coordinates mutual aid agreements, and maintains the county's emergency operations plan.

Two events converge: the county's CPG 101 plan is four years old – last updated before the current threat environment shifted significantly – and the county has received notice of an upcoming FEMA preparedness review. The director has no COOP coordinator on staff and no capacity to conduct a gap assessment while managing day-to-day operations.

The county administrator approves a $15,000 ALIGN Audit under existing professional services authority. Recognizing the short runway to the state subapplicant deadline, Sentinel executes a rapid data sprint within the first 14 days of the Audit to produce the updated THIRA/SPER metrics required for BRIC eligibility. The county successfully submits its application before the state's internal deadline, while the remainder of the comprehensive audit continues.

ALIGN Audit Finding	Impact
CPG 101 plan 4 years out of date	Creates EMPG compliance exposure; flagged in FEMA review criteria
THIRA/SPER not updated since 2022 cycle	Hazard profile does not reflect current risk environment; grant justification weakened
No alternate facility designated in COOP plan	FCD-1 deficiency; continuity plan non-compliant
Two successor positions without documented designation	Authority gap under HSPD-51 succession requirements
BRIC grant application eligible but lacking updated THIRA/SPER data required for an impending state subapplicant deadline	Updated THIRA/SPER data is the gating requirement; state subapplicant deadlines typically arrive before the federal close date, compressing the available runway

At Day 30, the Senior Resilience Advisor delivers a 12-page executive briefing to the county administrator and board. The briefing presents the five findings above with financial implications, EMPG audit exposure quantified, and a 90-day remediation roadmap.

The county elects to continue to the full advisory engagement at $145,000. By Day 120, the CPG 101 plan is updated and approved, the COOP plan is brought into FCD-1 compliance, and the agency enters the FEMA preparedness review with documented gap closures in hand.

The $145,000 advisory engagement – against a $15,000 audit credit – leaves a $130,000 balance. Utilizing the standard 50/50 EMPG cost-share allocation for allowable planning activities, the net agency cost for Phase 2 is $65,000. Total out-of-pocket including the initial Audit: $80,000. EMPG audit exposure avoided: estimated $95,000 in potential grant claw-backs.

7. Frequently Asked Questions

Question	Answer
What procurement vehicle can we use?	Sentinel holds active SAM.gov registration (UEI: YXQ1KTVBFWR4, CAGE: 20LX8). The $15,000 ALIGN Audit is priced to qualify for simplified acquisition procedures under FAR Part 13, enabling direct contract execution under standard county administrator or agency head approval authority without an extended RFP process. Full engagement contracts are available through state procurement vehicles and sole-source justification where specialized expertise requirements apply.
Is this EMPG-allowable?	Contracted advisory services supporting emergency management planning are allowable costs under EMPG (44 CFR Part 302). The engagement is structured to align with allowable cost categories. Sentinel will assist with documentation to support cost-sharing compliance as part of the engagement.
How does this differ from a general emergency management consultant?	Sentinel's founder led CPG 101 development as a FEMA project lead. The methodology is not built around federal guidance – it is the product of the practitioners who created it. Most emergency management consultants work from the doctrine outward. Sentinel works from the inside out.
What if we only need the audit?	The $15,000 ALIGN Audit is available as a standalone engagement. Deliverables are produced at Day 30 regardless of whether the agency continues. There is no obligation to proceed to a full advisory engagement.
We have an upcoming FEMA review. Can you mobilize quickly?	The ALIGN Audit is designed to mobilize within two weeks of contract execution. The 30-day audit timeline is fixed – the methodology does not compress – but it is structured to surface the findings most relevant to a preparedness review within the first two weeks of activity.
What if leadership changes mid-engagement?	Engagements are scoped to deliverables, not individuals. Each phase produces documented outputs that transfer cleanly to a new administrator or agency head. Sentinel structures briefings specifically to ensure incoming leadership can orient to the work in progress without lost context.
Does Sentinel handle sensitive planning data securely?	Sentinel strictly governs it. AI environments used within the engagement are ring-fenced: no data retention, no model training, human-in-the-loop on every output. Sentinel operates under the same data sensitivity expectations applied to any government advisory engagement.
Can this be structured as a multi-year contract?	Multi-year structures are available for agencies seeking a longer-term advisory relationship, particularly for steady-state oversight following the initial 120-day engagement. Pricing is defined per engagement year with defined scope and deliverables.

About Sentinel Resilience Partners

Sentinel Resilience Partners is a resilience advisory firm founded by a former FEMA senior practitioner who led CPG 101 development – the planning doctrine that governs emergency preparedness across all levels of government. Sentinel applies that operational depth through structured advisory engagements for government agencies facing expanded preparedness mandates, compliance deadlines, and constrained internal capacity.

Sentinel executes its proprietary ALIGN logic through secure, enterprise-grade commercial AI environments. Data shared within an engagement is ring-fenced: zero retention, not used for model training, human-in-the-loop at every decision point.

SAM.gov registered (UEI: YXQ1KTVBFWR4 | CAGE: 20LX8). Available via state procurement vehicles, simplified acquisition, and direct contract.

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