

IESMA Affinity Partnership Program

Program Structure and Policy (Draft for Board Approval)

1. Purpose

The **IESMA Affinity Partnership Program** is established to provide IESMA members with access to vetted resources, services, and solutions that support the full emergency management lifecycle, with an emphasis on **Preparedness, Mitigation, and Recovery in support of response operations**.

The program is intended to:

- Enhance member capabilities through access to trusted partners
- Support statewide resilience through public-private collaboration
- Provide optional value-added benefits to IESMA members
- Maintain the integrity, neutrality, and mission of IESMA

2. Authority

This program is established under the authority of the IESMA Board of Directors through the Policies & Procedures.

- This policy **does not modify the Constitution & By-Laws**
- All partnerships are subject to **Board oversight and approval**
- The Board retains the authority to approve, deny, or revoke partnerships

3. Definitions

Affinity Partner

A private, nonprofit, or public entity approved by IESMA to participate in the program and provide value to members.

Program

The IESMA Affinity Partnership Program.

Member Benefit

A product, service, discount, or resource offered by an Affinity Partner to IESMA members.

4. Guiding Principles

All program activities shall adhere to the following principles:

A. Mission Alignment

Partners and offerings must support:

- Preparedness
- Mitigation
- Response
- Recovery

B. Neutrality

IESMA shall remain a **neutral, non-endorsing organization**.

C. Transparency

Selection criteria and participation requirements will be clearly defined and consistently applied.

D. Equity and Access

The program will avoid unfair exclusivity unless justified by clear operational benefit.

E. Integrity

All relationships must uphold public trust and ethical standards.

5. Non-Endorsement Statement

Participation in the IESMA Affinity Partnership Program **does not constitute endorsement** by IESMA.

IESMA:

- Does not recommend or guarantee partner products or services
- Does not assume liability for partner performance
- Encourages members to conduct independent evaluation

All program materials must include appropriate non-endorsement language.

6. Eligibility Criteria

To be considered as an Affinity Partner, an organization must:

- Demonstrate relevance to emergency management functions
- Provide a clear benefit to IESMA members
- Operate in a manner consistent with public safety values

- Maintain appropriate business credentials, licensing, and insurance (as applicable)
- Agree to program terms and conditions

Preference may be given to organizations that:

- Support local government operations
- Enhance preparedness and mitigation capabilities
- Provide scalable or statewide solutions

7. Partnership Categories (Optional – scalable)

IESMA may establish partnership categories such as:

- **Affinity Partner** (standard participation)
- **Strategic Affinity Partner** (expanded engagement, subject to Board approval)

Categories, if used, must:

- Be clearly defined
- Maintain fairness and transparency
- Avoid implied endorsement

8. Benefits and Limitations

A. Potential Partner Benefits

May include:

- Recognition on IESMA website
- Participation in conferences or events
- Opportunity to provide member discounts or services
- Limited communication opportunities to members

B. Limitations

Partners shall not:

- Represent themselves as endorsed by IESMA
- Use IESMA branding without approval
- Directly solicit members in a manner inconsistent with IESMA standards

9. Selection and Approval Process

Step 1 – Application

Interested organizations submit a standardized application including:

- Description of services
- Member benefit proposal
- References or past performance

Step 2 – Review

Applications are reviewed by:

- Executive Board or designated committee

Evaluation criteria include:

- Mission alignment
- Member value
- Reputation and reliability
- Risk and conflict considerations

Step 3 – Approval

- Final approval by the **IESMA Board of Directors**
- Approval recorded in meeting minutes

10. Term and Renewal

- Standard term: **1 year**, unless otherwise approved
- Renewal subject to:
 - Continued compliance
 - Performance review
 - Board approval

IESMA may establish a periodic review cycle for all partners.

11. Conflict of Interest

- Board members must disclose any relationship with applicant organizations
- Individuals with a conflict shall **recuse themselves** from review and voting

- All decisions must prioritize the interests of the membership and mission

12. Termination

IESMA reserves the right to terminate a partnership at any time if:

- The partner fails to meet program requirements
- Activities conflict with IESMA mission or values
- The relationship creates reputational or operational risk

Termination may be initiated by:

- Board action
- Written notice from either party

13. Administration

The program shall be administered by:

- The IESMA Executive Board or designee

Responsibilities include:

- Managing applications
- Maintaining partner records
- Ensuring compliance with policy
- Reporting to the Board as needed

14. Implementation

Upon Board approval:

- Program materials will be developed
- Application process will be established
- Communication will be provided to membership

15. Review and Amendment

This policy shall be:

- Reviewed periodically by the Board
- Amended as needed to ensure alignment with mission and governance