



## Background

The Federal Government’s response to national-level incidents usually takes the form of assistance to State and local authorities to mitigate immediate threats to public health and safety. Accordingly, Requests for Assistance (RFAs) from private sector Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources (CIKR) owners and operators received by the NICC are directed through appropriate channels to other Federal, State, and local-level decision makers for consideration and adjudication of competing needs and priorities.

In incidents requiring a Federal response, the primary venue for considering CIKR-related requests for assistance is the Joint Field Office (JFO). The Office of Infrastructure Protection’s Infrastructure Liaison team assigned to the JFO includes representatives from the NICC to help coordinate, track and provide pertinent information related to these requests. The JFO uses established processes to ensure that action on each RFA is properly coordinated with the appropriate State, local and/or Federal officials in accordance with legal requirements, available resources, and priorities of the JFO. Figure 1. (below) details the process paths available to CIKR owners and operators to request assistance during an incident in which a JFO is established.

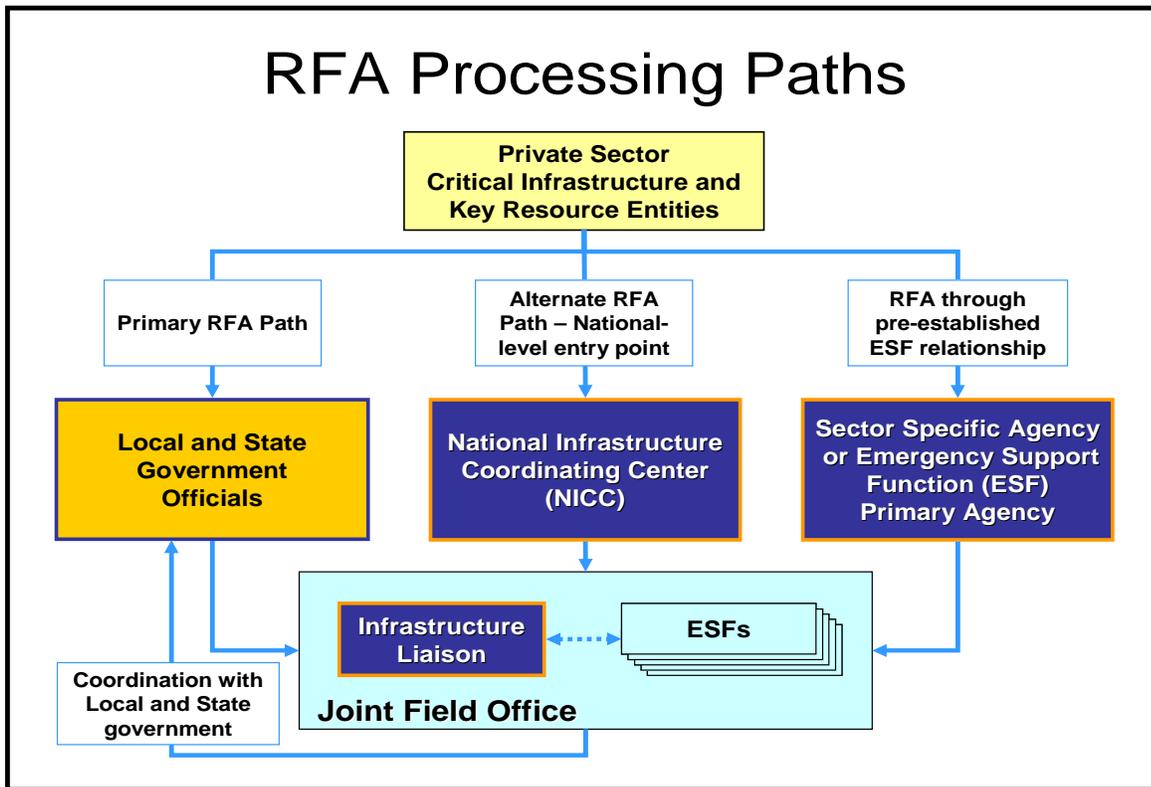


Figure 1. Request for Assistance Processing Paths

## RFA Processing Paths

Although the primary path for submission of RFAs is through State and local authorities, the Federal Government also provides alternate paths to supplement the primary method of submission.

## 1. Local and State Government Officials

RFAs should be submitted at the lowest appropriate level of government to ensure the most efficient processing. Local authorities may decide to fulfill valid requests with local assets, or forward them to the State if assets are unavailable. Likewise, the State may decide to fulfill valid requests using State assets, or forward the requests to the JFO for Federal consideration and/or action. Within the JFO, the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) will determine whether the request is valid, and determine 1) if the request can be funded under the Stafford Act; 2) if the JFO has the capability to meet the resource requirements; and 3) where the request falls in terms of the JFO's current priorities. The FCO's decisions regarding CIKR-related issues are supported by input from the Infrastructure Liaison and support staff. If a request is approved by the FCO, it is forwarded to an Emergency Support Function (ESF) within the JFO for action as an approved mission assignment.

## 2. Sector Specific Agencies and Emergency Support Functions

A CIKR owner or operator may have a well-established relationship with one of the Sector Specific Agencies outlined in Homeland Security Presidential Directive 7 (HSPD 7), or with a Federal Department or Agency having primary responsibility for a specific ESF under the National Response Framework (NRF). For example, DHS serves as the Sector Specific Agency for certain sectors, such as telecommunications, as well as the primary agency for ESF #2, Communications. In this case, the National Communications Center (a DHS organization) supports RFAs related to the telecommunications sector. Some of the other sectors also have similar pre-established relationships to support the RFA process, so CIKR owners and operators who are familiar with these existing linkages should continue to use them. Owners and operators who are unaware of any established relationships to support their requirements should submit their requests through the State or local governments, or the NICC, as described above.

## 3. The National Infrastructure Coordinating Center

RFAs also may be submitted directly to the NICC in situations in which CIKR owners and operators: do not have either mechanisms for coordination at the local or State levels or established linkages to ESFs, SSAs, or other Federal entities; prior to JFO establishment; during National-level, non-geographically specific incidents that do not require a JFO; or when the specific CIKR asset, system, network, or function is of national significance based on scope or potential impact or criticality to national security or economic vitality.. The NICC also acts on RFAs when the primary path is unavailable, e.g., State or local authorities are temporarily incapacitated due to the effects of a catastrophic incident.

The NICC will record the RFA for tracking and reporting purposes, then forward the RFA for attention and resolution to the appropriate Federal, State, or local authorities. If the RFA requires action within the JFO, the NICC will forward the RFA to the Infrastructure Liaison for action. The Infrastructure Liaison will facilitate the processing of the RFA through the appropriate authorities and notify the NICC of changes in the status of the request. The NICC will track the RFA and notify the submitter about the manner in which the RFA is being handled and resolved.

The NICC is operational 24/7, and uses an established, standardized list of contact numbers to address RFAs during the evolution of an incident. The *NICC is always available* as an entry point for RFAs, particularly for national-level organizations that may lack points of contact with local and State officials.

RFAs may be submitted to the NICC by e-mail at [nicc@dhs.gov](mailto:nicc@dhs.gov), and should contain "RFA" in the subject line of the message. The NICC strongly encourages this method of submitting RFAs to ensure proper handling and tracking of the submission. The NICC may also be contacted by telephone at (202) 282-9201.

CIKR owners and operators may also e-mail the NICC with general requests for information (RFIs) or other concerns, at [nicc@dhs.gov](mailto:nicc@dhs.gov). As with RFAs, the NICC requests that "RFI" be placed in the subject line of the e-mail.

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**For more information, contact the NICC:**

E-mail: [nicc@dhs.gov](mailto:nicc@dhs.gov)

Phone: 202.282.9201