**A Major Disaster** can be a result of hurricanes, earthquakes, flood, tornados or major fires; the President then determines warrants supplemental federal aid. The event must be clearly more than state or local governments can handle alone. If declared, funding comes from the President's Disaster Relief Fund, managed by FEMA and disaster aid programs of other participating federal agencies.

**An Emergency Declaration** is more limited in scope and without the long-term federal recovery programs of a Major Disaster Declaration. Generally, federal assistance and funding are provided to meet a specific emergency need or to help prevent a major disaster from occurring.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is an independent agency of the United Sates government that provides a point of accountability for all federal emergency readiness and response activities. Their primary mission is to support citizens, first responders, and local and state government so that they may plan for, protect against, react to and recover from all threats. You can read more about FEMA and their mission, here.

Over the last ten years, many, varying disasters, have devastated the country. From Hurricane Katrina, to the wildfires in the west, and the Boston Marathon bombings, the United States has faced it all in every location. Below I will highlight how and where the country was affected by showing the frequencies and severity of disasters by state and year.