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Harford County Public Schools Awarded $104,489 Grant to Enhance School Safety Through Digital Mapping Initiative

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) has been awarded $104,489 through the FY2026 School Facility Mapping Grant (SFMG) from the Maryland Center for School Safety. This funding will support a comprehensive initiative to create accurate, interoperable digital maps of all HCPS school facilities, significantly improving emergency preparedness and response across the county.

The project will deliver standardized, actionable maps for use by law enforcement, fire, EMS, 911 dispatchers, and school administrators. These maps will include detailed floor plans, stairwell and door numbering, utility shutoffs, AED and trauma kit locations, and external site layouts. Integration with RapidSOS and Next Generation 911 platforms will ensure seamless communication during emergencies.

"This initiative is about saving lives," said Richard A. Ayers, Sr., Director of Emergency Services for Harford County, in a letter of support. "During emergencies, seconds matter. Access to verified floor plans, stairwell and door numbering, utility shutoffs, AED and trauma kit locations, and external site layouts will directly enhance our ability to respond quickly and effectively."

Harford County Executive Robert Cassilly praised the partnership: "The safety of Harford County Public Schools' students and staff is a top priority. This grant allows us to leverage technology and collaboration to ensure first responders have the critical information they need when every second counts. Harford County Government is proud to support HCPS in this effort."

Implementation Details
- **Conversion of Existing Plans**: HCPS will work with a consultant to convert CAD/as-built floor plans into ArcGIS floor-aware data for all schools.
- **Emergency Asset Mapping**: Locations of AEDs, trauma kits, utility shutoffs, cameras, and access points will be verified and integrated.
- **Interoperability**: Data will comply with IAC School Mapping Data Standards and integrate with RapidSOS, Next Generation 911, and local GIS systems.
- **Annual Updates**: HCPS will maintain and verify data annually, including field checks of 25% of schools each summer.
- **Tiered Access & Security**: Harford County Government will store data in its enterprise GIS with strict access controls and FGDC-compliant metadata.

The mapping project aligns with the Safe to Learn Act of 2018 and subsequent legislation establishing the Maryland School Mapping Data Program. HCPS will prioritize mapping high schools first, followed by middle schools, and elementary schools.

Superintendent Sean W. Bulson emphasized the importance of collaboration: "This grant strengthens our partnership with Harford County Government and emergency responders. Together, we are building a safer environment for students and staff by leveraging technology to improve emergency planning and real-time response."

Beyond emergency incidents, the maps will support drills, reunification planning, and hazard mitigation efforts. HCPS will maintain and update the mapping data annually, ensuring accuracy and compliance with state standards.

For more information about the School Facility Mapping Grant program, visit Maryland Center for School Safety.

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