

## GOVERNMENTAL & PUBLIC INPUT

Planning is an organized process to solicit and consider input from diverse interests. Involving stakeholders is essential to building community-wide support for the plan. In addition to emergency managers, the planning process involves local and state agencies (e.g., public works and floodplain administration); agencies that have authority to regulate development; neighboring communities; businesses and academia; private organizations such as utilities and major employers; and non-profit and community-based organizations that work directly with and/or provide support to underserved and socially vulnerable populations.

Vital information these groups provide helps ensure that the plan is workable within the framework of the community's priorities.

## ADOPTION OF THE PLAN

Local units of government participating in a multi-jurisdictional planning process must adopt the final plan for the municipality to be eligible for future mitigation funds, including grants available through FEMA. **Local units (i.e., towns, villages, cities) that do not participate would be ineligible to receive such funds** until they meet these requirements and adopt a plan.

## HISTORY

Floods and storms have killed over 2,000 people in the U.S. in the last decade. Hundreds of disasters have occurred in

the past 25 years, costing the country millions weekly.

## MITIGATION PLANNING FACTS

▶ A 2019 study has shown that mitigation saves society an average of \$6 for every \$1 spent through federal mitigation grant programs.

▶ Rigorous building standards in communities across the country are saving \$11 per \$1 spent simply by adopting model codes. Other building measures save \$4 per \$1 spent.

▶ Hazard mitigation plans and projects reduce overall risks to the population and structures while also reducing reliance on funding from actual disaster declarations.

▶ According to the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, cumulative costs for weather and climate disasters in the United States from 2021-2023 were \$433 billion - continuing the trend of ever-increasing disaster costs.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# Pre-Disaster Mitigation Planning

*Creating Safe,  
Sustainable  
Communities*



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## WHAT IS HAZARD MITIGATION?

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Hazard mitigation is sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and their property from hazards.

Floods, ice storms, tornadoes, and forest/wildfires are all functions of the natural environment and only become hazardous when they threaten our “built” environment with destruction. These hazards will occur one day. When this happens, the results can be appreciably different from past outcomes if our community takes action today.

## RISK REDUCTION

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Risk reduction aims to reduce the risk to life and property, including existing structures and future construction, in the pre- and post-disaster environments. This is achieved through regulations, local ordinances, land use and building practices, and mitigation projects that reduce or eliminate long-term risks from hazards and their effects.

## WHY DEVELOP A PLAN?

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Mitigation plans form the foundation for a community's long-term strategy to reduce disaster losses and break the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage. The planning process is as important as the plan itself. It creates a framework for risk-based decision-making to reduce damages to lives, property, and the economy from future disasters.

State, tribal, and local governments are required to develop a hazard mitigation plan as a condition for receiving certain types of non-emergency disaster assistance. The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Public Law 93-288), as amended by the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, provides the legal basis for state, local, and tribal governments to undertake a risk-based approach to reducing risks from natural hazards through mitigation planning.

*Like many other people, the residents of Merkel, Texas, didn't think much about flooding. Besides, it had not flooded in Merkel for 45 years. It wasn't until the heavy summer rains came that residents realized flooding could hit anyone anytime. After the flooding finally subsided, officials knew they had to do something: mitigate.*

## REQUIRED INFORMATION

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- Flood maps
- Identification of potential hazards
- History of occurrences
- Hazard impact projections
- Location of critical facilities
- Identification of high-risk facilities (schools, fire stations, nursing homes, etc.)
- Location of repetitive loss structures
- Development & prioritization of mitigation projects
- Other materials as identified

## HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING PROCESS

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**1. Organize Resources-** From the start, communities should focus on the resources needed for a successful mitigation planning process. Essential steps include identifying and organizing interested community members, particularly those with the technical expertise required during the planning process.

**2. Assess Risks-** Communities next need to identify the characteristics and potential consequences of natural hazards. It is crucial to understand how much of the community can be affected by specific hazards and the likely impacts on important community assets.

**3. Develop a Mitigation Plan-** Armed with an understanding of the risks posed by natural hazards, communities need to determine their priorities and then look at possible ways to avoid or minimize the undesired effects. The result is a natural hazard mitigation plan and strategy for implementation.

**4. Implement the Plan & Monitor Progress-** Communities can bring the plan to life in various ways, ranging from implementing specific mitigation projects to changes in the day-to-day operation of the local government. To ensure the success of an ongoing program, the plan must remain effective. Thus, conducting periodic evaluations and making revisions as needed is important.