

**Lesson Overview**

This lesson describes two of FEMA's recovery programs—Individual Assistance and Public Assistance—and how the environmental/historic preservation review process relates to these programs.

**Lesson Objectives**

At the completion of this lesson, you will be able to describe the relationship between FEMA's recovery programs and the environmental/historic preservation review process.

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**Recovery Programs****Key Points**

- Individual Assistance (IA) and Public Assistance (PA) are the two primary recovery programs.
  - With few exceptions, IA projects do not undergo environmental/historic preservation review.
  - Because PA activities have greater potential to affect resources, environmental/historic preservation review is incorporated into the PA process.
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**Individual Assistance Program**

Assistance to individuals and households may include:

- Housing
    - Lodging assistance
    - Rental assistance
    - Home repair
    - Home replacement
    - Permanent housing construction
  - Other needs
    - Medical, dental, funeral costs
    - Transportation costs
    - Other disaster-related needs
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**IA and Environmental/Historic Preservation Review**

The only IA activity subject to environmental/historic preservation review is the construction of temporary or permanent housing sites. All other IA activities are nondiscretionary and are directed at individual recovery.

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### **Public Assistance Program**

The PA program provides assistance to Tribal, State, and local governments, and to certain Private Non-Profit organizations for:

- Debris removal.
- Implementation of emergency protective measures.
- Permanent restoration of infrastructure, including:
  - Buildings and structures
  - Roads and bridges
  - Water control facilities
  - Utilities
  - Parks and recreational areas

The program also encourages protection from future damage by providing assistance for hazard mitigation measures for damaged facilities during the recovery process.

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### **Improved Projects**

While PA funds may be used to repair facilities to their pre-disaster condition, applicants performing restoration work on a damaged facility may elect to make additional improvements to the damaged facility while still restoring the function of the facility. Or, applicants may elect to replace the facility with a new structure that restores the function of the damaged facility. Projects that incorporate such improvements are called "improved projects."

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### **Alternate Projects**

If approved by FEMA, PA funding may be used for alternate projects.

Alternate projects involve the repair, mitigation, or expansion of another public facility. In certain cases, if an applicant determines that the public welfare would not be best served by restoring a damaged facility or its function to the pre-disaster condition, the applicant may use a percentage of eligible funds for an alternate project.

An alternate project may include:

- Repair or expansion of another public facility.
  - Construction of a new facility.
  - Purchase of capital equipment, such as computers or vehicles.
  - Hazard mitigation measures.
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### **Mitigation**

If approved by FEMA and cost-effective, PA funding may be used for select mitigation measures in conjunction with the repair of damaged facilities. These measures must be related to eligible disaster-related damages and must directly reduce the potential of future, similar disaster damages to the eligible facility.

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### Responsibilities Under the Public Assistance Program

The following table summarizes the responsibilities of FEMA, the Tribe/State, and applicants under the PA program.

Party	Responsibility
FEMA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Has legal responsibility for the Federal environmental/historic preservation review process and documentation.</li> <li>▪ Coordinates with Tribe/State regarding project formulation, verification of basic environmental information, and further data collection.</li> </ul>
Tribe/State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As grantee, provides coordination and monitoring.</li> <li>▪ Establishes and maintains contacts with REO, ELO, and agencies.</li> <li>▪ Conducts Applicants' Briefings where environmental/historic preservation issues are discussed.</li> </ul>
Applicant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provides basic environmental/historic information by answering the Special Considerations Questions.</li> <li>▪ Obtains all appropriate permits.</li> <li>▪ Complies with Federal, State, and local laws applicable to local government/non-Federal actions.</li> <li>▪ Implements grant conditions resulting from FEMA's compliance review.</li> </ul>

### FEMA Program Staff: Overview

The Public Assistance program staff consists of field personnel who:

- Assist the applicant during the recovery process.
- Ensure that issues in addition to project eligibility, such as environmental/historic preservation compliance, are addressed in the recovery process.

### FEMA Program Staff: Public Assistance Officer

A FEMA Public Assistance Officer (PAO) manages the program in coordination with Tribal/State counterparts.

The PAO's environmental/historic preservation responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that proper procedures are followed.
- Obtaining adequate training for staff in environmental/historic preservation considerations.
- Ensuring that environmental/historic preservation review has been completed, documented, and approved prior to funding.

**FEMA Program Staff: Public Assistance Coordinator**

A Public Assistance Coordinator (PAC) is assigned to each applicant to help with the PA process from start to finish. The PAC is the initial and final reviewer of projects.

The PAC's environmental and historic preservation responsibilities include:

- Playing a key role in educating applicants and ensuring compliance with environmental and historic preservation laws.
  - Working closely with environmental and historic preservation specialists to determine which projects require environmental and historic preservation review.
  - Conducting the final review of projects prior to obligation of funds.
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**FEMA Program Staff: Project Officers**

Project Officers (POs) are responsible for assisting applicants with the development of PA projects and cost estimates.

The PO's environmental and historic preservation responsibilities include:

- Identifying environmental and historic preservation issues as projects develop.
  - Ensuring that a clear and concise scope of work is developed, so projects can be reviewed expeditiously.
  - Working with the environmental and historic preservation specialists to identify and resolve issues in project formulation.
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**FEMA Program Staff: Special Considerations Liaison**

When this position is staffed, the Special Considerations Liaison (SCL) coordinates the resolution of all special considerations issues, including insurance, mitigation, and environmental/historic preservation considerations.

This person works closely with the PACs, PAO, Environmental Liaison Officer (ELO), and other PA staff.

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**FEMA Program Staff: Environmental and Historic Preservation Specialists**

Specialists are technical experts who conduct the appropriate environmental or historic preservation review for specific projects.

Specialists may be drawn from:

- The environmental and historic preservation cadre.
- Contractors.

Specialists' environmental and historic preservation responsibilities include:

- Coordinating and preparing environmental/historic review documentation.
  - Working with the PO/PAC.
  - Providing technical expertise as needed.
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**Public Assistance and Environmental/Historic Preservation Review**

The chart below illustrates the major steps in the Public Assistance process.

- Event
- Preliminary Damage Assessment
- Disaster Declaration
- Applicant Briefing
- Kickoff Meeting
- Project Formulation
- Project Review
- Project Funding
- Project Implementation
- Project Monitoring

At most of these steps, known and potential environmental and historic issues should be identified and/or addressed.

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**Applicants' Briefing**

The Applicants' Briefing:

- Is conducted by the Tribe/State.
  - Occurs after a disaster declaration.
  - Provides the Tribe/State an opportunity to explain application procedures, administrative requirements, and eligibility criteria to potential applicants.
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**Applicants' Briefing: Environmental/Historic Preservation Points**

At this briefing, the Tribe/State informs applicants that they must:

- Comply with environmental and historic preservation laws.
- Not begin work before the environmental/historic preservation review process is complete (with certain exceptions).

FEMA representatives should explain that all efforts are taken to streamline the review and that potential issues should be addressed as early as possible in the disaster recovery.

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**Kickoff Meeting**

After the Applicants' Briefing, applicants complete a Request for Public Assistance. Upon receipt of these documents, the PAC assigned to the applicant schedules a Kickoff meeting.

The Kickoff Meeting:

- Focuses on the specific needs of the individual applicant.
  - Is an opportunity to educate the applicants on environmental and historic preservation requirements and the review process.
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**Kickoff Meeting: Environmental/Historic Preservation Issues**

During the Kickoff Meeting, the PAC or specialist:

- Discusses flood plains, wetlands, mitigation, insurance, and other issues in the Special Considerations Questions attached to the Project Worksheet.
  - Distributes copies of the "Green Book."
  - Discusses proposed scopes of work, including planned demolition work, ground-disturbing activities, and other projects that may have environmental and historic preservation issues.
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**Project Formulation**

Project formulation is the process of defining the scope of work and estimating costs for each project. FEMA/Applicants use the Project Worksheet to document the proposed project.

To facilitate the environmental/historic preservation review process, applicants work with the Tribe/State and FEMA throughout project formulation to:

- Provide a clear and complete scope of work.
  - Provide as much information as possible about potential environmental or historic resources affected by the proposed project, including project maps, photos, and dates of construction.
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**Project Formulation: FEMA PO/PAC**

The PO/PAC works with the applicant to identify environmental and historic issues as soon as possible. A worksheet containing the nine Special Considerations Questions must be completed for each project.

The PO/PAC also reviews the applicant's answers to the Special Considerations Questions attached to the Project Worksheet. If any answer is "Yes" or "Unsure," then the applicant, PO/PAC, and environmental/historic preservation specialist work together to provide detailed comments. FEMA uses these comments to help determine the level of environmental review required.

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**Project Implementation and Monitoring**

It is important to remember that FEMA's environmental/historic preservation responsibilities do not end with the funding of the project.

During project implementation, applicants must inform the Tribe/State (which then notifies FEMA) of:

- Any changes to the proposed scope of the work. FEMA then determines if there are any environmental/historic considerations associated with these changes.
- Unexpected discoveries, such as archeological sites or endangered species/critical habitat near the project site.

FEMA and the Tribe/State must monitor grant conditions to ensure that applicants comply with all environmental and historic preservation laws, and they cannot provide funds to applicants who violate these requirements.

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**Lesson Summary**

You have now completed the third lesson in the Disaster Operations and FEMA Programs module of this course. You should be able to describe the relationship between FEMA's recovery programs and the environmental/historic preservation review process.

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