

**Lesson Overview**

This lesson describes a law and an Executive order (EO) concerning socioeconomic issues and how they affect FEMA's work.

**Lesson Objectives**

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Describe the key components of:
    - The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA).
    - EO 12898 for Environmental Justice.
  - Describe the responsibilities of FEMA and the applicant under this act and EO.
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**Laws and Executive Orders: Socioeconomics****Key Points**

- The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) requires Federal agencies to examine the potential effects before approving any activity that would convert farmland to other use.
  - Executive Order 12898 for Environmental Justice ensures that Federal activities do not have a disproportionately high and adverse affect on a minority or low-income populations.
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**Farmland Protection Policy Act**

Passed by Congress in 1981, the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) discourages Federal actions that contribute to the conversion of farmland to other use.

Under the FPPA, Federal programs are required to protect:

- Prime farmland.
  - Unique farmland.
  - Farmland of statewide or local importance.
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### Types of Farmland

Prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing crops.

Unique farmland is land that is used to produce high-value crops. These might include:

- Citrus
- Tree nuts
- Olives
- Fruits

Farmland of statewide or local importance is land that has been identified by State or local agencies because of its significance.

### Complying With the FPPA

The FPPA requires Federal agencies to examine the potential adverse effects before approving any activity outside zoned city limits that would convert farmland to other uses.

In consultation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Federal agencies must conduct an assessment of the affected farmland, and complete a Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form.

Depending on the outcome of this assessment, the Federal agency may either:

- Conduct the activity without further evaluation, or
- Propose alternatives that will reduce impact.

### Responsibilities Under the FPPA

The following table summarizes the responsibilities of FEMA and the applicant under the Farmland Protection Policy Act.

Party	Responsibilities
FEMA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Determine if an action will affect farmland either by evaluating its location and nature, or by consulting with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).</li> <li>▪ If it has the potential to affect prime or unique farmland, submit documentation to the NRCS for review.</li> <li>▪ Identify alternatives or appropriate mitigation measures.</li> <li>▪ Address adverse impacts, such as loss of farmland, in an Environmental Assessment (EA).</li> </ul>
Applicant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement any mitigation measures that result.</li> </ul>

**Executive Order 12898 for Environmental Justice**

Implemented in 1994, EO 12898 for Environmental Justice requires each Federal agency to make achieving environmental justice part of its mission.

To accomplish this, an agency must identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.

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**Complying With the Environmental Justice EO**

To comply with this Executive order and include environmental justice as part of their mission, Federal agencies should:

- Ensure that their actions do not have **disproportionately high** and **adverse** human health or environmental effects on **minority** or **low-income** populations.
  - Conduct their programs, policies, and activities such that they do not have the effect of excluding or denying equal access to benefits to minority populations.
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**Disproportionate Adverse Effects**

In its disaster recovery efforts, FEMA must address its actions to avoid disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations.

In its activities, FEMA must determine:

- If minority or low-income populations are within the areas of effect of these actions; and
- If the effects are adverse; and
- If the adverse effects are disproportionately high on the minority or low-income portions of the population.

When these three conditions exist, FEMA must consider mitigation measures to avoid or minimize the adverse effect and take extra care to ensure adequate public participation.

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**Responsibilities Under EO 12898 for Environmental Justice**

The following table summarizes the responsibilities of FEMA and the applicant under Executive Order 12898 for Environmental Justice.

<b>Party</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
FEMA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Evaluate actions for disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations.</li><li>▪ Avoid or minimize disproportionate adverse impacts whenever possible.</li></ul>
Applicant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Provide data to help FEMA evaluate possible adverse impacts on minority or low-income populations.</li><li>▪ Comply with any mitigation needed to avoid or minimize disproportionate adverse impact.</li></ul>

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**Lesson Summary**

You have now completed the seventh lesson in the Environmental Review section of this course. You should be able to:

- Describe the key components of:
    - The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA).
    - EO 12898 for Environmental Justice.
  - Describe the responsibilities of FEMA and the applicant under this law and EO.
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