

FOREIGN AFFAIRS SECURITY TRAINING CENTER [FASTC]

An American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Project



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - NEPA and NHPA

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)

What is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)?

NEPA is a federal law that requires agencies to consider the environmental impacts of proposed projects or actions prior to taking any significant action. NEPA applies only to federal agencies and programs that are federally funded.

What is an Environmental Assessment and what topics are covered?

An Environmental Assessment (EA) is a concise public document that serves to assist the federal government in recognizing environmental impacts of a federal agency's proposed action. An EA also assists an agency in their decision-making process.

What resources are studied in an EA?

NEPA is often referred to as an "umbrella law" providing a comprehensive framework for complying with other Federal, State, and local environmental statutory requirements. An EA will contain relevant information necessary for the agency to make a determination on the significance of an impact the proposed action may have upon the area. Such resources include, but are not limited to, the following: Land Use, Cultural Resources, Transportation Systems, and Physical/Biological Resources.

How is public input considered in the NEPA process?

Public input will be used in the project evaluation process and EA development. GSA must take into consideration all comments received from the public and other parties on NEPA documents during the scoping and draft EA comment periods. We care about the community and believe open, ongoing communication is important.

Where can I find more information about the NEPA process?

Additional information regarding the NEPA process can be found at NEPA.net (www.nepa.gov) or at www.gsa.gov/nepadeskguide for agency specific instructions for implementing NEPA.

SECTION 106 OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT (NHPA)

What is the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA)?

The NHPA is the core legislation regarding the preservation of historic and cultural properties in the United States. The NHPA created many familiar components of preservation in the United States, such as the National Register of Historic Places, State Historic Preservation Officers/Offices (SHPOs), and Federal stewardship programs regarding Federally owned or managed historic properties.

What is Section 106?

Section 106 of the NHPA requires Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties. The goal of Section 106 Consultation is to identify historic properties that may be affected by the undertaking, assess the effects of the undertaking on these historic properties, and seek ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any adverse effects.

What is an undertaking?

An undertaking is a federal project, activity, or program, including those carried out by or on behalf of a Federal agency; those carried out with Federal financial assistance; or those requiring a Federal permit, license, or approval.

What is consultation?

Consultation is the process of seeking, discussing, and considering the views of other participants, and, where feasible, seeking agreement with them regarding matters arising in the Section 106 process.

How is public input considered in the NHPA process?

Section 106 provides for public participation throughout the review process. The public is provided with timely and complete documentation to facilitate their participation, and appropriate steps are taken to ensure that pertinent information is shared with consulting parties and considered during consultation.

Where can I find more information about the NHPA process?

Additional information regarding the NHPA process can be found at the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation website (www.achp.gov).