



FY15 Hazard Mitigation Assistance Guidance



Hazard Mitigation Assistance Guidance

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program, and Flood Mitigation Assistance Program

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Overview

The Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Guidance is a comprehensive document that details the specific criteria of the three HMA programs: the [Hazard Mitigation Grant Program \(HMGP\)](#), the [Pre-Disaster Mitigation \(PDM\)](#) program, and the [Flood Mitigation Assistance \(FMA\)](#) program. The guidance consolidates each program's eligibility information and outlines the common elements and unique requirements among the grant programs so that Federal, state, tribal, and local officials can easily identify key similarities and differences between the programs. The following sections provide more details on the key changes included in the fiscal year 2015 (FY15) update of the HMA Guidance. These enhancements will promote resilience and speed up application review and project implementation.

Key Changes:

Climate Change / Resilience Incorporation

- The Guidance encourages communities to become more resilient and to incorporate climate change considerations in their project scoping and development.
- The benefit-cost analysis allows for the incorporation of additional benefits into the calculations, such as the benefits of sea level rise mitigation, and environmental benefits associated with the acquisition of properties in green open space and riparian areas.
- Applicants and subapplicants can utilize the HMGP 5 Percent Initiative to incorporate disaster-resistant building codes.
- The Guidance promotes the inclusion of mitigation strategies that foster community resilience and smart development growth within mitigation plans.

Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 200 (Super Circular) Updates

- The Office of Management and Budget is streamlining the Federal Government's Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards into a consolidated set of regulations, also referred to as the [Super Circular](#).
- New terminology has been introduced, including pass-through entity, recipient, subrecipient, non-Federal entity, award, and subaward.
- HMA federal funds, or funds used to meet HMA cost-share requirements, may not be used as a cost share for other federal awards, lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings.

Streamlined HMA Program Delivery

- The HMGP lock-in is the amount of HMGP funding available for a given disaster and is determined at 12 months after the disaster declaration. The Guidance promotes a greater level of consistency and

transparency in the process of requesting a revised lock-in after 12 months.

- The Guidance describes the importance of accurate budgeting and forecasting in the Spend Plan for Presidential major disasters declared after October 30, 2013 for the HMGP.
- Changes to the HMGP Quarterly Progress Report have been incorporated, and hard copies are no longer accepted for the HMGP.
- The Period of Performance for the PDM program has increased from 24 months to 36 months.
- The FMA program allows Technical Assistance grants.

Frontloading Enhancements

- FEMA encourages applicants and subapplicants to take a comprehensive approach in the early stages of project identification and development.
- Frontloading, or early consideration of critical factors, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, leveraging other funding programs, critical actions, and resilience, is key to designing successful projects.
- The significance of early Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) considerations is clearly outlined in the project scoping and development process.

Inclusive Mitigation (Americans with Disabilities Act)

- FEMA encourages applicants and subapplicants to consider the needs and requirements of populations with disabilities as HMA projects are scoped and developed.
- Safe room construction should consider proximity of location to affected populations and ensure facilities within the safe room comply with the ADA regulations.

Mitigation Planning Clarification

- The Guidance clarifies mitigation plan requirements for statewide projects (e.g., safe room construction).
- States are required to update their mitigation plans every five years, not every three years as indicated in the *Federal Register* at [79 FR 22873](#).
- FEMA promotes mitigation strategies to address climate change, resilience, and smart growth development.

Incorporated Policy Memos

- FEMA has developed numerous policy memos that are incorporated into the HMA Guidance. These include:
 - A new methodology for calculating the benefit-cost ratio for the acquisition of properties in landslide hazard areas with a threat of catastrophic slope failure within five years of application development.
 - A new, expedited methodology for calculating the benefit-cost ratio for residential hurricane wind retrofit projects. If a proposed wind retrofit project costs less than the pre-identified benefits, the project will be considered cost effective.

Job Aids and Resources

- FEMA developed 23 job aids and resources to assist in HMA program delivery, some examples are:
 - “Homeowner’s Guide to the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program” to answer some common questions that homeowners have about implementing post-disaster projects.
 - “Federally-Recognized Tribes and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program – Option to Submit as an Applicant or Subapplicant” to discuss benefits and responsibilities of federally-recognized tribes if they become an applicant or subapplicant.
 - “Resilience and Climate Change Adaptation” to discuss FEMA programs designed to promote community resilience.
 - “Closeout Toolkit” which includes FAQs and a checklist to help recipients prepare for subaward closeout activities.
 - “Section 106 Process Under the National Historic Preservation Act” flowchart and “NEPA Flowchart for HMA Projects” to help applicants understand their responsibilities, FEMA decision points, and potential outcomes while undergoing a Section 106 review.