

# Unified Federal Review Process



## Unified Federal Environmental and Historic Preservation Review: Fact Sheet for Tribal Historic Preservation Officers

*Natural resources, cultural institutions and historic properties define communities and contribute to their well-being and unique character. As disasters continue to challenge our nation and communities grapple with issues of preparedness, resiliency and sustainability, federal, tribal, state and local agencies are working together to support the needs of affected communities and continually improve disaster recovery processes. This work includes helping communities incorporate environmental stewardship and historic preservation into emergency management decisions.*

### The Unified Federal Environmental and Historic Preservation Review Process

The Unified Federal Environmental and Historic Preservation Review Process (UFR Process) was established on July 29, 2014, by eleven federal departments and agencies entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The UFR Process focuses on the federal environmental and historic preservation review (EHP) requirements applicable to proposed disaster recovery projects following a presidentially declared disaster under the Stafford Act. Through the UFR Process, federal agencies that fund or permit disaster recovery projects and those that perform EHP reviews associated with those projects will coordinate their independent review processes leading to expedited decision making, which can result in efficient delivery of assistance and implementation of recovery projects.

The UFR Process does not change EHP requirements but, instead, identifies ways to use existing efficiencies, along with new Tools and Mechanisms to improve the EHP review of proposed disaster recovery projects for projects involving multiple federal agencies. Some examples of the Tools and Mechanisms that will specifically assist THPOs in disaster recovery reviews include the following:

- The **Prototype Programmatic Agreement (PPA) for Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act**, which was designated by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in December 2013, provides FEMA with a framework to negotiate state-specific agreements that allows tribes to either utilize the statewide programmatic agreement, or to develop separate agreements to outline tribal protocols. In either case, FEMA will continue to be responsible for conducting consultation with Indian tribes. Once executed, the PPA also allows other federal agencies to utilize the PA to satisfy their Section 106 responsibilities for response and recovery activities when appropriate.
- The **UFR Guidance for EHP Practitioners**, along with its accompanying appendices, walks practitioners through the UFR Process. Since every disaster is different, the UFR Process is not a one-size-fits-all

#### How is a disaster recovery project defined under the UFR Process?

It is defined as an action or project taken after the immediate threat to life and property in a presidentially declared disaster has been addressed and which action (1) is subject to federal involvement by reason of federal funding (in whole or in part), federal permitting or other federal approval; and, (2) is to (a) restore a community's facilities to pre disaster condition or to pre disaster capacity with such changes as may, for example, aid efficiency, resilience or sustainability in those capabilities, or (b) provide hazard mitigation activities.

#### Who is a practitioner for the UFR Process?

Agency staff responsible for conducting or contributing to EHP reviews. When the responsibility for conducting the EHP review is delegated or assigned to someone other than the federal agency staff, such as contractors, these individuals also meet the definition of EHP practitioner for the purposes of the UFR Process. This definition includes Housing and Urban Development (HUD) responsible entities under HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, who are grantees that must complete an EHP review of all proposed project activities prior to committing CDBG.

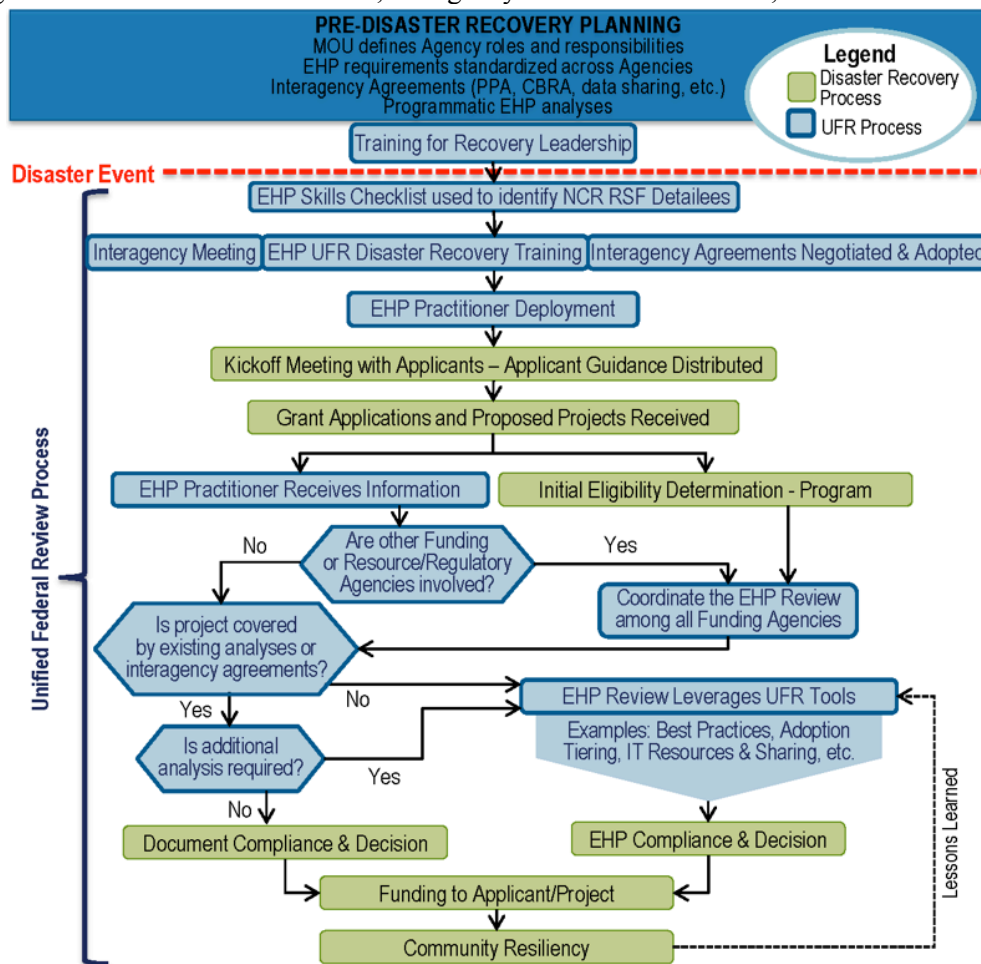
For more information on the UFR Process, please visit the UFR Webpage at: <http://www.fema.gov/environmental-historic-preservation/unified-federal-environmental-and-historic-preservation-review>

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approach but a flexible framework for collaboration among agencies. Following catastrophic disasters, federal agencies may ensure coordination under the UFR Process through the use of a Disaster-Specific MOU with tribal, state and local government partners to identify specific responsibilities, share data and coordinate reviews. During recovery from disasters that involve a smaller federal recovery effort, the coordination required by the UFR Process may be conducted through meetings and conference calls. The UFR Process is beneficial to funding agencies and resource/regulatory agencies. The funding agency EHP practitioners have a responsibility to ensure that EHP reviews for projects, which are jointly funded, are well coordinated among the agencies to ensure that the number of federal reviews is minimized.

The chart below depicts the UFR Process during disaster recovery, including the use of Tools and Mechanisms that will help EHP practitioners implement the UFR Process. The typical disaster recovery process is depicted in green and the expedited UFR Process is depicted in blue. The end-state for the UFR Process is community recovery and resiliency. Although not every disaster recovery process is the same, this graphic of the UFR Process can be easily adapted to the needs of individual agencies. These Tools and Mechanisms are available on the UFR Webpage and include: training modules for the UFR Process; Disaster-Specific MOU and Data Sharing Agreement Content; PPA for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act; best practices located throughout the Practitioners Guidance; an Agency Point of Contact List; and IT Resources List.



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