



FEMA

REGION V

BENEFITS OF NATURAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING

Mitigation is most effective when it is based on a comprehensive, long-term plan that is developed before a disaster occurs. The purpose of mitigation planning is to identify local policies and actions that can be implemented over the long term to reduce risk and future losses from hazards. These mitigation policies and actions are identified based on an assessment of an area’s hazards, vulnerabilities, and risks, and the participation of a wide range of stakeholders and the public in the planning process.

A Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)-approved hazard mitigation plan (HMP) is a requirement for receiving certain types of non-emergency disaster assistance, including funding for mitigation projects. Ultimately, hazard mitigation planning enables action to reduce loss of life and property, lessening the impact of disasters.

HMPs ensure that communities are eligible for hundreds of millions of dollars of funding each year to support mitigation projects, including:

- Retrofit roads, bridges, culverts, and similar structures to prevent recurring damage from winter storms and seasonal flooding;
- Buy properties in high-risk floodplains and convert them into local parks and trails; and
- Develop HMPs and additional planning mechanisms that integrate hazard mitigation information.

Perhaps equally important, the hazard mitigation planning process further helps local governments by bringing community partners together to identify vulnerabilities and reduce risk through planning, public works projects, and emergency management functions.



For example, while an emergency management department may facilitate and coordinate the hazard mitigation planning process, the land use planning and public works departments share information to propose mitigation strategies related to their long-term strategic goals, as well as daily permitting efforts.

Your Federal and State partners are available to support your community in this process. To help make the most of your mitigation planning process, we can:

1. Contribute to technical assistance for analyzing risk;
2. Assist in identifying effective mitigation actions;
3. Provide examples of creative planning processes;
4. Suggest examples for integrating with other planning mechanisms or community goals; and
5. Provide ideas to increase participation by other departments in the planning process.



GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

- **Focus on the mitigation strategy.** The mitigation strategy is the plan's primary purpose. All other sections contribute to and inform the mitigation strategy and specific hazard mitigation actions.
- **Emphasize that the planning process is as important as the plan itself.** In mitigation planning, as with most other planning efforts, the plan is only as good as the process and people involved in its development. The HMP should also serve as the written record, or documentation, of the planning process.
- **Use the plan as a tool to capture your community's identity.** To have value, the plan must represent the current needs and values of the community and be useful for local officials and stakeholders. Develop the HMP in a way that best serves your community's purpose and people.

BENEFITS OF MITIGATION ACTION BY SECTOR



Land Use Planning

- Mitigation action can support land use planning and decision making by protecting lives, future development, substantially damaged or improved structures, and other local priorities for maintaining the local economy and a community's identity.



Public Works

- Protect infrastructure investments, either through siting or design improvements, achieved through mitigation action.



Emergency Management

- The HMP is a tool for bringing many departments together to strategize and prioritize mitigation actions. Mitigation actions can complement all areas of emergency management including the preparedness, response, and recovery of a community post-event.



Economic/Community Development

- Mitigation actions implemented strategically throughout a jurisdiction contribute to continuity of operations and help foster effective community development.

Examples of mitigation action include:

- Altering green and grey stormwater infrastructure to account for extreme weather events;
- Purchasing generators to help maintain continuity of operations post-disaster;
- Integrating risk data into ordinances and building codes to influence future development; and
- Participating in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and the Community Rating System (CRS).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

FEMA Hazard Mitigation

<https://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-planning>

Mitigation Ideas: A Resource for Reducing Risk to Natural Hazards

<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/30627>

Mitigation Program Integration

<https://www.fema.gov/mitigation-program-integration>

Flood Economics

<https://floodeconomics.com/>

FEMA Flood Map Service Center

<https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home>