



State Hazard Mitigation Planning Key Topics Bulletins: Mitigation Capabilities

September 2016



FEMA

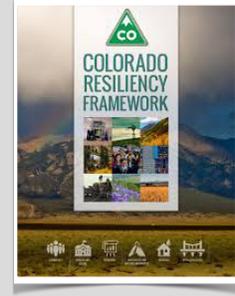
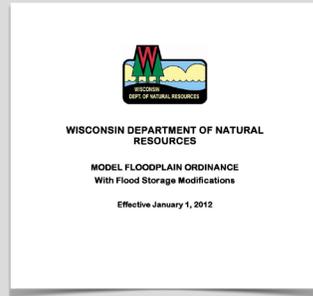
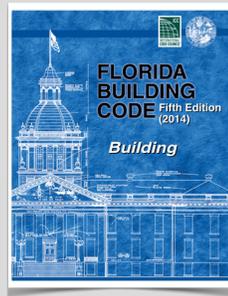
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On the Cover: Richard Pukema, a FEMA Operations Specialist, and Chris Nordeng, a FEMA Project Specialist, review kickoff meeting notes with Chuma Amechi, Associate Accountant for the Conn. Department of Public Health. Specialists routinely provide help for the public assistance process applicants. Photo by Ed Edahl/FEMA - Location: Hartford, Connecticut

INTRODUCTION

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) released a new [State Mitigation Plan Review Guide \(the Guide\)](#) in March 2015. This Guide, which became effective March 6, 2016, presents FEMA's official policy on and interpretation of the natural hazard mitigation planning requirements for states as established in the Code of Federal Regulations (44 CFR Part 201). The State Mitigation Planning Key Topics Bulletins ("Bulletins") are a series of brief documents aimed at informing states on how to meet the regulatory and policy requirements described in the Guide. The series covers all components of the mitigation planning process. The Bulletins are not intended to clarify policy, but instead to provide state officials approaches and resources for updating state hazard mitigation plans.



State mitigation capabilities include the programs, policies, staff, funding, and other resources available to build resilience and reduce long-term losses. Images (L-R): California Department of Water Resources; International Code Council; Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources; Colorado Resiliency and Recovery Office.

MITIGATION CAPABILITIES OVERVIEW

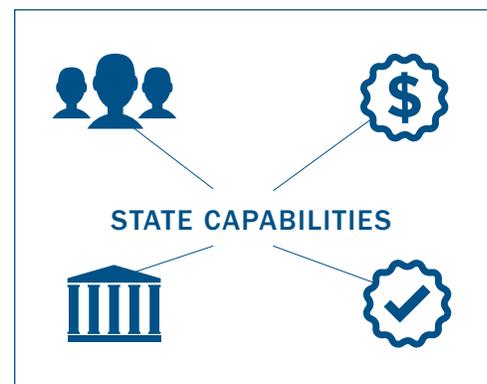
Assessing state mitigation capabilities is an integral part of the mitigation planning process in which the state identifies, reviews, and analyzes its current resources for reducing the impact of hazards. Mitigation capabilities provide the means to accomplish desired mitigation outcomes. Assessing capabilities identifies the framework that is in place, or should be in place, for the implementation of mitigation actions.

Each state has a unique set of pre- and post-disaster capabilities, including authorities, policies, programs, staff, funding, and other resources available to accomplish mitigation and reduce long-term vulnerability. Stakeholder participation and cross-sector collaboration throughout the planning process is key in identifying the state pre- and post-disaster hazard mitigation capabilities and assessing areas for improvement. Some states may have the resources and expertise to conduct outreach, perform GIS analyses, and provide technical assistance to communities, while others may not have the capability to perform these activities. Similarly, states may have different staffing resources and needs in pre- and post-disaster settings. An assessment of state mitigation capabilities is essential to creating a realistic mitigation strategy that will not stall due to inadequate resources.

The state mitigation capability assessment serves as the backdrop to the identification of specific mitigation efforts targeted for state-level and local planning. By evaluating the effectiveness of existing activities with respect to capabilities of communities, states can determine the need for additional programs to assist communities and include those action items in the state mitigation plan. States should coordinate the results of their capability assessment with local and tribal governments, as applicable.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE #4: IMPROVE MITIGATION CAPABILITIES

FEMA established four guiding principles for the development of state hazard mitigation plans in the Guide. Guiding Principle #4, **Improve Mitigation Capabilities**, references community resilience and the connections between economy, housing, health and social services, infrastructure, and natural and cultural resources. Improving mitigation capabilities requires an understanding of how state governments can contribute to hazard mitigation through the integration of planning processes, policies, and programs. States can work with FEMA for technical assistance to support and advance mitigation capabilities.



STEPS TO ASSESS STATE MITIGATION CAPABILITIES

The following steps will help guide the development of the state capability assessment.

Step 1: Evaluate State Pre- and Post-Disaster Capabilities

The foundation of a strong state capability assessment lies in the evaluation of state laws, regulations, policies, and programs related to hazard mitigation and development in hazard-prone areas across all parts of state government.

Each state's capability assessment looks different because their capabilities are different. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to evaluate the state pre- and post-disaster capabilities. Consider the following questions when assessing capabilities:

- What is the legal framework for hazard mitigation in the state?
- What laws support and facilitate hazard mitigation? Are there any that conflict with hazard mitigation or encourage activities that put people, assets, and/or infrastructure at risk?
- What are the planning and development authorities in the state? Does the state have the authority to manage or regulate development in hazard-prone areas?
- Are there state model codes or ordinances that assist in risk reduction?
- Which state agencies have had a role in risk reduction and hazard mitigation in the past? What programs within those agencies address hazard mitigation?
- Are there different pre- and post-disaster mitigation programs?
- What implementation tools, policies, and programs have been effective in achieving mitigation objectives? Which have been less effective?

These questions should be asked of all state agencies and departments with roles in hazard mitigation. These questions will inform states of: resources currently available to support mitigation; what states need to improve upon; and how to develop necessary frameworks to move forward with mitigation efforts..

Some states organize their capabilities by agency or department, and others opt to organize by type of capability. However the state planning team chooses to inventory and organize its assessment, it is important to identify whether each capability supports, actively facilitates, or is in conflict with risk reduction. Capabilities that support mitigation should be encouraged and strengthened. The state planning team should consider how capabilities that are in conflict with hazard mitigation could be amended to better support risk reduction.

LEVERAGING THE STATE PREPAREDNESS REPORT

Every year, states are required to complete both the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and State Preparedness Report (SPR). Through THIRA, states define their capability targets for core capabilities to be able to prevent, protect from, mitigate against, respond to, and recover from the impacts of natural and human made hazards. In the SPR, the state assesses its current capability levels against these targets. The state identifies its current level of capability, with contextual information about its identified capabilities, in five areas: planning, organization, equipment, training, and exercise.

There are seven mitigation core capabilities:

- Threats and hazard identification,
- Risk and disaster resilience assessment,
- Planning,
- Long-term vulnerability reduction,
- Community resilience,
- Public information and warning, and
- Operational coordination.

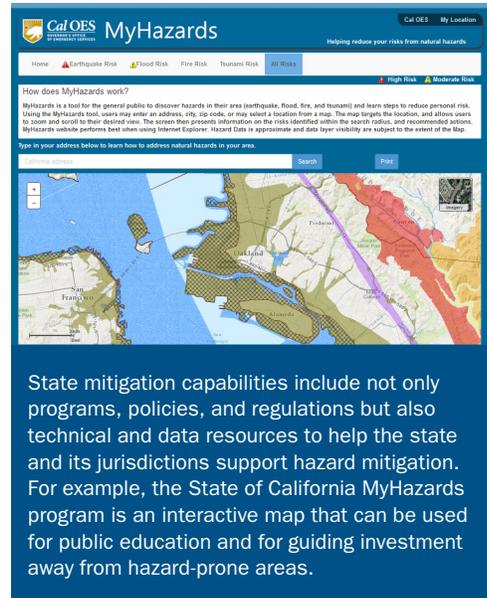
States should enhance efficiency between the SPR and the hazard mitigation plan's capability assessment by reviewing the mitigation core capabilities, identifying how these capabilities will enhance the assessment in the plan, and determining how to better align the capabilities identified in the future. For more information about THIRA and the SPR, visit the Resources Section at the end of this Bulletin.

State capabilities are not limited to the legal, regulatory, and programmatic framework for mitigation. States may want to include an assessment of “people-powered” capabilities, like administrative, technical, volunteer, or advocacy group capabilities. Additionally, the state should include an assessment of any technical or data tools available to support hazard mitigation. For example, California’s MyHazards and MyPlan websites provide online access to hazard mapping; this is a technical capability that can help ensure that state investments do not increase vulnerabilities.

Because all state mitigation plans are updates, they must account for changes in mitigation capabilities. While there may be a core of state mitigation capabilities that stay the same between plan updates, not all capabilities will be static. The plan update process provides an opportunity for the state to re-evaluate its pre- and post-disaster laws, regulations, policies, programs, administrative and technical staffing, and funding. The updated state hazard mitigation plan must address the state’s capabilities that have changed since the approval of the previous plan. The state may have identified laws, regulations, and policies that could be amended to integrate mitigation actions or to remove provisions that are in conflict with previously approved mitigation efforts. The updated state hazard mitigation plan should describe progress in modifying these policies, laws, or regulations and identify where opportunities for integration still remain.

Additionally, the capability assessment should incorporate any new capabilities that have emerged in the past five years. For example, in 2015, the State of New York began implementing the Community Risk and Resiliency Act, a regulation designed to ensure that certain state programs take into account future climate risks caused by storm surge, sea level rise, or flooding. This legislation is a new capability that may increase New York’s ability to manage the impacts of hazards. Similarly, Colorado has adopted a multi-hazard *Resilience Framework* to leverage capabilities and advance mitigation across state agencies. States should describe any new policies, programs, or funding sources like these that support hazard mitigation.

The plan update process provides an opportunity to improve upon the previous capability assessment. To do this, the state capability assessment should include a general summary of obstacles and challenges encountered during the previous plan cycle. It should also include how the overall state capabilities have changed since the previous plan’s approval. The state should use the update process to identify ways it can overcome these obstacles and challenges and address any conflicts highlighted in the state hazard mitigation plan.



USING THE PROGRAM CONSULTATION TO STRENGTHEN MITIGATION CAPABILITIES

The State Mitigation Program Consultation between the state and FEMA (as established in the Guide) is an annual collaborative meeting that will inform updates to the state capability assessment. After each year’s consultation is completed, a State Mitigation Program Consultation summary is prepared. This summary describes the mitigation program strengths, specific challenges to advancing mitigation, and opportunities for improving mitigation capabilities. The state planning team should review these summaries and incorporate comments and/or highlights about the state’s mitigation capabilities into the updated mitigation plan.

The administration of the National Flood Insurance Program, (NFIP), the Community Rating System (CRS), and the Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning Program (Risk MAP) is a key component of state hazard management capabilities.

The U.S. Congress established the NFIP with the passage of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968. The CRS, part of the NFIP, is a voluntary incentive program that recognizes and encourages community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum NFIP requirements. This is done by providing flood insurance premium discounts to property owners in communities participating in the CRS program. Credit points are earned for a wide range of local floodplain management activities; the total number of points determines the amount of flood insurance premium discounts to policyholders.

FEMA is working with federal, state, tribal, and local partners to identify flood risk and help reduce that risk through the Risk MAP program. Risk MAP provides high quality flood maps and information, tools to better assess the risk from flooding, and planning and outreach support to communities to help them take action to reduce (or mitigate) flood risk.

These three programs are essential state capabilities for flood risk reduction. The state hazard mitigation plan should identify the agency(ies) or department(s) managing the administration of the NFIP and CRS and evaluate available staffing and resources at the state level. This discussion should include the number of communities participating in the NFIP and CRS throughout the state, which is available from [the NFIP Community Status Book](#). States can provide this information as a narrative summary and/or include tables with more specific community data related to the NFIP and CRS, like the number of policies in force in each community or the CRS class of participating communities. The state capability assessment should also describe the activities and services provided to local communities in support of the NFIP and CRS, like Community Assistance Visits (CAVs) or Community Assistance Contacts (CACs). CAVs and CACs are two methods FEMA and state agencies (acting on behalf of FEMA) use to identify community floodplain management program deficiencies and to provide technical assistance to resolve these issues. They are an important part of ensuring compliance with the NFIP. It is important that the capability assessment identify any implementation challenges for the NFIP and CRS and describe what the state is doing to address those challenges.

Likewise, the state capability assessment must include a discussion of the state's participation in and support of the Risk MAP program. The state should provide information regarding watersheds and communities where mapping updates are taking place and how the state is supporting the Risk MAP program. For example:

- How is the state providing data and information to support the creation of Risk MAP products?
- How is the state encouraging the use of Risk MAP products in local hazard mitigation plans (thus, enhancing the capabilities of local communities to communicate risk)?
- How is the state educating its population about risk in the state through Risk MAP?

Participation in and support of the NFIP, CRS, and Risk MAP programs are flood-focused capabilities, but states should discuss the administration of or participation in any other hazard-specific mitigation programs. For example, states in



Execution of the NFIP, CRS, and Risk MAP programs are key state capabilities that provide flood hazard data, tools to assess flood risk, and planning and outreach support. Residents look at new preliminary flood maps at an open house in Hancock County. Image: Jennifer Smits/FEMA, Bay St. Louis, MS

the Pacific Northwest participate in tsunami readiness and mitigation programs. Other areas may participate in federal or state wildfire, drought, earthquake, or tornado mitigation programs. Describing participation in these programs may overlap with the discussion about local coordination and mitigation capabilities (see Step 4) in terms of increasing local communities' capacity to understand, communicate, and mitigate their risks.

Overall, this step of the capability assessment is not simply a list or report of existing programs but rather a comprehensive evaluation based on the state's existing capabilities that demonstrates the state's commitment to mitigation. This process will enable the state to identify a wide range of resources from which to implement mitigation activities, as well as reveal areas to target improvements. The capability assessment must include a summary of known obstacles and challenges so that the mitigation strategy can reduce obstacles and fill gaps in available resources.

Step 2: Discuss State Funding Capabilities for Hazard Mitigation

After assessing the pre- and post-disaster policies and programs, states must discuss and evaluate their funding capabilities. Funding capabilities are the resources that the state has access to or is eligible to use to fund mitigation efforts. This discussion must include a description of how the state has used its own funding for hazard mitigation projects and how FEMA mitigation programs and funding sources were used. The state should highlight positive aspects and areas where it needs to seek outside funding sources. States may also want to discuss their capability to administer and effectively spend grant funding.

This table is an example of how the state could organize its assessment of state hazard mitigation capabilities. Source: State of Nevada Enhanced Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2013.

FUNDING AGENCY (FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL, PRIVATE)	HAZARD	PROGRAM	TYPE OF HAZARD MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY		STATE INVOLVEMENT			DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM, POLICY, REGULATION; LINKS
			Pre-Disaster	Post-Disaster	Support	Facilitate	Funds	
U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	All Hazards	Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)	√	√	√	√		Grants to develop viable communities, principally for low and moderate income persons. CDBG funds available through Disaster Recovery Initiative. Contingent upon Presidential Disaster declaration. http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs
HUD	All Hazards	Disaster Recovery Assistance		√	√	√		Disaster relief and recovery assistance in the form of special mortgage financing for rehabilitation of impacted homes. https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/cdbg-dr/
HUD	All Hazards	HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program	√		√	√		This program supports multi-jurisdictional regional efforts that integrate housing, economic development, transportation, water infrastructure and environmental planning, and assists regional entities and consortia of local governments with integrated decision-making. www.hud.gov/sustainability

State funding for mitigation should look across the agencies, departments, and stakeholders participating in the planning process to identify available state funding sources. These funding sources can include resources earmarked for mitigation projects that protect state assets and sources that can be applied to local projects. State funding for mitigation should not be limited to grant programs. Consider, for example, the use of low-interest economic development or infrastructure protection loans, sales taxes, or other in-kind funding sources that have been used in the past. If there are dedicated streams of mitigation funding or other incentives available for mitigation, they should be included in this discussion.

According to the Guide, any discussion of funding capabilities must discuss how the state has used FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) programs, including the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP); Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Program; and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Program. The funding capabilities should also address the state’s use of Section 406 mitigation funds under the Public Assistance Program (categories C through G), if that funding mechanism has been used. This discussion is not just a list of which FEMA programs were used in the past five years; it should include a narrative of how the funds were used to reduce risk and increase resilience. States may want to include an inventory of the amount of funding obligated under each program, where funds were spent, if state funds were leveraged to cover the non-federal match, and what kinds of projects or plans were funded under the FEMA programs.

When evaluating state funding capabilities, it is important to remember that mitigation actions may require assistance from a combination of partners to implement. Projects may be implemented using: federal grants and funding; state-budgeted funding to match federal grants or to support state grant programs; capital improvement plans; property owner personal finances; and other means. The technical assistance to implement a mitigation action may come from a combination of engineers, technical experts, grant writers and managers, and project champions from all levels of government and community organizations. Consider the full range of funding capabilities and funding partners in the capability assessment.

Another key aspect of state funding capability relates to how the state prioritizes its communities to receive planning and project grants. The state’s discussion of prioritization ensures that investment decisions and grants all support the state priorities for mitigation actions. Prioritizing communities that would receive planning and project grants is also important in identifying and directing investments to the most at-risk locations. For example, several states prioritize acquisition projects on repetitive loss properties above other project grants because those activities permanently eliminate the possibility of losses on the state’s most vulnerable structures. The state planning team should determine the exact set of criteria used, but one of the principal criterion for prioritization must always be a benefit-cost review.

ENHANCED STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO MITIGATION CAPABILITIES

A FEMA-approved, enhanced state hazard mitigation plan documents sustained, proven commitment to hazard mitigation. The enhanced status acknowledges the coordinated effort a state is taking to reduce losses, protect life and property, and create safer communities. Approval of an enhanced state hazard mitigation plan results in eligibility for increased Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding.

With respect to mitigation capabilities, states with enhanced mitigation plans are able to demonstrate a comprehensive approach to advancing risk reduction and resilience by lessening the impact of disasters through the development, implementation, and coordination of a variety of capabilities and resources. Enhanced state hazard mitigation plans also exhibit successful application of a statewide mitigation program to implement mitigation actions and to achieve mitigation goals.

Additional information about enhanced plan requirements is found in the Guide. Enhanced states should also coordinate with FEMA Regional mitigation planning staff.

Step 3: Describe and Analyze the Effectiveness of Local and Tribal Mitigation Capabilities

Because disasters are inherently local events, the state capability assessment would not be complete without examining the effectiveness of mitigation capabilities at the local and tribal (if applicable) level. The state bears the responsibility of supporting local and tribal governments with mitigation planning through training, technical assistance, and, when available, funding. This support ensures that individual communities are aware of data, resources, and state priorities for mitigation that should be incorporated into local plans. Examining local mitigation capabilities and strategies also informs and influences the state plan's mitigation priorities. This step, often called the "local roll-up" of mitigation capabilities, ensures that the state understands local capabilities. It also provides an opportunity for the state to identify and review local and tribal mitigation capabilities and develop a process to support local and tribal hazard mitigation efforts.

This inclusion of local and tribal mitigation capabilities does not mean that the state should include every capability identified in local and tribal plans. Instead, the state plan must include a general summary of the current local and tribal policies, programs, funding, and other capabilities of communities to accomplish hazard mitigation. Consider the following questions:

- Do local and tribal governments use any model codes or ordinances, like the International Code Council's building code?
- Do any local or tribal governments go beyond federal and state minimum floodplain management standards? If so, what are those higher standards?
- Have public investment policies at the local or tribal level caused problems that would be in conflict with state, local, or tribal mitigation goals?
- Are there any communities that have enacted hazard-specific zoning or land use policies?
- Do any communities provide incentives for hazard mitigation or hazard-resistant design into their policies, programs, and capabilities? Have these initiatives been successful in reducing risk?
- Have any communities been particularly successful in leveraging resources for mitigation?
- How could successful local and tribal mitigation capabilities and actions be shared and encouraged in other communities?

Like the discussion of state capabilities, this should not result in just a list of local and tribal capabilities. It must also address the effectiveness of these policies, programs, and capabilities, discuss potential challenges to implementation, and describe any opportunities that may exist for implementing mitigation actions using local and tribal capabilities. Potential challenges may include things like limited financial and/or staffing resources; the lack of an informed public; etc. Where there are challenges, though, there are usually opportunities. The evaluation of the effectiveness of local and tribal mitigation capabilities must also discuss those opportunities, such as emerging capabilities and local implementation tools, policies, and programs that have proven to be effective in achieving mitigation objectives.

CRITERIA FOR PRIORITIZING COMMUNITIES FOR PLANNING AND PROJECT GRANTS

State planning teams can and should develop their own criteria for giving project and planning grants. Common criteria for selecting communities should include consideration for:

- Communities with the highest risk;
- Repetitive loss properties; and
- Communities with the most intense development pressures.

Other criteria considerations often include:

- Type of mitigation project;
- Potential impact on the community;
- Impact on the environment; and
- Community commitment to mitigation.

Whatever the final criteria are, one of the principal elements included must be an assessment of how benefits are maximized.

STEP 4: Describe the State's Process for Supporting Local and Tribal Mitigation Planning

Many communities require assistance to develop their hazard mitigation plans and to implement mitigation actions and projects. This is especially true of smaller communities that have limited or no resources. States are responsible for providing technical assistance and training to local governments and assisting them with HMA planning grant applications and local mitigation plan development. Therefore, the state hazard mitigation plan must discuss how the state supports the development and update of FEMA-approvable local and tribal mitigation plans and where those plans exist.

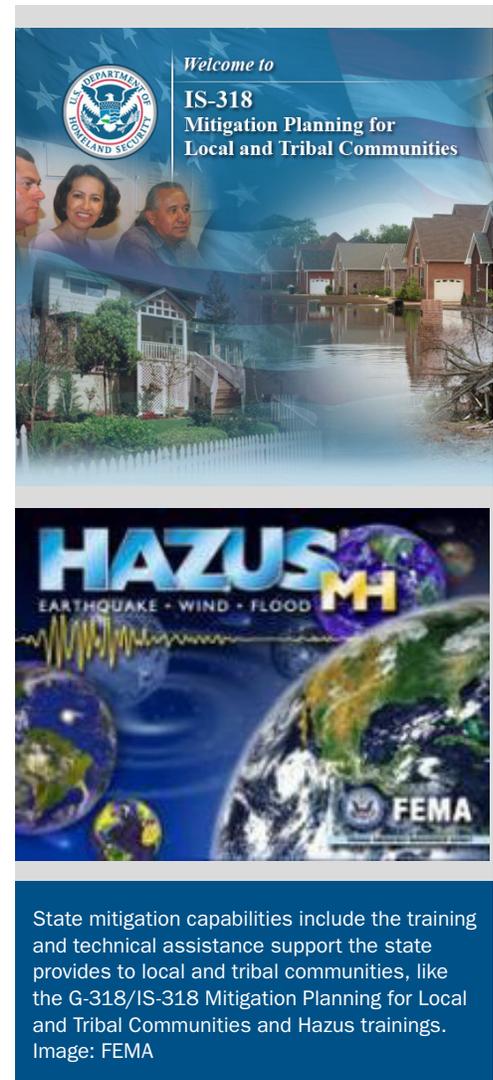
In addressing training capabilities, states should discuss what trainings are offered and how local and tribal governments can request training. Consider including the number and type of mitigation planning, risk assessment, mitigation implementation, grants management, or other trainings available, and discuss any trainings that have been requested but are not yet available. These training gaps could be addressed in the state mitigation strategy. States can also include descriptions of any exercises that support mitigation, as exercises test and build capabilities.

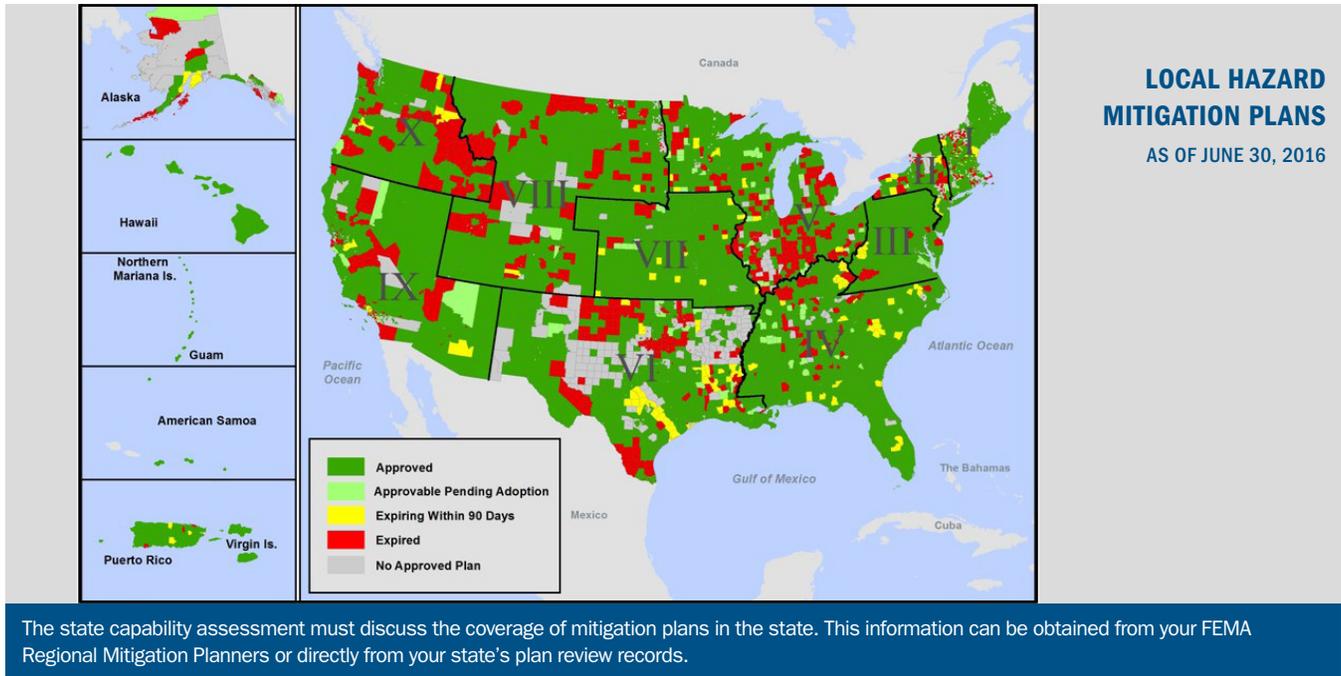
State technical assistance is essential to directing state resources toward effective mitigation planning. States should describe the types of technical assistance provided to communities, such as providing state risk assessment data for use in local and tribal plans, participating in and providing guidance at planning meetings, and working with communities to ensure their plan will be approved. The plan should include information about hazard mitigation training available from the State Hazard Mitigation Officer's (SHMO) office, as well as mitigation-related training available from other state agencies or departments.

Funding prioritization criteria are discussed in more detail in Step 3, but the discussion of local coordination should also describe the process the state uses to educate local and tribal communities on grant availability, grant applications, and managing mitigation funds. Keep in mind that funding capabilities may be federal, state, or private in nature, and may be provided by a number of different departments statewide.

The state mitigation plan's discussion of local coordination must include a summary of the coverage of mitigation plans in the state. Consider including a map and/or table of mitigation plan status, including where plans are FEMA-approved, approvable pending adoption, in progress, expired, or not present. States can work with the FEMA Regional staff to access data from the Mitigation Planning Portal on the status and coverage of plans.

The state mitigation plan and local and tribal mitigation plans should work together to build a more resilient state, so the plan must describe the process and time frame used to coordinate and link risk assessments and mitigation strategy information between local, tribal, and state mitigation plans. Depending on the number of communities in the state, establishing an efficient and valuable process of linking risk assessments and mitigation strategies from local and tribal mitigation plans may be a challenge.





States may want to retrieve local information as the SHMO or state mitigation planner reviews plans, looking for themes, project types, vulnerable areas, and noting where the local plan confirms or diverges from state priorities. Others may delegate this responsibility to the state planning team or a subcommittee annually, charging them with identifying linkages and suggesting updates to the state plan based on local information. If this process was not successful in the previous planning cycle, states should describe why the process did not work and make changes as appropriate. The state capability assessment must describe the process and time frame used to review and submit approvable local and tribal mitigation plans to FEMA. State planning teams should consider the following questions when documenting the plan review and approval process:

- Are local and tribal plans reviewed only when there is a complete draft? Are partial submissions of plan sections permitted under the state process?
- How many days does it typically take for a plan to be reviewed and, if it meets all requirements, sent to FEMA for review?
- If a plan does not meet all requirements after state review, what is the process for revision and resubmission?

The state capability assessment must summarize any barriers to developing or updating, adopting, or implementing mitigation plans and provide suggested solutions to removing those barriers. Barriers may include individual communities not completing the adoption and approval process, limits to funding or technical assistance, lack of political will or motivation to implement mitigation plans, etc. The approaches to addressing the barriers are just that—approaches—but they lay the groundwork for improved future planning and implementation efforts. Where appropriate, consider including concrete actions that support the approaches in the state mitigation strategy.

Updated state hazard mitigation plans should include a discussion of how the funding and technical assistance for communities to complete approvable mitigation plans have changed since the approval of the previous plan. The updated state hazard mitigation plan should also discuss how technical assistance will be used to improve the future effectiveness of local plans, particularly those of the more vulnerable communities. This discussion can include:

- Assistance to communities to include effective and feasible mitigation projects in their mitigation strategies;
- Planning workshops or trainings;

- Planning grant application development;
- Improved risk assessment, hazard data, or Hazus technical assistance; and
- Improved plan review process to reduce the number of plan revisions required to achieve approval pending adoption status.

Additionally, if any disasters have occurred since the approval of the previous plan, the state capability assessment should include a description of the steps taken to encourage affected communities to complete or update their mitigation plans to reflect changes in vulnerability or in state priorities. The updated plan should evaluate the previous plan's approach to prioritizing local assistance and identify successes and challenges encountered in the past five years. If the evaluation warrants changes to the prioritization approach, the updated plan should highlight the changes and how they will address stated challenges.

Overall, completing this step will ensure the state's process for reviewing and approving local and tribal mitigation plans is streamlined, develop a common understanding of risk statewide, and align mitigation strategies between state, local, and tribal plans.

LEVERAGING STAKEHOLDERS TO ASSESS CAPABILITIES

As discussed in the State Mitigation Planning Key Topics Bulletin: Planning Process, all levels of government have a role in hazard mitigation and their partnerships help to build resiliency nationally. Local, state, and federal governments each contribute to implementing mitigation actions and managing hazards. Capturing the workflow of how hazard mitigation is implemented for the state hazard mitigation plan provides the opportunity to evaluate the process, explain the process to stakeholders implementing a project for the first time, and identify actions to improve the process and sell successes.

Mitigation also benefits from partnerships between the seven sectors identified in the Guide: Emergency Management, Economic Development, Land Use and Development, Housing, Health and Social Services, Infrastructure, and Natural and Cultural Resources. Each sector contributes to the pre- and post-disaster capability of the state, and these partnerships can leverage resources to implement the state's hazard mitigation plan. Examples of each sector's possible contributions to state mitigation capabilities are as follows:

- **Emergency Management** agencies may lead hazard mitigation planning and usually have a leading role in mitigation grants management.
- **Economic Development** organizations may provide technical assistance to small business owners and link them to available loans and grants, and they may also have a role in understanding laws and policies related to development.
- **Land Use and Development** agencies may govern development regulations that can direct development away from hazardous areas through planning, ordinances, and building codes at both the local and state levels.
- **Housing** agencies assist in providing safe and affordable housing before, during, and after disasters; their capabilities can support resilience and recovery initiatives.
- **Health and Social Services** entities may add outreach and education capabilities, especially in encouraging individuals to implement small mitigation projects on their own properties.
- **Infrastructure** agencies may assist in funding and/or constructing projects that mitigate natural hazards and provide access to and from disaster areas.
- **Natural and Cultural Resources** agencies may have documented guidance or best practices for how to treat historic or culturally significant properties. They may also have access to funding streams that complement and implement mitigation projects.

Together, representatives of diverse sectors from all levels of government, organizations, and business have a role in hazard mitigation. Leveraging stakeholders allows the state capability assessment to go beyond the core plan developers' capabilities and give a broader look at all existing capabilities. Integrating the tools that each entity brings to the process strengthens the state hazard mitigation plan with champions to implement actions, funding streams that match project goals, and technical assistance from experts in their field. Linking capabilities to the mitigation strategy means actions are more likely to be implemented. Engaging sectors and stakeholders is discussed in more detail in FEMA's [State Mitigation Planning Key Topics Bulletins: Planning Process](#).

INCREASING RESILIENCE BY ASSESSING AND GROWING MITIGATION CAPABILITIES

Resilience is the capacity of communities to survive, adapt, grow, and even transform when conditions require it in the face of stresses and shocks. Building resilience is about making communities better prepared to withstand hazard events and better able to bounce back quickly and emerge stronger from these events. Assessing mitigation capabilities is an essential step toward resilience; building resilience cannot effectively occur unless there has been an honest assessment of the state's capabilities to plan, manage, and assign resources toward long-term hazard risk reduction.

RESOURCES

The following inventory of resources can be used to update the state mitigation strategy. Visit FEMA's [Hazard Mitigation Planning](#) webpage for additional resources.

HAZARD MITIGATION ASSISTANCE GUIDANCE AND ADDENDUM

[Hazard Mitigation Assistance Guidance and Addendum](#), February 2015, details the specific criteria of the three Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) programs: HMGP, PDM, and FMA. The guidance consolidates each program's eligibility information and outlines the common elements and unique requirements among the grant programs. This guidance document is updated periodically. Visit the [Hazard Mitigation Assistance website](#) for more up-to-date information.

FEMA'S LOCAL MITIGATION PLANNING HANDBOOK

Task 4 of the [Local Mitigation Planning Handbook](#), March 2013, provides a framework for reviewing community capabilities. While this document is intended for the development of local plans, it clearly describes the types of capabilities that may be available in communities and states. The Capability Assessment Worksheet included in the handbook can be adapted to help state planning teams assess state programs, policies, and regulations related to hazard mitigation. In addition, a review of the Local Mitigation Planning Handbook will help members of the state planning team fully understand the context and process recommended by FEMA for the development of local mitigation plans.

NATIONAL MITIGATION FRAMEWORK

The [National Mitigation Framework](#), May 2013, fosters a culture of preparedness centered on risk and resilience. The National Mitigation Framework provides context for how the whole community works together and how mitigation efforts relate to other parts of national preparedness. The National Mitigation Framework covers the seven core capabilities necessary to reduce the loss of life and property: threat and hazard identification; risk and disaster resilience assessment; planning; community resilience; public information and warning; long-term vulnerability reduction; and operational coordination. The discussion and description of these capabilities may help states frame their own capability assessments for state mitigation plans.

STATE HAZARD MITIGATION PLANS

Because there are many different ways of organizing the state mitigation capabilities, it may be helpful to review other state mitigation plans for ideas on organization and on the depth and breadth of capabilities that exist in other locations. Many state hazard mitigation plans are available from the emergency management agencies or departments of homeland security. Visit FEMA's [directory of State Hazard Mitigation Officers](#) to obtain the websites of each state's emergency management agency.

STATE PREPAREDNESS REPORT

[State Preparedness Report](#) is a self-assessment of a jurisdiction's current capability levels against the capability targets identified in the [Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment](#). Any state or territory receiving federal preparedness assistance administered by the Department of Homeland Security is required to prepare an annual report, which is used to make programmatic decisions to build and sustain, deliver, and validate capabilities.

SILVER JACKETS PROGRAM

The [Silver Jackets Program](#), a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers interagency flood risk management initiative, enlists teams in states across the country to apply shared knowledge to response, recovery, and mitigation initiatives that will reduce flood loss. Visit the Silver Jackets Program online and select your state team to view available resources and understand which organizations are involved in your state Silver Jackets team. These organizations usually have state-level capabilities that can support the state mitigation program.