

# Mitigation Framework Leadership Group 2022 Year in Review



The Mitigation Framework Leadership Group (MitFLG) provides a coordinating structure for mitigation across the federal government and with partners in mitigation nationally. The MitFLG operates according to the National Mitigation Framework (NMF), and its mission is to strengthen the nation's disaster resilience by expanding mitigation awareness, coordination, and action. FEMA, in coordination with other federal agencies, established and leads the MitFLG, which is composed of federal and state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) public sector representatives.

The MitFLG integrates federal efforts to deliver the mitigation core capabilities in the NMF, assesses the effectiveness of these capabilities across the United States, catalyzes risk reduction measures across the country by gathering interagency and intergovernmental perspectives on mitigation policy, and increases coordination in support of federal agency priorities. This summary outlines MitFLG activities in 2022.

## 2022 Focus Area: Investments in Whole Community Resilience

As in years past, the MitFLG collaborated to invest in whole community resilience and mitigation to support local community capacity building. MitFLG-led activities included considering place-based technical assistance, improving access to mitigation funding resources, and encouraging building code adoption and enforcement.

The MitFLG stood ready to support significant legislation that improved resilience. The first piece of legislation came at the start of Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, when the Biden-Harris Administration passed the [H.R. 3684 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#), signed into law as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in November 2021, which provided significant funding to federal agencies in support of wide-ranging new and improved infrastructure, clean energy transmission, clean drinking water, and access to reliable high-speed internet. The second piece of legislation, signed into law August 2022, was the [H.R. 5376 Inflation Reduction Act of 2022](#), a federal bill which aimed to reduce the deficit and combat the climate crisis through clean energy promotion. MitFLG member agencies worked together to prepare for the funding to ensure new and existing programs complemented each other in support of whole community resilience.

The MitFLG was also directed by the White House to lead the *National Initiative to Advance Building Codes (NIABC)* to support community resilience amidst intensifying climate change. In response to this initiative and request for support, the MitFLG transitioned to a project-based task force structure to advance various initiatives through interagency collaboration and coordination.

The MitFLG will continue to coordinate with the Executive Office of the President (EOP) to tackle climate change and mitigation challenges through a whole-of-government approach.



# FEMA

# Implementation Team and Task Force Initiatives

The [National Mitigation Investment Strategy](#) (*Investment Strategy*) is a product the MitFLG developed and subsequently published in 2019. The goal of the *Investment Strategy* is to identify, prioritize, and guide investments in pre- and post-disaster resilience and hazard mitigation-related activities. The Implementation Team served as a catalyst to identify and promote investments in mitigation that are effective in achieving the *Investment Strategy* goals. In 2022, the Implementation Team delivered high-impact deliverables and then stood down to usher in project-based MitFLG task forces. The Implementation Team—as well as the subsequent MitFLG task force structure—collaborated across multiple levels of government to drive mitigative action through initiatives that align to *Investment Strategy* recommendations and incorporate climate change and equity as catalysts for increasing whole community resilience.

## **National Initiative to Advance Building Codes**

In June 2022, the White House and FEMA announced the *NIABC* as a whole-of government approach to support community resilience through the adoption of modern building codes. The announcement was made at Florida International University's Wall of Wind by White House National Climate Advisor Ali Zaidi, FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell, and other local and federal officials. The MitFLG was directed by the White House to coordinate with agencies to implement the *NIABC*, which was formally recognized in a White House [Fact Sheet](#).

The MitFLG Implementation Team swiftly built a new interagency Building Codes Task Force consisting of 50 stakeholders, including an SLTT MitFLG member, with representation from 16 departments or agencies. Operating under a compact schedule set forth by the White House, the Building Codes Task Force facilitated the collection of 15 Supplemental Feedback Forms or responses from federal partners, which continued the Federal Landscape Analysis process to collect data from federal agencies on gaps and opportunities that may impact the adoption, administration, or enforcement of modern building codes; conducted six workshops with key federal and non-federal partners to create critical opportunities for dialog and collaboration as well as inform the Federal Landscape Analysis; completed the Federal Landscape Analysis; oversaw the creation of agency building codes implementation plans; and delivered a progress report to the White House.

## **Continued Support of the Utah Wasatch Front**

From FY 20–22, the Implementation Team demonstrated the value of whole community involvement in a local pilot project, affecting real-world change using the principles in the *Investment Strategy*. The Implementation Team supported the joint FEMA and Utah development of the [Wasatch Front Unreinforced Masonry \(URM\) Risk Reduction Strategy](#), which provides guidance to Utah communities on how to identify risk and take steps to address it. The URM Strategy was published in March 2021, around the one-year anniversary of the Magna, Utah magnitude 5.2 earthquake.

In partnership with the State of Utah, the Utah State Board of Education, and additional partners, the Implementation Team helped develop the [Utah K-12 Public Schools URM Inventory](#). The inventory, published in February 2022, identified 119 school campuses with URM construction, where 72,126 children spend some or all of their school hours. As a result of the *Utah K-12 Public Schools URM Inventory*, the Utah State Legislature approved a bill in March 2022 that directed \$171 million in one-time funding to help Utah schools upgrade multiple URM buildings across the State. The Implementation Team compiled additional funding opportunities by creating a URM School Funding Opportunities resource document, identifying innovative funding options across the federal government to help alleviate the financial burden of performing building retrofits and other mitigative actions on schools with URM.

The work along Utah’s Wasatch Front provides a model for what can be done in other states. Published in January 2022, the [Wasatch Front URM Risk Reduction Strategy Best Practices and Replicability](#) document is intended to support and guide the development of URM risk reduction programs across the United States by outlining best practices and replicability from the Wasatch Front. The guidance can be used by state agencies and local governments to develop URM strategies and by the MitFLG in the selection of future *Investment Strategy* projects.

## Place-Based Technical Assistance

In FY 21–22, the Implementation Team reflected on best practices from the Utah Wasatch Front collaboration and identified key requirements and criteria for use in prioritizing and selecting the next place-based project. Along with alignment to the *Investment Strategy*, project requirements included, but are not limited to, the existence of a local champion, the need for outside support, resourcing availability, and partner involvement.

A Project Nomination application for selecting the next project community was developed and distributed to MitFLG membership. The MitFLG acknowledged the need to elevate this effort and voted to stand-up the Place-Based Technical Assistance Task Force. Scoping discussions have begun to best leverage the interagency collaboration and expertise of the MitFLG.

## MitFLG Common Lexicon

The Implementation Team developed a common lexicon to support *Investment Strategy* Recommendation 1.1: “Make Mitigation Investment Relevant.” To do so, the Implementation Team partnered with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) librarians to conduct a literature review and identify existing definitions for select mitigation terms from across federal agencies and international organizations. Key, shared concepts were identified using a natural language processing system, and the group developed a common lexicon to ensure the final definitions reflected research and literature themes.

One definition developed by the group is being used by FEMA to define “disaster suffering.” With MitFLG support, the adopted definition of disaster suffering is as follows: “*Disaster suffering is any negative impact resulting from disasters that harm community and personal well-being. These negative impacts include, but are not limited to, mental, physical, emotional, social, cultural, occupational, economic, environmental, and spiritual dimensions of well-being.*”

## Recovery and Resilience Resource Library

The Implementation Team developed a communications and outreach strategy focused on the [Recovery and Resilience Resource Library](#) and its socialization. Collaboration with the Recovery Support Function Leadership Group (RSFLG) led to the identification of critical interagency, association, and organization partners who would most benefit from receiving the resource. The Recovery and Resilience Resource Library Socialization deliverable captured the 33 agencies and organizations that received the outreach, the process for library updates and maintenance, and the next steps.

Simultaneously, the Implementation Team developed a proposal for a hazard mitigation resource portal that would provide a single platform for funding opportunities, technical assistance, and example projects for mitigation project decision makers. Funding opportunities and project funding case studies were identified to inform the design and content of the future portal. The Implementation Team also developed end user personas to conceptualize who would access the portal and what resources they might need. The Mitigation Portal Personas deliverable captured those

concepts, with the initial persona focus being on SLTT decision makers. The analysis of those personas yielded resource, access, and functionality considerations for the future portal.

## Strategic Outlook for 2023

In 2022, during the third quarter MitFLG meeting, the MitFLG confirmed many of the Implementation Team deliverables and officially transitioned to a project-based task force structure to advance specific initiatives. This new structure created an opportunity for the MitFLG to closely align with current and future White House priorities as well as elevate mitigation projects that originate from its interagency membership.

The final meeting of 2022 highlighted additional opportunities for collaboration and heightened impact. There are opportunities for MitFLG membership to more strongly coordinate with the EOP to tackle climate issues and mitigation challenges alongside White House partners. Synergies were also identified with the RSFLG and the Emergency Support Function Leadership Group (ESFLG).

In 2023, the MitFLG will continue to provide support and strategic direction for the task force activities and will coordinate its activities to advance implementation of current Executive Orders on equity and climate change. Among other key activities, the MitFLG will work to strengthen communication and collaboration with its White House partners and the RSFLG and ESFLG, allowing for mitigation, response, and recovery to holistically improve whole community resilience.

## Resources

- [FEMA Recovery and Resilience Resource Library](#)
- [H.R. 3684 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#)
- [H.R. 5376 Inflation Reduction Act of 2022](#)
- [National Mitigation Investment Strategy](#)
- [Wasatch Front Unreinforced Masonry \(URM\) Risk Reduction Strategy](#)
- [Utah K-12 Public Schools URM Inventory](#)
- [Wasatch Front URM Risk Reduction Strategy Best Practices and Replicability](#)
- [FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Launches Initiative to Modernize Building Codes, Improve Climate Resilience, and Reduce Energy Costs](#)