

Hazard Mitigation Planning for Tribal Governments

This fact sheet provides an overview of hazard mitigation planning for Tribal Nations and governments.

Natural hazards can cause loss of life and damage buildings and infrastructure. These events can harm a tribe's economic, social and environmental well-being, as well. Hazard mitigation lessens the impacts of natural hazards by reducing loss of life and property. Hazard mitigation plans raise awareness of hazards, risks and vulnerabilities. They also identify ways to reduce risk and focus tribal resources.

The Tribal Mitigation Planning Process

There are several steps in the mitigation planning process for tribes. They include:

1. **Describe the Tribe:** Create a community profile that describes the planning area, assets and the tribe's unique characteristics.
2. **Identify Hazards:** List and provide details about hazards that could occur in the tribal planning area.
3. **Explain the Impacts of Hazards:** Describe how hazards can affect the tribe. Detail the effects of hazards on people, property, and other important tribal holdings such as sacred sites and subsistence areas. List how future conditions (e.g., climate change, land use and population changes) could change those impacts.
4. **Review the Tribe's Capability to Reduce Impacts:** Identify and describe the tribe's plans, policies and programs that could help reduce risks in the planning area. These should be relevant to identified hazards and resources.
5. **Develop the Strategy:** Identify the tribe's mitigation goals and actions. Keep in mind the tribe's risks and capabilities.
6. **Develop an Action Plan:** Provide details and prioritize actions to carry out the plan.
7. **Keep Track of Progress:** Adopt the plan. Record the progress of the mitigation program using a defined method and schedule.

Mitigation plans are living documents that change over time. As such, tribes should actively maintain them. The tribal planning team should stay engaged during the 5-year life of the plan. They should use the plan to guide decision making. FEMA can provide training and technical assistance to tribal governments as they develop, implement, maintain and update mitigation plans.



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Benefits of Hazard Mitigation for Tribal Nations and Governments

Making a hazard mitigation plan helps tribal officials:

- Increase the tribe’s awareness about hazards and vulnerabilities.
- Build partnerships to reduce risk. Partners can include tribal and non-tribal agencies, non-profit organizations, and businesses.
- Identify long-term ways to reduce risk.
- Protect sacred, cultural and economic resources for the tribe.
- Identify actions that focus on the greatest risks and vulnerabilities.
- Connect priorities and funding.

Mitigation Planning and Grants

Per the [Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act](#) (Stafford Act), a Tribal government must develop and adopt a FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan to be eligible for certain types of non-emergency disaster assistance. The Code of Federal Regulations ([44 CFR Part 201](#)) sets requirements for tribal mitigation plans. FEMA’s [Tribal Mitigation Plan Review Guide \(2017\)](#) helps officials interpret those requirements as they review and approve plans. A tribal mitigation plan can be a standalone plan or a plan that was developed as part of a multi-jurisdictional plan with other Tribal Nations or local governments. In either case, FEMA evaluates a tribal mitigation plan under the requirements of [44 CFR Section 201.7](#) (Tribal Mitigation Plans).

FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant programs support federally recognized Tribal governments as they develop mitigation plans and carry out projects. These programs include the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), HMGP Post-Fire, Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities, and Flood Mitigation Assistance. Tribes can apply directly to FEMA for assistance as “applicants,” or through a state as “sub-applicants.” Visit [Mitigation Planning and Grants](#) for more information.

FEMA provides several guides, tools and resources to help tribes develop their hazard mitigation plan.

- [The Tribal Mitigation Planning Handbook](#) focuses on practical approaches to help tribes build mitigation plans that reduce long-term risk from natural hazards.
- [The Tribal Mitigation Plan Review Guide](#) is FEMA’s policy on Tribal Mitigation Planning and includes the tribal mitigation planning requirements based on 44 CFR Part 201.
- The [Tribal Mitigation Planning and HMA Grant Application Development Job Aid \(2021\)](#) guides tribes through the process of completing an HMA planning grant application or sub-application. The end result is a FEMA-approved mitigation plan that is complete and actionable.

- [IS-350: Mitigation Planning for Tribal Communities](#). provides tribal officials, planners, emergency managers, and other partners with the information necessary to prepare and implement a Tribal hazard mitigation plan.
- Emergency Management Institute (EMI) Tribal Curriculum – links to EMI courses and programs developed for tribal officials.
- Visit [Create a Plan](#) to see mitigation planning resources and information on virtual and in-person training.
- FEMA's [Tribal Affairs](#) office connects tribal partners to FEMA staff and provides [tribal mitigation resources](#). Tribal partners may also contact their [Regional Tribal Liaison](#) for assistance.