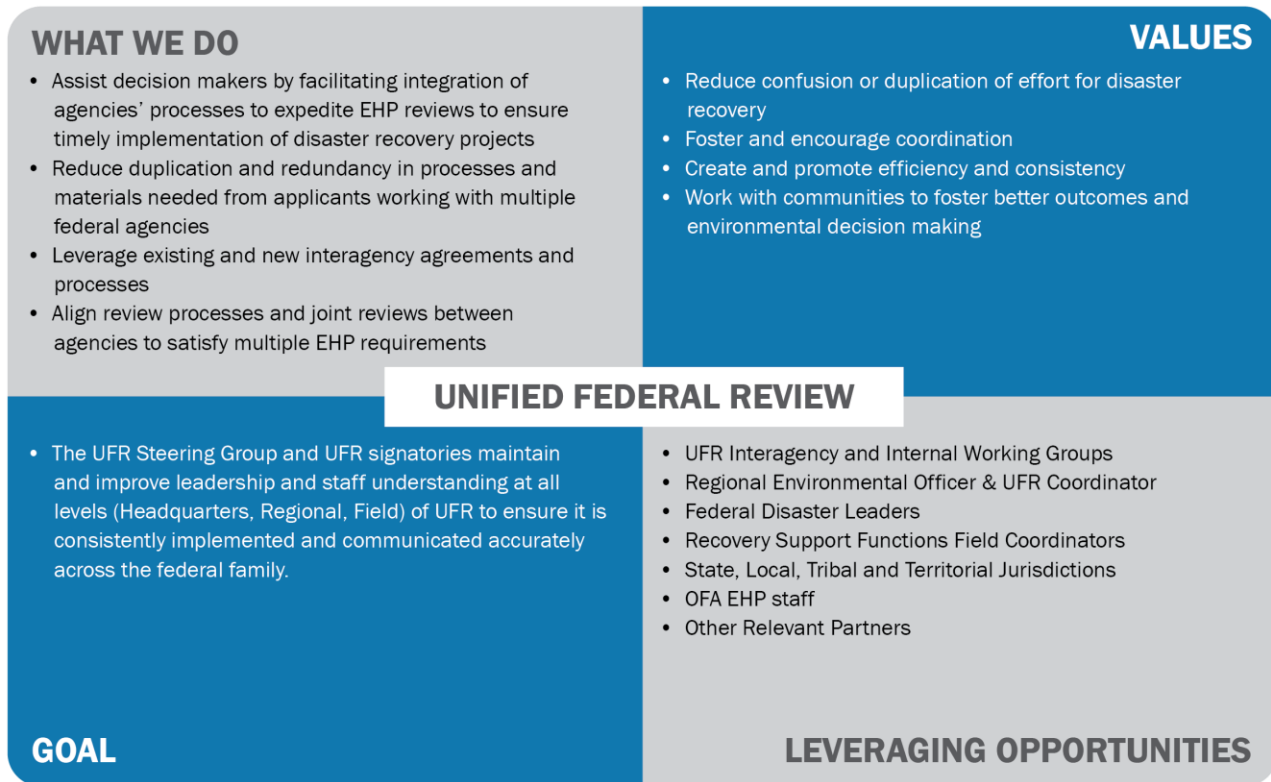


# FEMA Unified Federal Review Fact Sheet

## Overview

The establishment of the [Unified Federal Review \(UFR\)](#) process was mandated in the [Sandy Recovery Improvement Act of 2013 \(SRIA\)](#). The UFR process is essentially a framework for coordinating federal agency environmental compliance reviews for proposed disaster recovery projects. The UFR process utilizes a set of tools and mechanisms, such as Interagency Agreements, best practices, and data sharing, that were developed to foster partnerships, enhance intergovernmental coordination, and streamline federal agency Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) reviews for disaster recovery projects.



## Purpose

The purpose of UFR is to develop methods that expedite the environmental and historic preservation review process for disaster recovery projects through strengthening working relationships among federal agency partners. When more than one federal agency is involved in the same recovery project, successful UFR implementation leads to improved federal decision making and better outcomes for communities and the environment.



# FEMA

## Background

SRIA directed the President to “establish an expedited and unified interagency review process to ensure compliance with the EHP requirements under federal law relating to disaster recovery projects, in order to expedite the recovery process, consistent with applicable law.” The Unified Federal Review is guided and supported by the UFR Memorandum of Understanding of 2014 (MOU) that consists of eleven departments and agencies. The UFR MOU creates a mandate for agencies to commit staff and resources to meet their obligations which include utilizing UFR tools and mechanisms, providing training, and engaging in the UFR process. The UFR MOU consists of 11 federal departments and agencies: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Department of Energy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Advisory Council of Historic Preservation, Department of Transportation, Executive Office of the President of the United States, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of the Interior, and U.S. Department of Commerce, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Beyond this general overview, documents specific to the UFR process are available via [FEMA’s UFR Library](#).

## UFR Does & Does Not

The UFR process is intended to apply to all presidentially declared disasters. The UFR Process promotes the use of best practices and provides tools designed to address misalignments in EHP review processes, increase consistency, and leverage existing resources to create process efficiencies. Through this enhanced coordination, the UFR Process can improve the Federal Government’s assistance to state, local, and tribal governments; communities as they recover from presidentially declared disasters.

Table 2. UFR Process Does & Does Not

<b>UFR Does</b>	<b>UFR Does Not</b>
Create opportunities across agencies to expedite environmental compliance requirements.	Supersede any existing federal, state, local, or tribal environmental compliance requirements.
Reduce duplication of information from applicants among multiple agencies.	Eliminate requirements for consultations.
Leverage existing or new interagency agreements.	Change existing interagency agreements.
	Establish a single review process for agencies funding a single project.

## 3. UFR Organizational Structure

The UFR process is executed through various positions as seen in the UFR Disaster Structure chart below. The National UFR Team is located at FEMA Headquarters within the Office of Environmental and Historic Preservation (OEHP) that provides oversight for the implementation of the UFR process. The National UFR Coordinator consults with the Regional Environmental Officer (REO), the Regional UFR Coordinator, and OEHP Readiness Division to identify the appropriate UFR Advisor for the disaster. UFR Advisors are disaster-specific positions that act as a liaison and advisor to both FEMA staff and the Interagency Recovery Coordination Group (IRC) if they are activated. The UFR Advisor still

maintains coordination with the National UFR Team and Regional UFR Coordinator who all work in conjunction to support the Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator (FDRC) at the national, regional and field level.

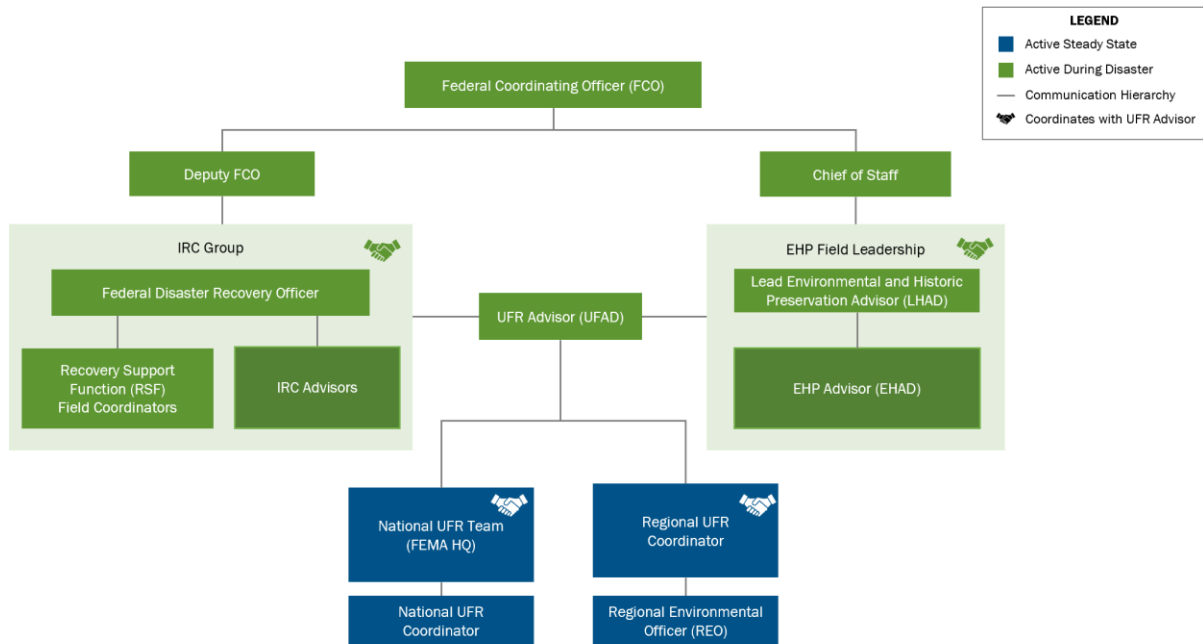


Figure 1. UFR Organizational Chart

## UFR Process Implementation

### National Level

The UFR National level is comprised of the UFR Executive Steering Group, Interagency Working Group, National UFR Team, and the National UFR Coordinator. They provide national strategic oversight for the implementation of the UFR process, assist UFR Regional Coordinators, UFR Advisors and interagency stakeholders during disaster recovery and steady state operations. Together, they build a national network and develop interagency agreements and programmatic approaches during steady state and disaster activations. The UFR Executive Steering Group includes the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation; Department of Homeland Security; Council Environmental Quality; and FEMA. Overall, the UFR Steering Group makes decisions on the continued development and implementation of UFR, documents and applies lessons learned, and reviews the UFR process annually and updates as necessary.

### Regional Offices

The UFR Regional level includes the Regional UFR Coordinator, Regional Environmental Officer, Regional Interagency Partners, and Region/State Specific UFR Working Groups. The UFR Coordinator reports to the Environmental Officer and focuses on interagency agreements and programmatic NEPA documents specific to disaster recovery in their region. The UFR process is most successful when early engagement and coordination occur among federal agencies and state, local, tribal, and territorial governments.

At the Regional level, interagency relationships are not only established but also support field operations by providing regional context for interagency coordination issues. Entities build regional networks and develop streamlined measures, interagency agreements, and programmatic approaches during steady state and disaster activations. Due

to the unique assets and needs of affected communities, the regional level of the UFR provides process implementation expertise to expedite EHP compliance. The Regional offices liaise with federal and state agency partners to identify opportunities/needs to develop and promote UFR resources including interagency agreements such as MOUs, Memorandum of Agreements, data sharing, and programmatic NEPA documents.

## **Field Offices**

The Recovery Support Function Super Leadership Group (RSFLG) is made up of multiple departments and agencies across the federal government that work together to help communities recover from a disaster. The RSFLG allows federal agencies to coordinate disaster recovery work under the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF) across the six Recovery Support Functions in order to provide communities with unified federal assistance as quickly and effectively as possible. FEMA's UFR Disaster Operations Coordinator is integrated to the RSFLG via the IRC and works on early coordination to support integration of UFR to disaster field operations. The Disaster Operations Coordinator, Federal Coordinating Officer, and FEMA Readiness Division staff work together to identify UFR staffing resources needed for a given disaster.

The UFR Advisor deploys to the disaster field office to coordinate UFR implementation at the disaster level. The UFR Advisor works with federal agencies and State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial (SLTT) governments to implement the UFR process and leverage UFR resources to navigate the complexities of interagency EHP reviews. UFR Advisors identify existing interagency agreements and programmatic NEPA documents that can be used to streamline EHP reviews. The UFR Advisor may also develop a disaster-specific MOU or data sharing agreement to drive consistency and reduce EHP review timelines.