Section 2

Hazard Mitigation Planning Basics

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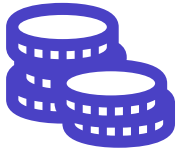
What is Hazard Mitigation Planning?

Hazard mitigation consists of long-term actions taken before disasters to reduce risk to people, property, and services:

- Focuses on reducing risk, not responding to emergencies

- Addresses natural hazards (flooding, storms, heat, etc.)

- Emphasizes long-term resilience



- Proven to reduce future losses and recovery costs

Why Hazard Mitigation Planning Matters

An HMP documents risks, priorities, and actions over time.

Through it, communities work to:

- Identify local hazards and vulnerabilities
- Define mitigation goals and priority actions
- Meet planning requirements commonly tied to FEMA mitigation funding
- Strengthen competitiveness of future grant applications

Note: Maintaining an HMP supports eligibility but does not ensure funding.

How Hazard Mitigation Planning Works

Hazard mitigation planning follows a local–state–federal framework:

- Local governments identify risks and projects
- States coordinate planning and funding submissions
- FEMA sets requirements and reviews plans
- Plans follow a five-year update cycle
- Plans must be maintained and adopted to remain current

Participation, Adoption, & Eligibility (Conceptual)

These are related but distinct concepts:

Participation: involvement in the planning process

Adoption: formal approval by a governing body

Eligibility: coverage under an approved and adopted plan

General principle: Participation supports inclusion, while adoption is generally necessary to maintain access to mitigation funding programs.

Elements of a Typical HMP

Typical Hazard Mitigation Plans include:

Stakeholder Process

- Municipalities, agencies, and partners help identify risks and priorities

Risk Assessment

- Analysis of hazards and vulnerabilities affecting the community

Mitigation Strategies

- Projects and actions that reduce risk

Implementation & Monitoring

- Tracking progress and updating the plan over time

Multi-Jurisdictional Planning: Why Counties Lead

Many municipalities participate through **county-led HMPs** to:

Share data, tools, and technical expertise

Reduce duplicative planning effort

Support municipalities with limited staff capacity

Allow local actions to be included in a regional plan

Note: Participation & documentation requirements are defined through FEMA guidance and communicated by the state.

Aligning HMPs with Local Priorities

Effective HMPs align with other local planning efforts, such as:

- Comprehensive plans
- Stormwater or flood studies
- Capital improvement programs
- Infrastructure planning
- Climate or resilience plans
- Community priorities and constraints

State & County Roles (High-Level Overview)

At a general level:

State partners typically coordinate plan review and mitigation funding applications and share guidance as available

County partners typically coordinate the planning process and support municipal participation and submissions

Note: Specific roles, timelines, and requirements vary by planning cycle and funding opportunity.