

Tribal Mitigation Planning and HMA Grant Application Development

This job aid provides considerations for developing a mitigation planning grant scope of work. Its ultimate goal is to encourage strong, comprehensive planning grant applications and subapplications. It will help users understand what is needed for a hazard mitigation plan and the level of effort and cost implications of those needs. This job aid can be used by both tribal applicants and subapplicants.

What is the purpose of hazard mitigation planning?

Mitigation planning is the process of understanding risks from natural hazards and developing and applying strategies that can reduce future damages to people, property, and the environment. Developing a tribal hazard mitigation plan also facilitates eligibility for the [Public Assistance](#), [Fire Management Assistance Grant](#) (FMAG) and [Hazard Mitigation Assistance](#) (HMA) programs.

FEMA mitigation planning program provides guidance, training, and technical assistance to support Indian tribal governments ("tribes") with developing and implementing mitigation plans. FEMA's HMA program provides grants to tribes that want to develop or update their mitigation plans as well as for planning-related activities.



Tips to Develop a Successful HMA Grant/Subapplication for a Mitigation Plan

- Ensure the tribe can meet a 25% non-federal cost share requirements, if applicable.
- Provide a reasonable timeline for the mitigation planning process, including review, approvals, and adoption by the tribe.
- Ensure that the application documents outreach efforts, such as public involvement and coordination with relevant agencies.
- Understand public meeting requirements for input from interested parties.
- Assess all appropriate hazards and identify mitigation strategies to address the hazards.
- Include resources in the cost estimate to meet all requirements.



FEMA

Pre-Application Considerations

Before a tribe begins the planning grant application, several key considerations or decisions must be made about applicant status and the type of plan to submit. These decisions will affect the application, from the cost to the data and analysis that must be completed. These considerations and decisions will be based on the capacity and capability of the tribe to manage and carry out these grant and planning activities. The sections that follow highlight two of the major pre-application considerations. Tribes are encouraged to speak with their FEMA regional tribal liaison and HMA specialists to determine what additional issues they need to consider before applying.

Applying for a Planning Grant as an Applicant or Subapplicant

A federally recognized tribe may apply for an HMA planning grant as an applicant or subapplicant. As an applicant, the tribe will be responsible for managing the grant, including all reporting and closeout requirements. The tribe will manage the entire mitigation planning process, including the award and management of any contracted work.

Where applicable, a tribe may also consider applying for a planning grant as a subapplicant to the state. For example, a tribe that does not have a FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan may apply for a planning grant under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) as a subapplicant if the state has received a presidentially declared disaster and chooses to accept the tribe's subapplication.

One of the tribe's considerations in deciding whether to apply as an applicant or subapplicant is whether it has the capacity to manage the planning grant. As an applicant, a federally recognized tribe controls the application process from beginning to end. In some cases, the tribe may lack the capacity to manage the grant (i.e., limited staffing or experience), and applying through a state as a subapplicant can help the tribe to obtain needed technical assistance. To assist in making this critical decision, tribes are encouraged to consult this job aid, as well as their FEMA Regional Tribal Liaison or HMA Specialist. For more information regarding applicant/subapplicant considerations, see the FEMA HMA job aid [Federally-Recognized Tribes and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program – Option to Submit as an Applicant or Subapplicant](#), or contact the Regional Tribal Liaison or HMA Specialist in the FEMA Region.

Single Jurisdiction or Multi-Jurisdictional Plan

In addition to deciding whether to apply as an applicant or a subapplicant, a tribe needs to decide what type of plan it is going to develop. A tribal government may elect to prepare a tribal mitigation plan on its own (single jurisdiction plan), or the tribe may elect to participate in the broader community as a participant in a multi-jurisdictional plan. A tribe participating in a multi-jurisdictional plan has two options:

1. Participate in a multi-jurisdictional tribal mitigation plan, where all participants are tribal governments.
2. Participate in a multi-jurisdictional mitigation plan, where participating entities are tribal and local governments.

Each participating federally recognized tribal government must meet the requirements for tribal mitigation planning specified in Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §201.7 Tribal Mitigation Plans.

Required HMA planning grant application components:

- **Scope of Work:** identifies deliverables; outlines tasks needed to complete work.
- **Cost Estimate:** specifies the cost for tasks with enough detail for FEMA to determine if all costs are eligible.
- **Schedule:** matches the tasks identified in the scope of work; includes time for FEMA reviews and any needed revisions.

Major components of the grant application development of the mitigation strategy

The mitigation strategy is the heart of a tribal mitigation plan, so the HMA planning grant scope of work (SOW) should include the process that will be used when developing this strategy. Some of the questions, such as how many jurisdictions and how many hazards are included in the plan, will affect the cost and schedule of the mitigation strategy.

The following questions are meant to assist the tribe with developing its mitigation strategy:

Is there an existing mitigation strategy?

- In the planning grant SOW, explain the approach that will be used in the planning process to gather information on the status of previous mitigation actions and document the estimated cost to do so. In the SOW, be sure to document the level of effort needed for the planning process to evaluate and prioritize new mitigation actions identified since the previous plan was approved. This information can take time to collect and assess, especially if there has been staff turnover.
- The planning area and planning process affect the development of a tribal mitigation plan, and there are connections between the size of the planning area, the complexity of the planning process, and costs. The planning narrative must describe the geographic area the plan will cover, including noncontiguous holdings. A summary description of the planning area's demographics, though not required, can provide overall context and more effectively address the risk by highlighting which populations might be more at risk to certain kinds of hazard events.

How many jurisdictions are participating in the planning process?

- A larger number of participating jurisdictions generally increase the complexity and cost because each jurisdiction must be engaged in the planning process and given the chance to provide input for the plan. Smaller, more compact jurisdictions may need a less intensive planning process. In the planning narrative, identify the number of participating jurisdictions.
- Meeting with or engaging each participating jurisdiction separately or in small groups takes more time and effort, but it may be worthwhile to build support for mitigation in the planning area. In the planning narrative, describe the methods proposed to engage each participating jurisdiction.
- Tribal governments may need to comply with specific planning requirements, such as zoning and land use restrictions, architectural guidelines or historical preservation requirements or existing comprehensive plans.

The planning narrative should reflect the additional work that may be needed to meet applicable tribal planning requirements.

What is the plan to engage the public and stakeholders?

All tribal mitigation plans must provide the opportunity for the public and stakeholders to be involved in the planning process, but how that is done is determined by the tribe.

- Consider how many meetings and/or workshops the team plans to hold for the planning process, including the meeting type(s) and the location(s). Generally, more meetings means a higher level of effort. Consider travel time and costs that can affect how much funding is needed for the public engagement process. In the planning narrative, explain the engagement process and how it will benefit the planning process.
- If the team plans to conduct a public survey, the subapplication should describe the intent and value of the survey, the target audience, and how the results will be used. In the planning narrative, document the method of the survey (such as in person, mailed, or online) and costs that might be associated with it.
- Make sure the time and effort to incorporate public feedback into the plan is accounted for when developing the schedule and cost estimates.

Does the tribe plan to use contractor support?

Tribal governments may choose to engage a contractor to assist with developing or updating the hazard mitigation plan. Before beginning any procurement process, tribes are encouraged to speak with the FEMA Regional Tribal Liaison or HMA Specialist to ensure compliance with program guidance, and procurement requirements in 2 CFR Part 200. The items listed are a few factors to consider when hiring a contractor:

- In the application, provide a detailed description of the tasks that the contractor will be responsible for and connect items to the budget, work schedule and SOW.
- Include an itemized cost estimate that is reasonable and corresponds to the schedule. This estimate should be an attachment to the subapplication,
- If a contractor writes the application for an HMA planning grant, the contractor is prohibited from bidding on the actual plan development or update.

Available Data and Risk Assessment

The risk assessment is an expansive and often complex part of the mitigation planning process. The risk assessment narrative must describe the methods and resources the planning team will use to research, collect, analyze, and summarize information on hazards and associated risks. The plan must also describe the natural hazards that can affect the planning area.

Manmade hazards may be included in the plan, but they are not required and will not be reviewed to meet plan requirements.

Key questions to consider as the team develops the planning grant scope for the risk assessment:

How many hazards will be included in the hazard mitigation plan?

- In the HMA planning grant application, document the number of natural hazards that may be profiled, and scale the cost estimate and schedule appropriately.
- Coordinate with the FEMA Regional Tribal Liaison and/or state hazard mitigation officer to determine what risk data are available from FEMA and other federal and state agencies and whether the tribe could receive technical assistance to analyze the available data.
- When completing a grant application to update an existing mitigation plan, document existing data gaps and deficiencies. Each hazard profile may need to be reviewed, but it does not necessarily need to be updated. In the risk assessment, be sure to describe how to improve.

Will a specific risk assessment methodology or software be used?

- There are times when a specific risk assessment methodology or software is appropriate to use. The planning grant application should describe the specialized methodology, and the costs and schedule should be appropriately matched to the available resources.
- If the plan will use Hazus data or other Geographic Information System (GIS) software to support assessing vulnerability, the level of customization for the analysis will affect the costs. The use of Hazus is not required, but it can have major implications on cost. More information on the software and its use can be found on the [Hazus webpage](#). This information can aid the tribe in deciding whether to use the software. Additionally, tribes may wish to speak with their FEMA regional tribal liaison, mitigation planner and/or risk analyst to understand the benefits and limits of using Hazus data more fully in the risk assessment.

Considerations for Cost Estimates

Cost estimates should be documented in the planning grant SOW and supported with documentation. These estimates must include various cost item categories such as labor, materials, equipment, and contractor costs. Lump-sum estimates are not accepted. Tribes should provide a record of all documents used to develop the estimate and a narrative that describes how each cost item was determined.

What are the main items that should be considered when developing a budget?

- Preparing a cost estimate is a key function for developing a successful mitigation plan. A good cost estimate will help manage the entire mitigation planning process and can be developed based on the phases of the planning process.
- The cost estimate should account for the entire period of performance for the plan production and include enough time for FEMA review, any state or FEMA revisions, tribal plan adoption, FEMA approval and HMA planning grant closeout.
- The estimate can include costs for the planning team to travel to and attend applicable training.

- FEMA recommends that the planning team meet to develop the planning grant application together, if possible. This activity is an eligible pre-award cost that can be included in the cost estimate. NOTE: Pre-award costs are only reimbursed if the HMA planning grant is awarded.
- As part of the planning process, the public must be involved and provide comments on the plan during the drafting stage and before approval (see 44 CFR Section 201.7 (c)(1)(i)) by the tribal governing body. The cost for the production and distribution of publications associated with the plan, as well as the staff time for meetings and preparations, should be included in the cost estimate.
- The cost estimate should account for any special studies or additional funds needed to support the development of the plan. This estimate should also account for any new hazards that have been identified and will be included in the plan update.
- All in-kind staff time, including costs incurred to support plan coordination and outreach, should be included in the cost estimate.
- Non-federal cost share—usually 25% of HMGP and HMGP Post-fire and Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) planning grant funding—must come from sources outside of FEMA. Cost share sources include cash, in-kind services, and private funding. Some tribes may be eligible for a reduced non-federal cost match if they qualify as a small and impoverished community as defined in the [2015 Hazard Mitigation Assistance Guidance](#).

How do management costs figure into the application?

Management costs are indirect costs and direct administrative and any other administrative expenses incurred for a grant (such as the costs for purchase of some equipment, staff time for managing the grant, or hiring a contractor and related contract monitoring), and should be accounted for during plan development. Common problems can arise when management costs are not included, and lump sum costs are included. It's essential to break the costs down into line items. The amounts, allowable uses, and procedures to request management cost funding vary by program and are found in FEMA's [Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Management Costs Interim Policy](#).

Resources

The following links provide information and assistance for tribal mitigation planning:

- [Tribal Mitigation Plan Review Guide](#) (December 2017, effective December 2018):
- [Tribal Mitigation Planning Resources Page](#)
- [FEMA Regional Tribal Liaison contact information](#)

The following links provide information and assistance for HMA mitigation planning grant applications:

- [Hazard Mitigation Assistance Guidance webpage](#)
- [HMA Application Development resources](#)
- [HMGP Tribal options to submit as an applicant job aid](#)
- [FEMA Regional Contacts](#)

Further information on local mitigation planning requirements, approaches, and examples are available from:

- [Create a Hazard Mitigation Plan: Local Governments](#)

Further information on Tribal Declarations and additional FEMA assistance programs:

- [Tribal Declarations Pilot Guidance](#)
- [Assistance for Governments and Private Non-Profits After a Disaster](#)
- [Fire Management Assistance Grant](#)

Legal Authorities:

- Flood Mitigation Grants, 44 CFR Section 79.6.
- Section 322 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 44 CFR Section 201.7.
- Section 1366 of the National Flood Insurance Act 42 United States Code 4104c.
- Uniform Administrative Requirements, 2 CFR Part 200.