



Transformative Mitigation ***Connecting Planning, Modeling & Outcomes***



WV FMA 2026 Conference



iem.com



Introductions



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Largest Disaster Management Firm in the United States

Providing Integrated Community Solutions and Managing All Phases of Emergency Management and Disaster Assistance: IEM delivers integrated solutions from readiness and immediate response to long-term resiliency.



\$280+ Billion

Federal Funds Management



Fastest CBDG-DR Disbursement in History

\$1.8B to Survivors of the 2016 Louisiana Great Floods



Customers

HUD, FEMA, SBA, HHS, DOD, DHS, DOI, DOC, DOE, USTR 50 States, 3 Territories, D.C., Tribal Nations, the Private Sector & International



41+ Years in Operation



800+ Full-Time Employees



200+

Nationally Qualified Reservists & Readiness Corps



2-24 Hour

Rapid Response Deployment



Comprehensive Expertise

Delivering specialized expertise and capabilities across all emergency management phases



Subcontractors

Vast partner network ensures we meet our clients' full scope of mission needs

Objectives

- By the end, you'll be able to:
 - Describe best practices for hazard mitigation plan development tied directly to project success.
 - Replicate an engagement structure that produces usable plan inputs.
 - Understand how to apply a clear path from risk to community priorities to actions.

A Changing Landscape...



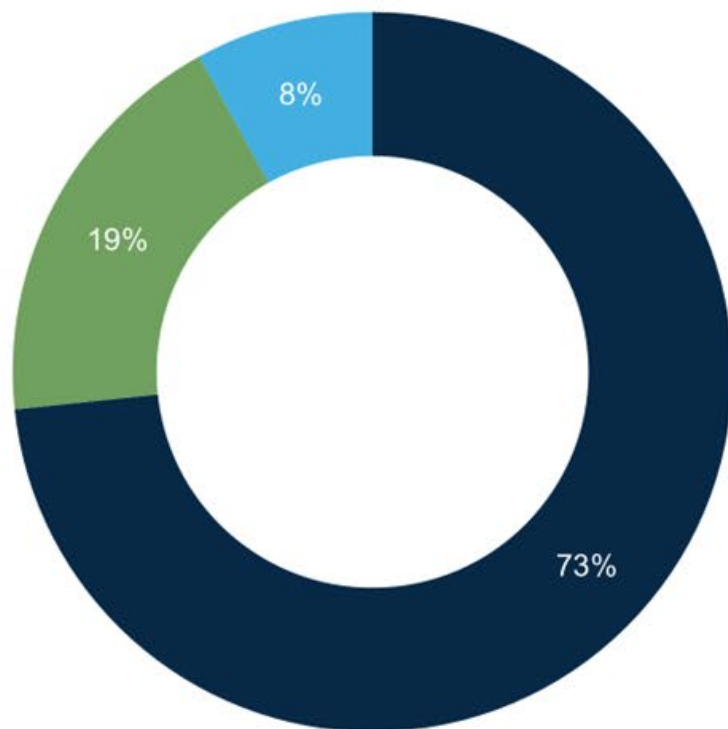
Federal Mitigation Plan & Project Development Updates

The Outlook

- BRIC funding has been released – new priorities by the current administration point to more developed plan items and ready-to-go projects.
- Calls for change – increased emphasis on state and local-led programs.
- Mitigation Action items have in the past been very broad statements similar to “address drainage issues”, “elevate homes”, or “restore the stream to its natural habitat.”
- Traditional HM plan action items have left many communities adopting overly broad strategy sections and addressing items only after a disaster.

Overall Outlook: Cautious Optimism

"Can state-led hazard mitigation flourish with limited federal funding?" (75 responses)



■ It's possible ■ I'm skeptical ■ Absolutely — already flourishing

73%

say success is possible — but not assured

19% are skeptical — barriers too high without sustained federal support.

8% say it's already flourishing in several states.

2026 ASFPM Conference

State-Led Hazard Mitigation Survey Results

- **Flexibility vs. Capacity:** Bypassing federal bureaucracy offers faster, tailored, and more innovative local solutions, but state and local staffing shortages pose a major threat.
- **The Socioeconomic Divide:** Without federal safety nets, there is severe risk of creating a "class system of states" where affluent areas thrive and low-income communities fall behind.
- **Funding Stability is Paramount:** Securing consistent funding for long-term plans and projects was voted as the most critical need.
- **Diverse Financial Horizons are Key:** Successful models rely on blending state legislative appropriations with non FEMA resources, including HUD, NOAA, local taxes, and climate philanthropies.

Opportunities

Open-ended • 53 responses



Flexibility, less red tape

Freedom from rigid BCA rules, EHP delays, and waiting on the NOFO.



Speed

Faster approvals, permitting, and project delivery.



Local fit

Plans built on direct knowledge of community needs — right mitigation, right place.



Innovation

States as laboratories: pilot approaches federal programs would restrict.



Trust & collaboration

Communities wary of FEMA will work with states; stronger regional teamwork.



New tools & partners

AI-accelerated delivery; philanthropy and non-FEMA federal programs.

A Plan to Project Pipeline



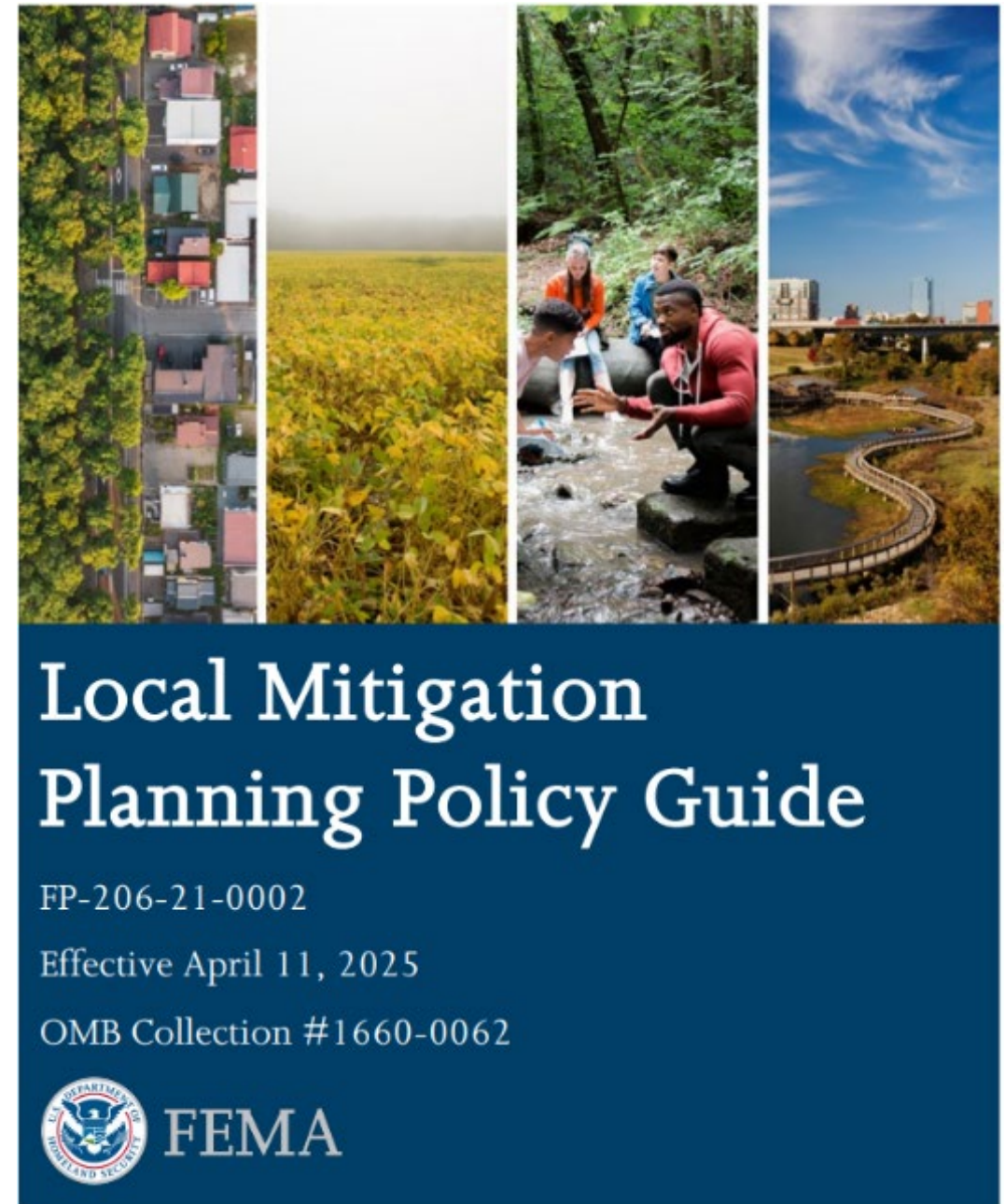
Federal Mitigation Plan & Project Development Updates

Why Update the Plan?

- **Hazard mitigation plans** are prepared and adopted to identify, assess, and reduce the long-term risk to life and property based on natural and human-caused hazards.
- Adopting a FEMA-approved plan enables communities to be eligible for certain FEMA mitigation **grants**
 - Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)
 - Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)

New Guidance (2023-2025)

- *Three* sets of guidance in five years
- 2023 guidance changes
 - Emphasis on partnerships and “whole community”
 - Future conditions & climate integrated
 - Stronger NFIP & building code integration
 - High Hazard Potential Dam (HHPD) element
- 2025 guidance
 - Made climate change, equity inclusion optional
 - Most other 2023 guidance still in effect



The Hazard Mitigation Plan





Planning Process – *Floodplain Management's Role*

- Encourage stakeholder engagement
 - Floodplain managers
 - Dam owners
 - Wetland preservation groups
- Include special districts
 - Levee
 - Water
- Engage the public
 - Targeted focus of populations in SFHA
- Consider establishing a Flooding Working Group

Best Practice: Invite anyone who can contribute to understanding flood risk, vulnerabilities, or mitigation projects

Interactive Formats

- Workshop-style formats
 - Review hazards of concern
 - Identify four types of capabilities and opportunities for improvement
 - Facilitate a hazard analysis poster session
 - Review mitigation actions ideas

"Most people interested in mitigation I've ever seen together."

Expert Engagement

- Academic institutions
 - SMEs on each hazard
- Meetings with each High Hazard Potential Dam (HHPD) owner
 - Risks to and from the dams
 - Populations at risk
 - Breach inundation data

Risk Assessment - Local Data is KEY

- Federal data not equivalent to locally validated data
- Locally maintained hazard studies make a difference
- Stakeholder engagement served as a critical mechanism for identifying locally maintained data sources and community-specific vulnerabilities
- HAZUS used for incorporating local critical infrastructure

Best Practice: Provide expert advice on flood-specific concerns

- *Inundation impacts on community lifelines*
- *Post-flood secondary/cascading disasters*
- *Substantial damage process*

Mitigation Strategy

- Suggest ways to support reducing flood risk with all project types
 - Local plans and regulations
 - Structure and infrastructure projects
 - Natural systems protection
 - Education and awareness
- Incorporate existing projects from stormwater management, capital improvement, comprehensive plans, etc.
- Develop project worksheets

Best Practice: The mitigation plan should be the foundation of your grant application.

Mitigation Action Ideas

- Identify list of mitigation actions, including reviewing:
 - Stakeholder meeting notes
 - Vulnerability assessments
 - Local mitigation plans
 - Common grant application types
 - Mitigation expert advice
 - Critical infrastructure at-risk in high, moderate flood zones



Plan Solutions for Action Items

- Make your action items specific in nature and consider using project worksheets or doing preliminary design work as part of your plan update.
- Clarify action intent
 - “Reduce flooding” vs. “Perform H&H study/Perform Feasibility Study/Upsize Culvert”
- Expand project descriptions through project worksheets
 - Consider developing scope and budget goals for potential applications - have that pre-application basically drafted
- Consider project scope
 - What is the root cause of risk?
- Review plans to include for both big and small projects.
 - Nature-based solutions – no longer an emerging field

Plan Solutions for Action Items

- Remember, mitigation action items can be funded both pre- and post-storm events.
- Consider co-benefits and alternative funding sources.
 - Stormwater fees, floodplain development permit fees.
 - Look for smaller planning grants to help develop plans and 30-50% construction ready drawings.
- Remember 406 Mitigation funding during recovery.
- Think of mitigation funds as supplemental Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funds for your locality.
- Projects can include:
 - Upgrading street drainage system
 - Address neighborhood nuisance flooding
 - Creating new park space



Data, Data, Data

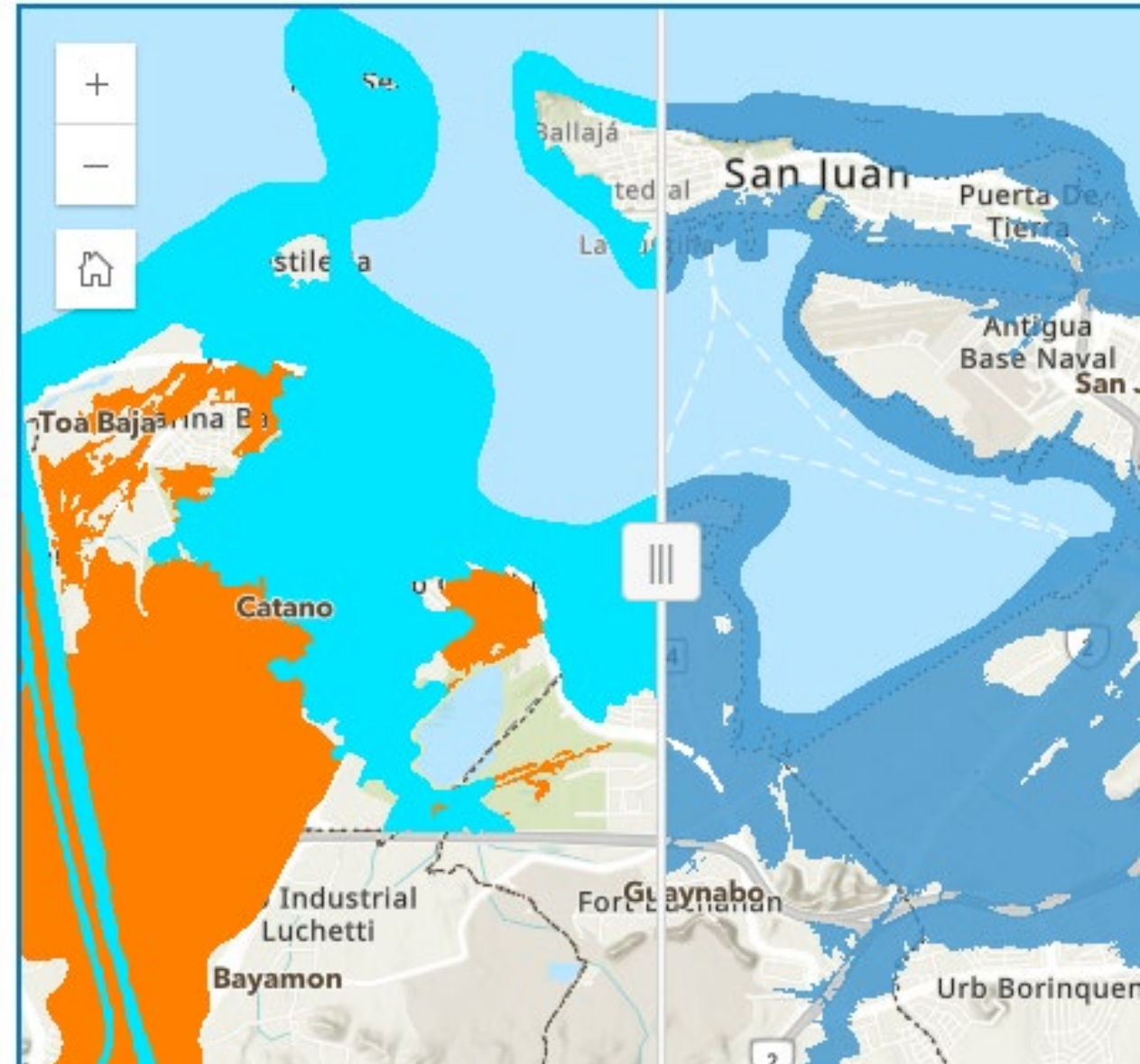
- Local staff should work with residents to establish a historical database (e.g., oral histories, insurance claims, high water marks).
- Use historic data (e.g., NFIP, IA claims) or work with partners like universities to run baseline models for Phase I projects.
- Remember for FEMA projects, including the BCA, it is data, data, data, and the source validation of that information.
- Pass BCA = Data (including BEST available data) go back to stakeholders; keep historical event data in one place and ready to pull for the application.
- FEMA wants to see solutions to your action items.

Plan Maintenance: Looking Ahead

- Keeps the plan relevant to current risks and priorities
- Enables ongoing implementation
- Keeps alignment with stakeholders and FEMA requirements
- Supports continuous monitoring and updates

Best Practices for Your 5-year Plan Cycle

- Participating in annual meetings
- Providing updates to actions/projects
- Communicating the need of a plan amendment prior to grant application (if needed)
- Consider digital solutions
 - Real-time visualization of hazards and risks
 - Continuous updates instead of 5-year revisions



Plan Implementation: Lessons Learned

- Strong problem identification, but insufficient documentation of project benefits.
- Applicants often describe the hazard but do not clearly identify the specific assets being protected (e.g., homes, roads, utilities, critical facilities, emergency access routes).
- It may not be your first solution that you think of – remain open to creative ideas.
- Historical damages are often anecdotal and lack supporting records, invoices, photographs, maintenance logs, or repair costs.
- Many projects have only analyzed a single storm event and need multiple recurrence interval evaluations (e.g., 10-, 50-, 100-year events) to support BCA development.

Plan Implementation: Lessons Learned

- Floodplain, floodway, permitting, and environmental considerations are not always being addressed early enough in project development.
- If you have been impacted by another hazard – wildfire, landslide – considering cascading impacts
- H&H and flood studies
 - Ensuring engineering analysis is aligned with current grant requirements
 - Consider impacts both up and downstream
 - Show pre and post mitigation water surface elevations at protected assets



Thank You



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