

FEMA Awards Port St. Lucie More Than \$1 Million To Improve Emergency Telecommunications System

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ORLANDO, Fla. – The City of Port St. Lucie will receive more than \$1 million in federal grant money to install additional fiber optic cables to improve emergency communication systems between the city and St. Lucie County.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) has approved \$1,078,451 for the installation of more than six miles of underground fiber optic cable between the City of Port St. Lucie and St. Lucie County emergency operations centers. New cables will also connect the system to the St. Lucie County Fire Department and the James E. Anderson Water Treatment Plant. This will improve emergency response via 911 at all times as well as during major storm events.

Funding for this HMGP project is authorized under Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Act, the 1988 law that governs FEMA's disaster-related activities.

FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program is an important source of federal disaster assistance. HMGP funds may become available following the president's declaration of a major disaster, and help strengthen communities by improving buildings, facilities and infrastructure that people use every day. A 2018 report from the National Institute of Building Sciences found that one dollar spent on hazard mitigation will save more than six dollars of recovery and rebuilding costs.



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Generally, HMGP may provide a state, tribe or territory with additional grants up to 15 percent of the total disaster grants awarded by FEMA for a federally-declared disaster. States such as Florida that meet higher mitigation planning criteria may qualify for a higher percentage.

Florida has a FEMA-approved Enhanced Mitigation Plan, making the state eligible for HMGP funding not to exceed 20 percent of the estimated total amount of money spent by FEMA on disaster grants in the Hurricane Irma disaster. From this amount, HMGP reimburses the state up to 75 percent of eligible costs for mitigation projects. The remaining amount comes from other sources such as state and local assets and a combination of cash and in-kind sources.

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