

# Unified Federal Review Process



## Unified Federal Environmental and Historic Preservation Review: Fact Sheet for Native Hawaiian Organizations

*Natural resources, cultural institutions and historic properties define communities and contribute to their well-being and unique character. The federal government plays a critical role in helping communities incorporate environmental stewardship and historic preservation into emergency management decisions. As disasters continue to challenge our nation and communities grapple with issues of preparedness and sustainability, federal agencies are working together with tribal, state and local agencies to continually improve upon the processes that are currently in place in order to support the needs of affected communities.*

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### Environmental and Historic Preservation Review

Whenever federal funding is allocated for a disaster recovery project, the project must be reviewed for compliance with environmental and historic preservation (EHP) laws, regulations and executive orders. These are known as EHP requirements. These requirements are aimed at protecting water, air, coastal, wildlife, land, agricultural, historical and cultural resources, as well as minimizing the potential for disproportionately adverse effects to low-income and minority populations.

When federal agencies review applications for assistance, they must ensure compliance with EHP requirements before they can approve or deny federal assistance and permits for the disaster recovery project. These EHP reviews are performed by either an EHP practitioner or responsible entity, depending upon the federal agency from which an applicant is seeking funding.

In addition to the risk of federal prosecution and civil lawsuits, failure to comply with applicable EHP requirements may jeopardize project funding, so it is important that the applicant and grantee understand these requirements. An EHP review must be completed before permits can be issued and funding released.

### The Unified Federal Environmental and Historic Preservation Review Process

The Sandy Recovery Improvement Act of 2013 (SRIA) added Section 429 to the Stafford Act, which directs the president to establish an expedited and unified interagency review process. The Unified Federal Environmental and Historic Preservation Review Process (UFR Process) was established on July 29, 2014, by eleven federal departments and agencies entering into a Memorandum of Understanding Establishing the UFR Process (UFR MOU). The UFR Process is intended to apply to all presidentially declared disasters. Its purpose is to improve federal decision making to allow for more timely and planned processes that yield better outcomes for communities and the environment when federal funds and permits are used for disaster recovery projects. The UFR Process does not change EHP requirements under existing federal law.

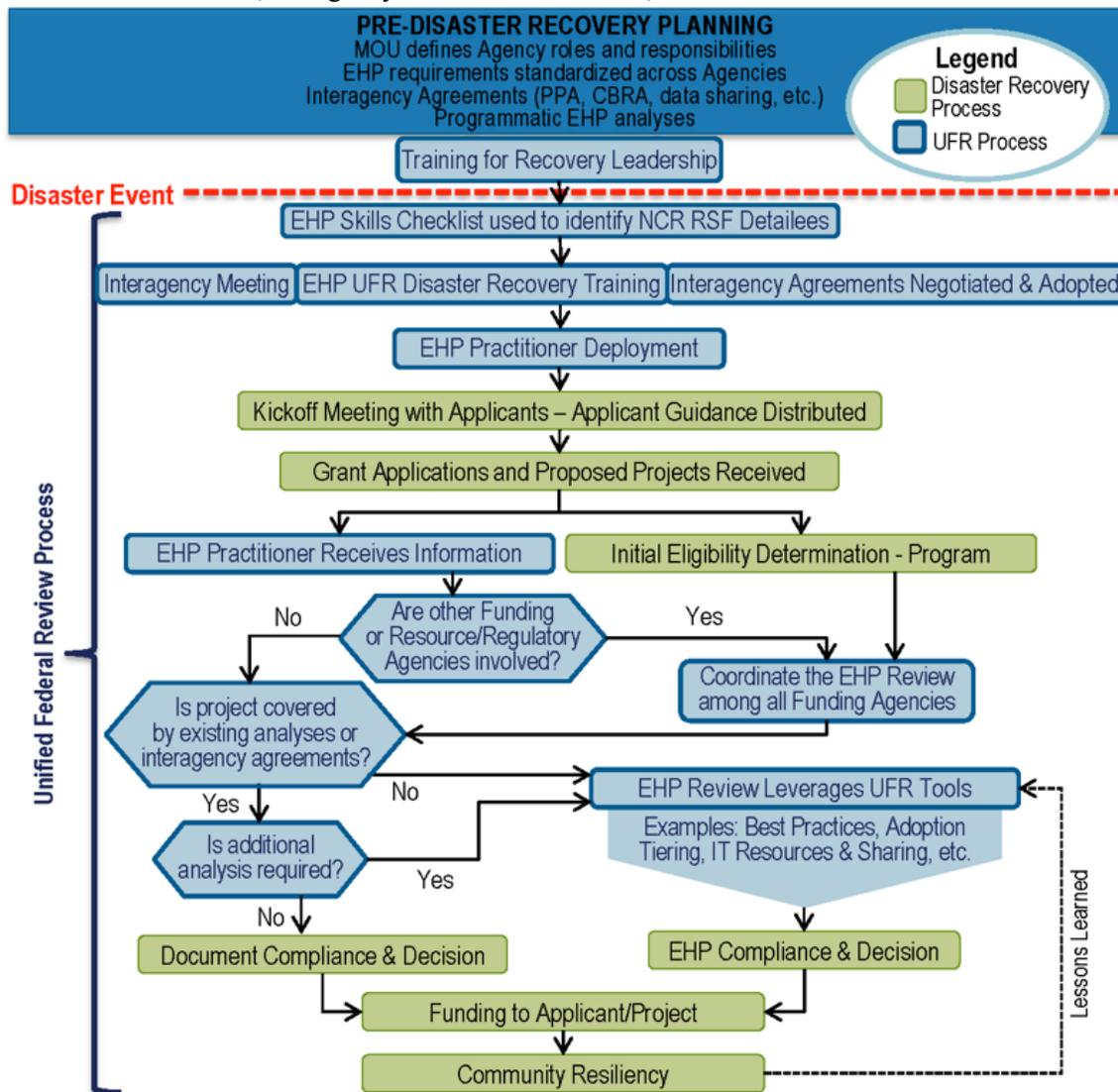
A Steering Group consisting of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Council on Environmental Quality, the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency have led the development of the UFR Process with the support of a working group, which encompasses a broader group of federal agencies that have various roles in disaster recovery and EHP expertise, to assist in developing a unified framework for EHP reviews for disaster recovery projects.

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The UFR Process consists of a set of Tools and Mechanisms that can be utilized to expedite and unify the EHP review of disaster recovery projects. The UFR Process was intentionally designed to be an adaptive and flexible process that can be modified to meet the needs of a specific disaster and the community affected by the disaster in order to strengthen communities from future disasters.

The chart below depicts the UFR Process during disaster recovery, including the use of Tools and Mechanisms that will help EHP practitioners implement the UFR Process. The typical disaster recovery process is depicted in **green** and the expedited UFR Process is depicted in **blue**. The end-state for the UFR Process is community recovery and resiliency. Although not every disaster recovery process is the same, this graphic of the UFR Process can be easily adapted to the needs of individual agencies. These Tools and Mechanisms are available on the UFR Webpage and include: training modules for the UFR Process; Disaster-Specific MOU and Data Sharing Agreement Content; Prototype Programmatic Agreement for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act; best practices located throughout the Practitioners Guidance; an Agency Point of Contact List; and IT Resources List.



For more information on the UFR Process, please visit the UFR Webpage at: <http://www.fema.gov/environmental-historic-preservation/unified-federal-environmental-and-historic-preservation-review>