



Unified Federal Environmental and Historic Preservation Review (UFR)

As part of the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act (SRIA), which amended the Stafford Act, Section 429 was added, directing the President to “establish an expedited and unified interagency review process to ensure compliance with environmental and historic requirements under Federal law relating to disaster recovery projects, in order to expedite the recovery process, consistent with applicable law.” The goal of the process is to improve Federal, state, tribal, and territorial decision-making to allow for more predictable outcomes from planning and implementing disaster recovery projects.

Development of the UFR

Development of the Unified Federal Environmental and Historic Preservation Review (UFR) process was led by a Steering Group consisting of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP).

The Steering Group created a working group to identify ways to enhance efficiencies in environmental and historic preservation reviews: A diverse representation of agencies serve on the UFR working group.

During disaster recovery, many Federal, state, tribal, territory, and local agencies have responsibilities for Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) review. Agencies must satisfy their own EHP requirements and coordinate with each other when an applicant’s project requires decisions from multiple agencies. When interagency coordination is successful, EHP reviews improve agency decision making, conserve agency resources, avoid duplication of EHP analyses, support community resiliency, and help to expedite the recovery process. To develop this coordinated and unified process the Steering Group focused on five elements. Each element is designed to support the overall UFR process that will help agencies make better, more efficient decisions with the ultimate goal of building more

resilient communities.



Napa, CA, September 9, 2014 – Earthquake damage to the historic Romanesque Goodman Library building in the City of Napa, California . FEMA Photo by **Christopher Mardorf**

The Five Elements of the UFR Process

In partnership with the Working Group agencies, the Steering Group developed the following five elements of the UFR process:

- Formalize the unification and standardization of EHP requirements;
- Develop standards and guidance for EHP practitioners to unify the Federal Review Process;
- Provide one stop source for EHP information and resources;
- Develop inter-agency agreements formalizing roles, responsibilities and commitments to the UFR; and
- Support the continued development of the Natural and Cultural Resources Recovery Support Function as part of the National Disaster Recovery Framework.

Each element was developed in response to a specific issue identified during the planning phase of the UFR Process.

A Phased Implementation

Recognizing the challenges inherent in unifying the EHP review process across multiple Federal agencies in the 18 months provided by the SRIA legislation, the Steering Group developed a phased implementation plan for the UFR process. Compliance with the legislative requirements will occur in three phases:

- Phase 1: Completion of the development of the Unified Federal Review process (Completed);
- Phase 2: Initial implementation – this phase will provide an opportunity to implement and refine reforms developed over the previous 18 months, receive additional stakeholder input based on experience with the process and further develop longer-term unifying and expediting mechanisms (August 2014 – August 2015); and
- Phase 3: Full implementation – this phase builds upon the monitoring and improvements completed during Phase 2 with the goal of continuous improvement (September 2015 and beyond).

For Additional Information

[About the Unified Federal Review \(UFR\)](#)

[About FEMA’s Office of Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation \(OEHP\)](#)

[About the Council on Environmental Quality \(CEQ\)](#)

[About the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation \(ACHP\)](#)

[About the Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\)](#)