



Grant Effectiveness Strategic Vision 2.0

Homeland Security Grant Program

Purpose

To provide FEMA with a multiyear strategy for measuring, evaluating, and communicating the contributions of FEMA preparedness grants. The National Preparedness Assessment Division (NPAD) evaluates the extent to which these grant programs improve grant recipients' preparedness capabilities, a responsibility it shares with state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) governments. Since its creation in 2003, the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) issues between \$850 million and \$2.5 billion annually in funds to SLTT governments. The primary focus of this vision is the two core grants under HSGP: State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) and Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI), which account for more than ninety percent of the total each year on average.

Strategic Vision Overview

The first Grant Effectiveness Strategic Vision in 2017 identified three objectives that define grant effectiveness and six research activities to more effectively evaluate grant-funded projects. The lessons learned and key accomplishments are detailed from that vision below in Appendix A. Building on these successes, NPAD developed a research agenda critical to establishing an evidence base that can demonstrate HSGP's effectiveness in maintaining and improving SLTT and national preparedness. *Grant Effectiveness Strategic Vision 2.0 (Vision 2.0)* will guide grant effectiveness evaluation efforts for the coming years. The projects proposed in this document support and align to Objective 1.4 and 3.4 of FEMA's *2018–2022 Strategic Plan*, which are to: a) help FEMA learn from past disasters, build continuous improvement processes, and implement innovative ideas; and b) reduce complexity, improve grants management, and further improve data analytics, respectively.

I. Measuring Grant Effectiveness

Definition of HSGP Grant Effectiveness

NPAD translated the purpose and key features of SHSP and UASI into three overarching objectives that define grant effectiveness. FEMA considers SHSP- and UASI-funded projects effective if grant recipients satisfy all three objectives:



Implement projects that address state and national priorities

FEMA has established a set of priorities for SHSP and UASI to ensure funds enhance preparedness for terrorist or catastrophic events and enable recipients to deliver the capabilities essential to achieving the goal of a secure and resilient Nation. Grant recipients show how proposed projects align to these priorities and report data to show how they are implementing national preparedness. These priorities provide grant recipients the flexibility to target funds to the unique challenges facing their jurisdictions while also addressing national areas of importance identified by FEMA.



Improve capabilities and achieve preparedness outcomes

Grant recipients use SHSP and UASI to build and sustain capabilities. Projects help recipients close preparedness gaps and achieve their capability targets. Recipients demonstrate impacts from grant-funded projects through performance in exercises and real-world events.

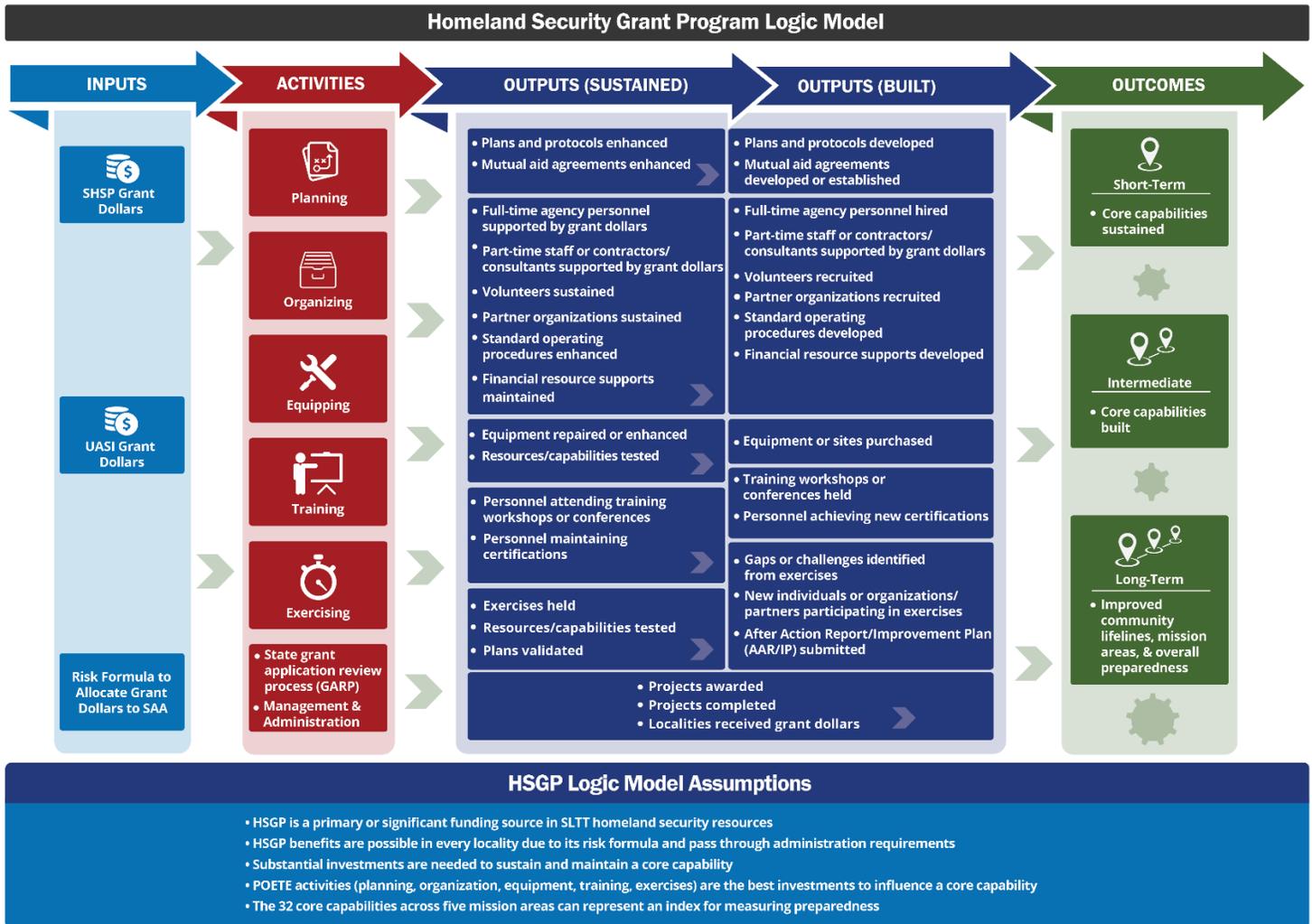


Manage projects in accordance with Federal standards and guidelines

Grant recipients must comply with Federal Management and Administration (M&A) requirements and guidance, including those found in 2 C.F.R. Part 200 (Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards). Meeting these requirements promotes continuous improvement in grant execution.

HSGP Logic Model

A logic model demonstrates how a program works by identifying the intended relationships between the program's assumptions, resources, activities, and desired outcomes. A logic model can strengthen evaluation activities by identifying (1) research questions, (2) which aspects of a program to evaluate, (3) what information to collect, and (4) measures and data collection methods. The following logic model serves as a starting point for defining these evaluation concepts as they relate to HSGP. The next steps in fully developing this logic model involve coordinating with other stakeholders within FEMA and the disaster preparedness community at large for feedback and to reality test the model (see *Research Agenda* below).



II. Research Agenda

The projects described in the table below serve as a long-term research agenda for HSGP. These projects continue the focus on improving data quality, measurement, analysis, and communication associated with HSGP grant outcomes. FEMA developed this long-term research agenda so that findings from each project are used to support and inform future projects as the overall agenda progressively builds towards measuring HSGP outcomes. The research agenda framework¹ is organized by key stages as the evidence base builds (Figure 1). These stages overlap and are not mutually exclusive.

Establishing a strong program design, sound performance measures and data collection systems, and measurable program outcomes are key to maturing and validating the logic model and evaluation of HSGP. These activities are fundamental for more rigorous evaluation methods.

For each project in the research agenda, NPAD:

- Developed an initial research question(s) and description and considered how well each project would contribute to the evaluation of grant effectiveness.²
- Will create an implementation plan with an associated budget, timeline, and methodology to answer each research question.

Projects are ordered by the fiscal year in which the project will begin. Additional feasibility studies are grouped within three phases to reflect prioritization of projects that will be pursued as time and resources allow.

Figure 1: Key Stages of Building Evidence

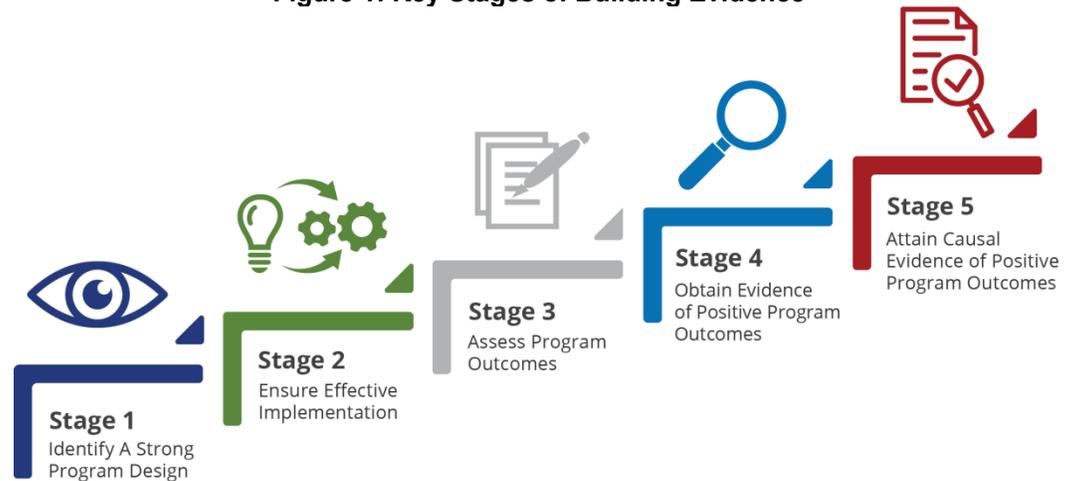


Table 1: Proposed Research Projects³

Project Title	Research Question(s)	Description	Objective
FY2019			
HSGP Logic Model Development	How does HSGP ideally influence preparedness?	This project will finalize the creation of a shared framework of the HSGP program design (<i>see page 2</i>) to identify assumptions and opportunities for analysis. NPAD will gather feedback and reality-test the model with the help of stakeholders within FEMA and the disaster preparedness community at large (e.g., Grant Programs Directorate, Federal Preparedness Coordinators, Preparedness Analyst and Planning Specialists (PAPS/PAPOs), National Emergency Management Association).	1

¹ Developing a Long-Term Research Agenda, CNCS, <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/evaluation>

² Objective 3 of measuring grant effectiveness falls under the purview of the Grant Programs Directorate (GPD) and is outside of the scope of this plan, so the projects below all address Objectives 1 and 2.

³ The execution of all proposed research projects is dependent upon available resources.

Table 1: Proposed Research Projects³

Project Title	Research Question(s)	Description	Objective
FY2019 (cont.)			
HSGP Data Landscape and Strategy	What are current data analyses to describe HSGP? What are current data gaps?	This project will document existing data sources and analyses, identify data gaps and deficiencies, and make a plan to improve data collection and cataloguing procedures. FEMA will develop standardized performance measures to assess jurisdictions' capacity to deliver the core capabilities. This plan may also include revising investment justifications, aligning Biannual Strategy Implementation Report (BSIR) to performance measures and/or standardized targets, and adding location information to projects.	1
Contributions of HSGP grants in new THIRA/SPR assessments (subset of core capabilities)	How are core capabilities built and sustained with grant funding? Which capabilities were used to address a real-world incident? How were they used?	This project will analyze which capabilities are being built vs. sustained primarily with FEMA preparedness grants using data that grant recipients report in the new Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment / Stakeholder Preparedness Review (THIRA/SPR). In FY2019, FEMA will receive and analyze data on a limited number of capabilities. Grant recipients can also describe the impact that grant-funded capabilities had in real-world incidents over the past year to capture how they used previous years' investments since the last assessment. FEMA will analyze these results to extract the role of grant-funded capabilities, the most common use of these capabilities, and the impact of those grants.	2
HSGP Protection and Prevention Break-Even Analysis	How much do HSGP grant investments reduce US exposure to terrorism as compared to the total investments of the prevention, protection and mitigation portfolios?	This project will expand on previous cost/benefit analysis (breakeven analysis) to assess the benefits of HSGP projects towards select core capabilities across three mission areas, prevention, protection and mitigation as perceived by subject matter experts (SMEs).	2
Case Studies	How do HSGP investments contribute to preparedness for and response to real world incidents?	FEMA will continue to conduct annual grant effectiveness case studies to capture how HSGP grants influence SLTTs in preparing and responding to real-world incidents, how they assess gaps, and prioritize funding decisions. FEMA will also assess how SLTTs are implementing the new THIRA and SPR methodology and how their standardized THIRA targets and capabilities align to their real-world incident results.	2
FY2020			
Data Strategy Implementation	What outputs and outcomes are HSGP grants achieving?	Continuing efforts from the HSGP Data Landscape and Strategy, FEMA will modify existing data collection procedures and introduce new procedures to capture the most relevant aspects of grant funding and performance and implement standardized performance measures for grant recipient reporting to track outcomes over time.	1
Investment Benefit Analyses and Grant Effects Implementation	How can a collection of investments, or the comparison of the investment with project benefits, be assessed through a common, standardized methodology?	This project will reduce current data gaps and increase outcome data for disaster research. This project will expand on previous cost/benefit analysis (breakeven analysis) to assess the benefits of HSGP projects towards other mission areas to include response and recovery and select core capabilities.	2

Table 1: Proposed Research Projects³

Project Title	Research Question(s)	Description	Objective
Contributions of HSGP grants in new THIRA/SPR assessments (full set of capabilities)	How are core capabilities built and sustained with grant funding? Which capabilities were used to address a real-world incident? How were they used?	This project continues the THIRA/SPR analyses from FY2019, but, beginning in FY2020, grant recipients will submit THIRA/SPR data on all core capabilities. FEMA will conduct analyses on this full set of capabilities annually moving forward.	2
FEMA Grant Outcomes (FEMA GO) Final Implementation	Is there additional information that FEMA can collect from grant recipients that would improve reporting on grant effectiveness? What new information would be most beneficial? Would collecting this information impose unnecessary burdens on grant recipients?	Based on findings from previous research projects, FEMA will provide recommendations for the new system design to capture key data points that are essential for grant effectiveness assessments. For example, the new system may capture which SPR capability gaps grant recipients are addressing to gain greater fidelity in measuring progress toward closing preparedness capability gaps.	1
FY2021			
Data Strategy Analysis	How does HSGP funding impact grant recipient preparedness? How does HSGP funding affect identified capability gaps? How does HSGP funding affect THIRA targets? Which HSGP funding activities most effectively close capability gaps?	This project will build on the Data Strategy Implementation. FEMA will use statistical analyses to explore new data gathered from a) added questions on grant effectiveness; and b) standardized performance measures in new grant reporting requirements from the data strategy. These analyses will allow us to assess the relationship between HSGP funding and ability to meet THIRA targets.	2
Additional Feasibility Studies – Phase 1			
Baseline Data Feasibility Study	What is the best way to measure improvements in capabilities gained from HSGP grants?	This study will synthesize existing research and methods to recommend an approach to best capture baseline data for HSGP grant projects to effectively measure improvements in capabilities and closing gaps over time	2
Additional Feasibility Studies – Phase 2			
Pre/Post Universal Instrument	How do participants' knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) change after completing an HSGP-funded training, after creating or enhancing an HSGP-funded plan, and/or after completing an HSGP-funded exercise?	This project will develop, validate, and field-test a universal instrument to measure pre/post changes in KSAs of participants of HSGP-funded training, participants of HSGP-funded exercises, and the benefits of planning.	2
Additional Feasibility Studies – Phase 3			
Data Strategy Implementation Evaluation	How has the data strategy been implemented at the federal and state levels?	This project will assess strengths and areas for improvement on the process of implementing new grant recipient reporting requirements on grant effectiveness and standardized performance measures. FEMA will conduct technical assistance focused on changes to reporting and documentation procedures as well as general best practices in grant administration and evaluation. The project will also consolidate best practices and recommendations for improvement.	1
Counterfactual Feasibility Study	How can a feasible counterfactual group to measure HSGP impact be identified?	This study will synthesize existing research and methods to recommend an approach to incorporate a potential comparison or control group that maximizes rigor while minimizing burden	2

Appendix A: Grant Effectiveness Strategic Vision 1.0

Accomplishments

In 2017, FEMA developed the *Grant Effectiveness Strategic Vision 1.0* to identify potential courses of action to address challenges in measuring grant effectiveness. Challenges included isolating grant outcomes, a variability in grant projects and project descriptions, and accounting for changes in measurement over time. This section highlights some of FEMA's key accomplishments in assessing SLTT and national progress toward meeting three objectives.

Objective 1: Implement projects that address state and national priorities

- **THIRA/SPR Methodology Revision:** In 2018, NPAD revised the methodology for the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR). Communities use the THIRA/SPR processes to identify threats and hazards of concern, to set preparedness goals in the form of capability targets, and to review their current preparedness capabilities. The revisions directly support grant effectiveness by helping communities develop standardized capability targets and associated capability gaps. Communities can use these gaps to prioritize grant funds, creating a clearer linkage of how grants help communities improve capabilities and achieve preparedness outcomes.
- **EMAC Data Collection:** In 2017, NPAD engaged the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) to improve the data provided on resource sharing in a disaster. EMAC and FEMA released National Incident Management System (NIMS) Job Titles, Position Qualifications, Resource Typing Definitions, and Implementation Objectives for SLTTs. The FY2018 EMAC Grant NOFO includes new reporting requirements to improve the quality of information on deployable and deployed resources through EMAC, which include: maintaining the Mutual Aid Support System (MASS) for the availability, request, dispatch, use, tracking, and return of resources in all states during all-hazard incidents requiring mutual aid; development and use of NIMS resource typing definitions within the Mutual Aid Support System (MASS), including aligning Mission-Ready Packages to NIMS resource typing definitions; and sustaining EMAC's Emergency Operations System (EOS) sharing real-time deployment data with FEMA, including through WebEOC.
- **Data on Standardized Resources:** NPAD has made efforts to better capture data on the number of standardized teams and assets across the Nation and the number of these assets funded by grants in order to understand nationwide capability levels and resources available for a catastrophic incident. To accomplish this, NPAD worked with the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) to include questions on standardized teams and assets, such as Urban Search and Rescue teams and Hazmat teams, in their biennial member survey. NEMA used the survey results to examine the return on investment that SHSP and UASI funds provide towards terrorism preparedness (["Homeland Security Grant Return on Investment", 2018](#)). Questions about standardized resources have also been incorporated into case study research questions to qualitatively assess how state and local agencies are using HSGP funds to build national capabilities.

Objective 2: Improve capabilities and achieve preparedness outcomes

- **Incident-Specific Hurricane Case Studies:** NPAD conducts case studies with preparedness grant recipients each year to gain a more in-depth understanding of the effects of grants in improving preparedness. In 2018, FEMA focused its case studies on the impacts of grant-funded projects on preparedness, response, and recovery operations for disasters, particularly the 2017 hurricanes. Specifically, FEMA partnered with Texas and Florida to identify how grant funds supported preparedness improvements ahead of Hurricane Harvey (Texas) and Hurricane Irma (Florida). The case studies documented on-the-ground examples of how multiyear grant investments in both states yielded demonstrable preparedness outcomes that improved response and recovery operations.
- **Return on Investment (ROI) Methodology:** In 2018, NPAD designed three pilot studies in partnership

with a Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC-MITRE) to measure the benefits of HSGP. The lack of data required to conduct traditional ROI analyses served as the impetus for this study. Findings from a Breakeven Analysis, Revealed Preference Analysis, and Detailed Operations Model pilots provided recommendations that will support FEMA efforts to better assess the value of its grant program in the future.

- **FEMA Grants Outcomes (FEMA GO):** FEMA GO—formerly known as FEMA Grants Management Modernization (GMM)—is a FEMA-wide initiative to modernize and consolidate existing FEMA grants management systems and business processes into a single IT platform. Once completed, FEMA GO will meet business needs, simplify grants' life cycle processes, improve the timeliness of grant awards, and provide access to complete and accurate grants data in one system. NPAD is supporting FEMA GO implementation by providing guidance to FEMA GO developers that encourage outcome-based data collection to demonstrate grant performance.

Objective 3: Manage projects in accordance with Federal standards and guidance

- **Management and Administration (M&A) Measures:** The Grant Programs Directorate (GPD) collects data and reports on 12 M&A performance measures annually. These measures focus on how efficiently and effectively FEMA manages and administers preparedness grant programs, such as the rate of closing out grant awards, the percentage of grant awards monitored, and the number of grant monitoring corrective actions implemented. GPD continues to work to reduce its closeout backlog and improve its grant monitoring and corrective actions follow-up.
- **Audit Trend Analysis:** In March 2016, GPD reviewed and analyzed more than 1,000 DHS Office of Inspector General audit recommendations across 10 preparedness grant programs. GPD grouped these recommendations into 23 recurring and systemic recipient issue categories, including procurement and contracts, program and project management, and property and equipment standards in order to update policies, technical assistance, or grant monitoring efforts to address those issues. Using this information, GPD has created a grants management handbook for its recipients to more effectively document their grants management policies, processes, and procedures. GPD is also expanding and improving its Grants Management Technical Assistance deliveries to address recurring issues, including tailoring to specific SLTTs' identified issues.