National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program State Assistance Grant Program

The National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) is the federal government’s coordinated approach to addressing earthquake risks. The NEHRP’s premise is that while earthquakes may be inevitable, earthquake disasters are not.

FEMA is responsible for the majority NEHRP’s general implementation activities. In this role, FEMA translates the results of research and technology development into effective earthquake risk reduction plans and activities. For example, FEMA operates a program of grants and assistance to enhance states and territories’ earthquake risk reduction efforts.

FEMA NEHRP Responsibilities

- Operate a program of grants and assistance to enable states to develop and implement earthquake risk mitigation activities.
- Support implementation of a comprehensive earthquake education, outreach, and public awareness program.
- In conjunction with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and other federal agencies, support the preparation, maintenance, and dissemination of seismic resistant design guidance on building codes, standards, and practices for new and existing buildings and lifelines.
- Work with states, local jurisdictions and other federal agencies to establish demonstration projects on earthquake hazard mitigation.
- Support the Director of NIST in the completion of programmatic goals.

Years of research has determined that all 50 states and US territories are at risk from earthquakes. However, 24 states and U.S. territories have a high to very high risk. These states and territories are eligible for FEMA NEHRP State Assistance.
State Assistance Grant Program

The FEMA NEHRP State Assistance Grant Program is designed to increase and enhance the effective implementation of earthquake risk reduction at the regional, state and local level, by making funding available through annual, non-competitive cooperative agreements for individual states and territories. FEMA also provides grant funding to non-profit organizations and institutions of higher education for multi-state and national earthquake assistance.

Allowable Activities

For detailed information on allowable activities, click here. Generally, funding is provided to:

- Develop seismic mitigation plans;
- Prepare inventories and conduct seismic safety inspection of critical structures and lifelines;
- Update building codes, zoning codes, and ordinances to enhance seismic safety;
- Increase earthquake awareness and education;
- Participate in earthquake exercises;
- Promotion of Earthquake Insurance; and
- Provide assistance to multi-state groups.

Types of Funding Opportunities

To support individual states and territories, the FEMA NEHRP state assistance program utilizes two types of funding opportunities: Individual State Earthquake Assistance cooperative agreements and Multi-State and National Earthquake Assistance competitive grants.

Individual State Earthquake Assistance

This funding opportunity is provided to those states and territories that have been determined to be at a high to very high risk of earthquakes.

This determination is made and published annually by FEMA as the State Assistance Target Allocation Plan. The plan is based on the Seismic Design Category (SDC) per ASCE/SEI 7-10 Minimum Design Loads for Buildings and Other Structures and the 2012 International Residential Code (IRC) SDC maps.

In addition, states and territories must meet the statutory 25 percent cost share requirement, and they must ensure that they have the staffing capacity to manage their anticipated level of involvement in FEMA-funded NEHRP projects and activities.

Funding is provided to eligible states and territories through Cooperative Agreements that are managed by FEMA Regional earthquake program management staff.
Multi-State and National Earthquake Assistance

This funding opportunity is designed to facilitate the development and implementation of FEMA-funded, Multi-State and National NEHRP projects and activities. An example is support for ShakeOut events.

Funding is provided to non-profit organizations and institutions of higher education through competitive grants. Unlike Individual State Earthquake Assistance, these grants are managed by FEMA Headquarters earthquake program management staff.

How Funding Opportunities are Made Available

Each year FEMA publishes a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for both Individual State Earthquake Assistance and Multi-State and National Earthquake Assistance. The NOFOs are posted on Grants.gov and are available for public review.

Additional Information and Resource Links

- National Earthquake Reduction Program (NEHRP)
- Fact Sheet - FEMA National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program
- Earthquake Publications available at FEMA
- For information about federal earthquake grants and Cooperative Agreements

Questions for FEMA Headquarters NEHRP program management staff can be emailed to: FEMA-NEHRP@fema.dhs.gov