



## Building Community Resilience by Integrating Hazard Mitigation Social and Economic Benefits

### What Makes a Community Resilient?

Resilience is the ability to adapt to changing conditions and prepare for, withstand, and rapidly recover from disruption. Resilient communities proactively protect themselves against hazards, build self-sufficiency, and become more sustainable.

### What Are the Benefits of Community Resilience?

Community resilience has multiple social and economic benefits, including:

- **Preventing loss of life and injury.** This is typically of paramount importance to most communities. The value of protecting buildings and infrastructure diminishes significantly if residents and property owners do not feel safe in their homes or places of business.
- **Reducing property damage to homes and businesses.** Minimizing physical damage to residential properties can help avoid expensive displacement costs, in addition to the cost of repairs. Any avoided damage to a business can help reduce loss of revenue and downtime for employees, in addition to the cost of repairs.
- **Reducing business interruption and revenue loss.** Businesses employ workers, provide for community needs and services, and generate revenue, allowing the community, both its members and government, to provide for itself. Reducing business interruption and revenue loss greatly aids in the speed and effectiveness of returning a community to self-sufficiency and vitality after a disaster.
- **Helping to lower emergency response and disaster recovery costs.** Emergency response costs can be lowered significantly when services such as fire safety, search and rescue, medical operations, disaster management, and other related services are needed less. Disaster recovery costs can also be lowered when prolonged activities such as long-term recovery planning, debris management, housing recovery, infrastructure recovery, natural resource recovery, and other related activities are needed less.



FEMA/Adam Dubrowa

“On average, a dollar spent by FEMA on hazard mitigation provides the nation about \$4 in future benefits.

In addition, FEMA grants to mitigate the effects of floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, and earthquakes between 1993 and 2003 are expected to save more than 220 lives and prevent almost 4,700 injuries over approximately 50 years.”

*Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves:  
An Independent Study to Assess  
the Future Savings from Mitigation  
Activities by the Multihazard  
Mitigation Council  
[www.nibs.org/resource/resmgr/  
MMC/hms\\_vol1.pdf](http://www.nibs.org/resource/resmgr/MMC/hms_vol1.pdf)*

- **Attracting new businesses and residents.** The ability to market a neighborhood or business district as “resilient” to hazards can help attract industry, commercial development, and a thriving population with positive impacts on a community’s tax base.
- **Protecting cultural and historical assets.** Seeking to preserve, protect, conserve, rehabilitate, recover, and restore cultural and historical resources can have a significant positive impact on a community’s overall health.
- **Reducing environmental damage.** Environmental assets and natural resources are important to community identity and quality of life and support the economy through agriculture, tourism and recreation, and a variety of other ecosystem services, such as clean air and water. The natural environment also provides protective functions that reduce hazard impacts and increase resiliency.
- **Building a sense of place and peace of mind.** A safe, resilient community results in residents and business owners feeling more confident and secure about their assets and investments, and can lead to a stronger sense of place and, ultimately, peace of mind.

## The Added Value of Integration

Well-rounded community resilience as described above is often the result of integrating hazard mitigation with other local planning processes that help guide community development. Communities can build a stronger capacity for mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery by building on the public, private, and non-profit institutions that enable day-to-day activities to run well. Integration can also lead to efficiencies and reduced costs as planning efforts and hazard mitigation activities are combined, productivity is optimized, and tasks and responsibilities are shared.



FEMA/Jennifer Smits