

FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Application Period Extension Rule

On Aug. 15, 2024, a final rule that changes its application procedures for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) became effective. Through HMGP, FEMA provides funding to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments to develop hazard mitigation plans and rebuild in a way that reduces or mitigates future disaster losses in their communities. The updated rule extends the application period to offer additional time to submit complete and quality applications to address the effects of climate change and other unmet community mitigation needs. It also provides the ability to re-open closed application periods under certain circumstances to allow applicants to maximize available HMGP funding.

Summary of changes

- On Aug. 14, 2024, FEMA published a final rule that extends and adds additional flexibilities to the application procedures for HMGP. The final rule is effective for major disasters declared on or after Aug. 15, 2024.
- The updated rule makes the following changes to the HMGP application period:
 - Extends the application period from 12 months to 15 months from the date of the disaster declaration.
 - Increases FEMA Regional Administrators' authority to grant application period extensions in 30 to 120-day increments, for a total application period extension of up to 240 days.
 - Provides clear authority for FEMA to extend the application period beyond 240 days for extenuating circumstances outside of the applicant's control. FEMA is developing additional guidance regarding extenuating circumstances.
 - Authorizes FEMA to re-open the HMGP application period for two circumstances: 1) if additional funding becomes available because of a recalculation in the amount of HMGP assistance, or 2) if an appeal on an application period extension denial is granted after the application period closes.
- This rule applies to HMGP awards made under major disaster declarations declared on or after Aug 15, 2024. It does not apply to the HMGP Post Fire program. For application procedures related to the HMGP Post Fire program, applicants should refer to the [2024 Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program and Policy Guide](#).



FEMA

Table 1: Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Application Procedure Changes

| Prior Regulation | New Regulation |
|---|---|
| Application period is 12 months from the date of the major disaster declaration | Application period is 15 months from the date of the major disaster declaration |
| Regional Administrators can extend the application period up to 180 days, in 30 to 90-day increments | Regional Administrators can extend the application period up to 240 days, in 30 to 120-day increments |
| The prior regulation did not provide FEMA Headquarters clear authority to extend the application period | FEMA can extend the application period beyond 240 days for extenuating circumstances outside of the applicant’s control |
| The prior regulation did not provide FEMA with the authority to reopen the application period | FEMA has the authority to reopen application periods for up to 180 days, in limited circumstances |

Benefits

- The application procedure changes will help our partners address risks to natural disasters and reaffirms FEMA’s commitment to reducing barriers to participate in HMGP.
- The application deadline extension will allow communities more time to complete applications. Based on an analysis of application period extension requests under the previous regulation, 74% of applicants requested an extension beyond the 12-month application period and nearly 27% requested extensions beyond the Regional Administrator’s authority to extend up to 18 months.
- This rule responds to numerous comments regarding the length of the application period and the inability to reopen it once it has closed.
- This effort highlights the importance of FEMA’s continued commitment to “people first” and helping communities, families and businesses build climate resilience. It also aligns with the 2024 FEMA Year of Resilience theme to build capacity to withstand tomorrow’s hazards.