

Advance Assistance: Instructions

**The following information is intended for guidance only and is not a request for information. The following template is only intended to help the reader understand the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) application process.*

This document provides instructions on how to complete the application for Advance Assistance funding. Section 1104 of the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act authorizes the use of Advance Assistance, which allows advancing up to 25 percent of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) ceiling or \$10 million to Applicants/Subapplicants (whichever is less) to accelerate the implementation of the program. Applicants/Subapplicants may use Advance Assistance to develop mitigation strategies and obtain data to prioritize, select, and develop complete HMGP applications in a timely manner.

Advance Assistance is not automatic and is included in the HMGP ceiling amount. States and federally recognized tribes may request Advance Assistance by submitting an HMGP application form to the Regional Mitigation Division Director. The application must identify the proposed use of the funds, including costs in sufficient detail for each proposed activity and milestones for submitting completed HMGP applications to FEMA. Advance Assistance is subject to the HMGP cost-share requirements and Strategic Funds Management (SFM); FEMA will not obligate funds until the Recipient/Subrecipient has an immediate need for the funds.

The user can provide the requested information by adding text or comments to the form, or by including the information in a separate document with their subapplication.

A. Applicant/Subapplicant Information

1. **Applicant/Subapplicant Legal Name:** Enter your organization's legal name.
2. **Organizational Unit:** Enter the name of the department or agency within your organization that is pursuing the grant.
3. **Project Title:** Enter the name of the project title. The title should be short but descriptive (e.g., Town of Tornadoes Community Safe Room).
4. **Applicant/Subapplicant Type:** Enter the type of applicant or subapplicant; refer to Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Guidance (Part III, Sections A and B) for information on Eligible Applicants and Subapplicants.
5. **Proposed Project Total Cost:** Enter the total cost of the project in the first field provided. In the fields beneath that, indicate the percentage and dollar amount of both the federal and nonfederal shares for the project.
6. **Certifications:** Read the statement provided and enter the requested information to certify the Applicant/Subapplicant reviewed and concurred with the HMA program requirements.
7. **Mitigation Plan:** Mark the appropriate box—Yes or No. If Yes was marked, provide the specified information for the Local and State/Territorial/Tribal Mitigation Plan. Refer to HMA Guidance (Part III, Section E.5) for information on hazard mitigation plan requirements.



8. **National Flood Insurance Program:** Mark the appropriate box—Yes or No. HMGP mitigation project subapplications for projects sites within the Special Flood Hazard Area are eligible only if the jurisdiction in which the project is located is participating in the program.
9. Enter the **Tax ID Number**, five-digit Federal Information Processing Standards (**FIPS**) code, six-digit **Community Identification Number**, and Data Universal Numbering System (**DUNS**) number for the Applicant/Subapplicant.
10. Enter the **U.S. Congressional District** for your jurisdiction, if applicable.
11. Enter the **State Legislative District** for your jurisdiction, if applicable.
12. **Primary Point of Contact:** Enter the contact information for the person coordinating the implementation of this grant throughout the application process.
13. **Alternate Point of Contact:** Enter the name and contact information for the alternate point of contact who can coordinate the implementation of this grant when the primary point of contact is not available.
14. **Authorized Applicant/Subapplicant Agent:** Enter the name and contact information for the authorized agent for your organization. The Authorized Applicant/Subapplicant Agent **MUST** be the chief executive officer, mayor, or person of comparable status who is authorized to sign contracts, authorize funding allocations or payments, etc.

B. Project Narrative and Scope of Work

1. Insert the name and applicant/subapplicant type for your organization and the FEMA disaster declaration number.
2. Describe all project activities in detail and clearly explain how they relate to the project goals. Include key milestones, activities and deliverables.

Per fiscal year 2015 Hazard Mitigation Grant Assistance Guidance (Part VIII A.12), applicants/subapplicants may use Advance Assistance for the following activities:

- Obtain staff or resources to develop a cost-share strategy and identify potential match funding.
- Evaluate facilities or areas to determine appropriate mitigation actions.
- Incorporate Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) considerations early into program decisions.
- Collect data for benefit-cost analyses, EHP compliance, and other program requirements.
- Scope and prioritize hazard mitigation projects (including State coordination of local projects) to incorporate sustainability, resilience, and renewable building concepts.
- Develop hazard mitigation projects, including engineering design and feasibility studies for larger or complex community drainage projects or critical facility retrofits.
- Incorporate SFM principles into mitigation project work schedules and budgets that will facilitate compliance with the legislative requirement to expend obligated funds within 24 months.
- Conduct meetings, outreach, and coordination with potential subapplicants and community residents to identify potential participants for property acquisition and demolition or relocation projects.
- Conduct hydrologic and hydraulic studies for unmapped flood zones or Approximate Zone A areas where communities propose to submit hazard mitigation projects.

- Perform professional cost estimation services to aid consistency in project budgeting across subapplications.
 - Rectify data consistency needs for other project application categories, such as EHP compliance, cost-sharing mechanisms, and work schedules.
 - Complete necessary documents for deed restricting properties such as acknowledgement of voluntary participation or Model Acknowledgment of Conditions for Mitigation of Property in a Special Flood Hazard Area with FEMA Grant Funds for property acquisition projects.
3. Describe the need for the project and how it will protect individuals. Describe the hazards to be mitigated, such as hurricanes, flooding, tornado, wildfire, and/or seismic events. Include any damage history in the project area, if available. Describe how the project will mitigate the identified risk(s).
4. Provide a title for each proposed activity and the estimated cost and the deliverable associated with each. Advance Assistance funding should not be used for projects that have already been fully scoped and ready to be submitted as HMGP projects.

Requirements and deliverables associated with Advance Assistance and resulting HMGP applications may include:

- Documentation of Advance Assistance Accomplishments: Applicants and subapplicants must submit documentation to FEMA to support that they accomplished all activities listed in their Advance Assistance application.
- Submission of Projects up to the HMGP Ceiling: FEMA expects States that receive Advance Assistance to submit complete project applications up to or over the available HMGP ceiling by the final HMGP project application deadline.
- Accounting for Use of Advance Assistance Funds: For accounting and audit purposes, the State must submit sufficient financial detail to demonstrate that no costs claimed under Advance Assistance are duplicated in subsequent HMGP project applications or in State Management Cost budgets.
- Documentation of EHP Considerations: The Applicant and subapplicant must document that impacts to environmental and historic resources were considered early in the planning and project scoping processes. This requirement is in addition to ensuring EHP compliance.

The federal share of the estimated costs cannot exceed 75%. The percentage of cost shares for federal and local should be demonstrated in the last column.

C. Estimated Work Schedule

The work schedule must reflect actions that can be executed within 24 months from the time FEMA obligates funds. Indicate which quarter the proposed activities will occur in, including the associated milestone and deliverable for each. The “activity” should match the “activity” items in the “Scope of Work” table. Each of the activities listed in the Scope of Work should be accounted for in the Work Schedule table.

The proposed project can take less than 24 months, but not longer than 36 months. Each “quarter” is a 3-month period that begins once the project is approved.

D. Budget Estimating

1. **Costing Methodology:** Indicate which method(s) were used to determine the project costs. Choose whether the estimate was prepared by a contractor or consultant OR if the cost of a previous planning grant was used (with an inflation factor) to obtain the estimate. If none of these were used, please choose “Other” and describe the methodology used to develop the cost estimate for the planning efforts.
2. The Advance Assistance budget must include estimated costs for each requested activity. It must also include schedules for incremental obligations, based on the associated activities and time frame for implementing each action. The work schedule must reflect actions that can be executed within 24 months from the time FEMA obligates funds.
3. Provide a budget narrative with explanations, justifications, and line-item details of the project costs. If needed, indicate in box that the narrative is in an attachment to the application and provide with application submittal.
The budget narrative should explain how costs were derived, including any details not in the line items.

E. Nonfederal Funding Share (25% of Total Planning Grant Costs)

List all sources and amounts used in the nonfederal share, including all in-kind services. In-kind services may not exceed the 25% nonfederal share. For each source, indicate the name of the source agency, describe the type of funding, and the amount.

Attach letters of funding commitment for each source.

F. Required Documentation Attached

Indicate all attachments to be included with this form. Please also indicate any additional documentation in the box below.

- Jurisdiction Details Form: Must be filled out completely and signed by the Authorized Agent for the entity.
- Detailed budget with narrative as described in Section D.
- Funds commitment letter(s) (from all match sources), which lists the sources and amounts used in the nonfederal share requirement, including all in-kind services. Fund commitment letters are also required from nonapplicant sources
- Assurances (FEMA Form 112-0-3C or 20-16c (Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements), and SF-LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Programs) if applicable)
- Completed SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance), signed by the authorized representative of the jurisdiction
- Completed SF-424a (Non-Construction Programs) (optional for subapplications in HMGP): instructions provided with the forms
- Designated Authorized Agent documentation designating authority for the signatory to sign contracts, authorize funding allocations or payments, or apply for grant funding that is signed by the ruling body of the applicant

- Provide any additional information or explanation needed to better help the application reviewer understand the proposed activities