

# Hazard Mitigation Planning for Tribal Governments

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This fact sheet provides an overview of hazard mitigation planning for tribal governments.

## What is Hazard Mitigation Planning?

State, local, tribal and territorial governments use the mitigation planning process to understand natural hazard risks and develop long-term strategies to reduce the impacts of future events on people, property and the environment. Hazard mitigation is most effective when it is implemented under a comprehensive, long-term mitigation plan. Having a mitigation plan increases awareness of hazards, risks and vulnerabilities; identifies actions for risk reduction; and focuses tribal resources on the greatest risks and mitigation priorities.

## Tribal Mitigation Planning Process

FEMA's [Tribal Mitigation Planning Handbook](#) describes the mitigation planning process for tribes in detail:

1. **Describe the Community:** Start by describing the planning area, tribal assets and the tribe's unique characteristics in a community profile.
2. **Identify Hazards:** Document hazards that could occur in the planning area.
3. **Explain the Impacts of Hazards:** Describe how hazards can affect the tribe, including sacred and cultural sites and subsistence areas, and how they might change based on future conditions (e.g., climate change and changes in land use and population).
4. **Review the Tribe's Current Capability to Mitigate the Impacts:** Inventory the tribe's plans, policies and programs that can be used to protect the planning area.
5. **Develop the Strategy:** Keeping in mind the risks and capabilities, identify the tribe's mitigation goals and actions.
6. **Develop an Action Plan:** Prioritize actions and develop details to help with implementation.
7. **Keep Track of Progress:** Adopt the plan and record the progress made in implementing the mitigation program using a defined method and schedule.

Mitigation plans are meant to be living documents that change over time and should be actively maintained. It is important that the planning team stay engaged during the five-year life of the plan and use the document to guide decision making. Once the tribe moves toward plan implementation, more tribal members may be involved, and other tribal departments may assume responsibility for project and grant management.



FEMA can provide training and technical assistance to tribal governments as they develop their mitigation plan and throughout the plan life cycle.

## Benefits for Tribal Governments

Tribal governments have a responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of their citizens. Developing a hazard mitigation plan helps tribal officials:

- Increase education and awareness of threats, hazards and vulnerabilities.
- Build partnerships for risk reduction involving government, organizations, businesses and tribal members.
- Identify long-term, broadly supported strategies for risk reduction.
- Align risk reduction with other objectives.
- Identify implementation approaches that focus on the greatest risks and vulnerabilities.
- Connect priorities with potential sources of funding.

## Mitigation Planning and Grants

Under the [Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act \(Stafford Act\)](#), a tribal government must develop and adopt a FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan to be eligible for certain types of non-emergency disaster assistance. The Code of Federal Regulations ([44 CFR Part 201](#)) establishes specific requirements for tribal mitigation plans, and [FEMA's Tribal Mitigation Plan Review Guide](#) (2017) assists agency officials in interpreting those requirements in their review and approval of plans. FEMA evaluates a tribal government's mitigation plan under the requirements of [44 CFR Section 201.7](#) (Tribal Mitigation Plans), even if the plan is part of a larger multi-jurisdictional mitigation plan developed together with nearby local governments.

FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant programs can support federally recognized tribal governments in developing mitigation plans and implementing projects. These HMA programs include the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities, and Flood Mitigation Assistance. Tribes can apply directly to FEMA for assistance as "applicants" or through a state as "sub-applicants." For more information, including eligibility information for individual grant programs, visit [Mitigation Planning and Grants](#).

### **FEMA provides a variety of guidance, tools and resources to help tribes develop their hazard mitigation plan.**

- [Hazard mitigation planning regulations and guidance](#), in particular, [FEMA's Tribal Mitigation Plan Review Guide \(2017\)](#), direct the development of tribal mitigation plans.
- [The Tribal Mitigation Planning Grant Application Development Job Aid](#) guides tribes through the process of completing an HMA planning grant application or subapplication that results in a FEMA-approved mitigation plan that is complete and actionable.
- Visit [Create a Plan](#) for available mitigation planning resources and information on virtual and in-person mitigation planning training.
- [FEMA's Tribal Affairs](#) office connects tribal partners to FEMA points of contact and provides [tribal mitigation resources](#). Tribal partners may also contact their [Regional Tribal Liaison](#) for assistance.