

Guidance for Stakeholder Engagement

Introduction and Key Terms

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November 2019



Requirements for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning (Risk MAP) Program are specified separately by statute, regulation, or FEMA policy (primarily the Standards for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping). This document provides guidance to support the requirements and recommends approaches for effective and efficient implementation. Alternate approaches that comply with all requirements are acceptable.

For more information, please visit the FEMA Guidelines and Standards for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping webpage (www.fema.gov/guidelines-and-standards-flood-risk-analysis-and-mapping). Copies of the Standards for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping policy, related guidance, technical references, and other information about the guidelines and standards development process are all available here. You can also search directly by document title at www.fema.gov/resource-document-library.

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Table of Revisions

Affected Section or Subsection	Date	Description
First Publication	November 2019	<p>Initial version of streamlined stakeholder engagement guidance; incorporates duplicative content from eight superseded Stakeholder Engagements documents including: <u>Guidance Document No. 21 Stakeholder Engagement Project Planning Phase</u>, <u>Guidance Document No. 22 Stakeholder Engagement Discovery Phase</u>, <u>Guidance Document No. 23 Stakeholder Engagement Due Process Phase</u>, <u>Guidance Document No. 61 Stakeholder Engagement Data Product Development Phase</u>, <u>Guidance Document No. 62 Stakeholder Engagement Preliminary National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Map Release Phase</u>, <u>Guidance Document No. 63 Stakeholder Engagement Risk Awareness Phase</u>, <u>Guidance Document No. 86 Stakeholder Engagement FIS and FIRM Delivery Phase</u>, and <u>Guidance Document No. 87 Stakeholder Engagement Planning for Mitigation Action Phase</u>.</p> <p>The initial transformed guidance was derived from <u>Operating Guidance 04-11</u>, <u>Risk MAP Meetings Guidance</u>, and subsequently revised to provide additional clarity on the implementation of enhanced stakeholder engagement requirements resulting from Section 216 of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, as amended by the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014.</p>

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1.0 Introduction

This resource document introduces and accompanies three guidance documents that cover stakeholder engagement for the Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning (Risk MAP) program.

Figure 1. Risk MAP Project Lifecycle



Those guidance documents each provide detailed information on stakeholder engagement at certain phases of the Risk MAP lifecycle:

- Document No. 102, Guidance for Stakeholder Engagement: Project Planning and Discovery
- Document No. 103, Guidance for Stakeholder Engagement: Preliminary Production Process
- Document No. 104, Guidance for Stakeholder Engagement: Post-Preliminary Due Process

Using the guidance, context, and information in these guidance documents is not required unless that guidance is codified separately in a statute, regulation, or policy. Alternate approaches that comply with all requirements are acceptable. The engagement activities performed during a Flood Risk Project will be based on the required level of support, which the FEMA Project Officer identifies.

This document contains overviews of the following topics:

- Issues for project teams to consider during coastal or levee mapping projects;
- Issues for project teams to consider when working with sovereign tribal nations;
- Impacts of National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) reform legislation on flood mapping studies;
- Federal policies related to flood mapping studies;
- Supplemental resources to consider when engaging with stakeholders; and
- Definitions for common key terms.

2.0 About Risk MAP

The Risk MAP program vision includes working with local, state, and tribal groups to produce high-quality flood mapping data that gives those groups a greater awareness of flood risk and motivates them to reduce their risk. To achieve this vision, FEMA transformed its traditional process for identifying and mapping flood hazards. It now uses a process that integrates

identifying, assessing, communicating, planning, and mitigating flood-related risks. The Risk MAP program has these goals:

Goal 1: Address gaps in flood hazard data to form a solid foundation for flood risk assessment, floodplain management, and the actuarial soundness of the NFIP.

Goal 2: Ensure that a measurable increase of the public's awareness and understanding of risk management results in a measurable reduction of current and future vulnerability to flooding.

Goal 3: Lead and support states, communities, and tribes to effectively engage in risk-based mitigation planning that results in sustainable actions that reduce or eliminate risks to life and property from natural hazards.

Goal 4: Provide an enhanced digital platform that improves management of Risk MAP resources, stewards information produced by Risk MAP, and improves communication and sharing of risk data and related products with all levels of government and the public.

Goal 5: Align risk analysis programs and develop synergies to enhance decision-making capabilities through effective risk communication and management.

3.0 The Importance of Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is the way an organization involves people who may be affected by its decisions or who can influence the way its decisions are carried out. It is a critically important part of any Flood Risk Project. Communities are much more likely to reduce their flood risk when they understand and are involved in identifying those risks, and when they have the tools and resources to respond to that information. Communities need to understand that FEMA is fully committed to helping them throughout this journey—not just during formal meetings or other flood study milestones.

FEMA and its project teams are partners with each community. This means making or strengthening working relationships with key local stakeholders throughout the process. Using an informed and intentional approach, FEMA can make it easier to exchange information with its stakeholders, gain their support, and avoid misunderstandings. The resources offered in the three guidance documents on stakeholder engagement provide FEMA project teams with approaches and best practices for stakeholder engagement throughout the lifecycle of a Flood Risk Project.

4.0 Coastal and Levee Accreditation Project Considerations

Coastal projects and levee accreditation projects may have a longer timeline than other regionally prioritized areas. Other differences may include different audiences and unique protocols for setting priorities. For example, a levee project team may need to form a Local Levee Partnership Team with a diverse group of stakeholders.

Separate guidance related to coastal projects and levee accreditation projects is provided on the Guidelines and Standards for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping webpage. Additional resources for coastal analyses and mapping are available from <https://www.fema.gov/coastal-flood-risks->

[achieving-resilience-together](#). Additional resources for levee analysis and mapping are available from the FEMA Levee Resources Library at <https://www.fema.gov/fema-levee-resources-library>.

The Risk Communication and Risk MAP Playbook (also known as the CERC Playbook) is another resource for teams working on Flood Risk Projects involving coastal analyses or levees. It provides links to project-related examples, tools, and templates. Access the CERC Playbook through the password-protected Risk Management Directorate (RMD) Portal or by contacting the FEMA Project Officer.

The “Supplemental Resources” section of this document has links to additional coastal and levee-specific outreach materials.

5.0 Tribal Considerations

When tribal lands are included in a project area, coordinate with the FEMA Regional Office Tribal Liaison before engaging any tribal entity or representative. During the Discovery Phase of Risk MAP, any affected tribal entities should be asked whether they want to be included in planned engagement and Risk MAP meetings. They also have the option for separate engagement or meetings, if that is more appropriate. This will depend on established working relationships between the Regional Office Tribal Liaisons and the tribal entities. For instance, if a tribe participates in a multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, it might be appropriate for members to participate in the Resilience Meeting. Their desire to be involved should be revisited throughout the Risk MAP process, as appropriate. This is especially true for Resilience Meetings, where decisions about mitigation actions could affect tribal lands.

Only the FEMA Regional Office Tribal Liaison or other approved Regional Office staff members are to work directly with federally recognized tribes and tribal entities. If a tribal entity contacts a project team member about participation in the NFIP or in the ongoing project, notify the FEMA Project Officer and the Regional Office Tribal Liaison immediately.

The FEMA Region may determine that a tribe does not have the land-use authority needed to implement the requirements of the NFIP. Even so, the Discovery process might provide an opportunity to inform the tribe about the NFIP, the Risk MAP program, mitigation, and the benefit of developing a Hazard Mitigation Plan. Tribal planning and mitigation resources include a Tribal Mitigation Planning Handbook and a companion Tribal Mitigation Plan Review Guide. These are available at <https://www.fema.gov/tribal-mitigation-planning-resources>.

Before the end of the Discovery Phase, the FEMA Region usually will know, in coordination with the tribal entity, whether the tribe meets the NFIP definition of a community and how it should be included in the Flood Risk Project. The FEMA Regional Office Tribal Liaison will continue to work with the tribal entity, as appropriate, after the Discovery Phase.

During the earlier phases of the project lifecycle, tribal entities may need to be considered as external stakeholders, and the Regional Office may need to consider the potential impacts that the additional engagement will have on the project’s budget. In this document, the term “communities” includes tribes and tribal entities that choose to participate in a Flood Risk Project.

6.0 Impact of NFIP Reform Legislation

Through the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (BW12) and the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014 (HFIAA), the U.S. Congress established a number of mapping-related requirements. For a complete breakdown of these requirements, visit the Flood Insurance Reform portion of the FEMA website (<https://www.fema.gov/flood-insurance-reform>).

Several of the requirements for communicating about flood map updates from Section 216 of BW12 are addressed in the following stakeholder engagement guidance documents: No. 102 Project Planning and Discovery, No. 103 Preliminary Production, and No. 104 Post-Preliminary Due Process. Refer to those documents for additional clarity on the implementation of FEMA's communication-related Standards (620, 621, and 622). The following limitations apply to these Standards:

- They apply only to FEMA Flood Risk Projects funded in or after June 2016.
- They are not retroactive (even where projects were funded in phases).
- They do not need to be met a second time (i.e., if a revised preliminary map is prepared).
- They do not apply to Letters of Map Revision (LOMR), community-initiated Physical Map Revisions (PMRs), or PMRs that are undertaken as a follow-up to a LOMR.

Templates to support the implementation of the communication-related Standards are available from the Flood Mapping Letter Repository which can be found on the password-protected RMI SharePoint portal or through the FEMA Program Officer.

As part of the reform legislation, the U.S. Congress also required the Technical Mapping Advisory Council (TMAC) to advise FEMA on certain aspects of the national flood mapping program. Find information about the TMAC on the FEMA website at <https://www.fema.gov/technical-mapping-advisory-council>. FEMA works with the TMAC to implement the NFIP reform legislation and the TMAC's recommendations.

7.0 Links with National Strategic Goals

The Risk MAP goal of providing quality data to increase risk awareness and lead to mitigation actions is in line with FEMA's vision and Strategic Plan for a prepared and resilient Nation (<https://www.fema.gov/strategic-plan>). The National Mitigation Investment Strategy (NMIS) (<https://www.fema.gov/national-mitigation-investment-strategy>) provides an opportunity for national-scale coordination around mitigation investment and disaster resilience priorities that reduces the Nation's exposure to future losses from disasters.

Before the Strategic Plan and NMIS were published, national strategic goals were stated in Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD-8) and the associated National Planning Frameworks (<https://www.fema.gov/national-planning-frameworks>). Each Framework outlines the roles and responsibilities for planning and implementation, including those of the federal government, and helps document how we coordinate, share information, and work together—ultimately resulting in a more secure and resilient Nation. The Frameworks are based on the Whole Community approach (<https://www.fema.gov/whole-community>), which recognizes that everyone can contribute to and benefit from national preparedness efforts, including individuals and families,

businesses, community and faith-based groups, nonprofit organizations, and all levels of government. The five Frameworks—Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Disaster Recovery—relate to the preparedness mission areas identified in PPD-8 (<https://www.dhs.gov/presidential-policy-directive-8-national-preparedness>).

8.0 Supplemental Resources

The resources listed in Table 1 were developed to help project teams with stakeholder engagement in all phases of Risk MAP and to help communities think about mitigation investment and risk reduction before, during, and after a flood mapping study. Project teams are encouraged to use these resources whenever appropriate. For questions about any of these resources, contact your regional Project Officer or CERC Liaison (CERC-L).

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Table 1: Stakeholder Engagement Supplemental Resources

RMD Portal (<i>password protected</i>)	
<p>CERC Playbook and Tools and Templates (https://rmd.msc.fema.gov/CERC%20Playbook/CERC%20Playbook.pdf)</p>	<p>This comprehensive resource guides project teams to strategies and best practices for community engagement and risk communication during a Flood Risk Project. In addition to chapters on each phase of Risk MAP, the Playbook includes special considerations for engagement during coastal and levee flood risk studies, and ways to incorporate behavioral science concepts.</p> <p>The CERC Playbook also has linked resources for project teams to use. These include tip sheets on a variety of communication-related subjects, such as facilitating a successful meeting, using plain language, and powerful presentation delivery. Links for template meeting invitations, agendas, and other tools—including an entire section dedicated to levee-specific Flood Risk Projects—are also available.</p>
<p>Best Practices Library (https://rmd.msc.fema.gov/BestPractices/SitePages/BPHome.aspx)</p>	<p>This library includes tools, job aids, and other resources for engaging people in conversations (and eventually actions) about flood risk and mitigation. The collection includes case studies and describes how various Regions have used these resources.</p>

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FEMA.gov (publicly available)

Flood Risk Communication Toolkit for Community Officials
(<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/179697>)

This Toolkit, including the videos below, is designed to help community officials communicate more effectively with the public. The topics include flood risks, Risk MAP, flood insurance, and the importance of reducing risk through investing in mitigation projects. The Toolkit includes guides for designing a communication plan, effective public meetings, and social media. It should be offered as a resource to community officials, ideally at the beginning of a Flood Risk Project. The story maps and videos can be shared with community officials and the public at Discovery Meetings, Open Houses, and elsewhere, or community officials can share them with residents via social media.

Flood Risk Communication YouTube Videos
(<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL720KvDprrLiVWzbpCOn5MjQw13E6e>)

These original videos are designed to help community officials communicate more effectively with the public. The topics include flood risks, Risk MAP, flood insurance, and the importance of reducing risk through investing in mitigation projects. The videos can be shared with community officials and the public at Discovery Meetings, Open Houses, and elsewhere, or community officials can share them with residents via social media.

Tribal Mitigation Handbook
(<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/179207>)

This Handbook provides practical approaches and advice to help tribal governments develop their hazard mitigation plans. It is organized around the seven steps recommended for developing a tribal mitigation plan. It also provides considerations for how to implement the mitigation plan, advance mitigation activities, and incorporate risk reduction into other tribal plans and programs. The Handbook is a companion to the Tribal Mitigation Plan Review Guide, which FEMA released in 2017.

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<p>Coastal Hazards and Floodplain Mapping: A Visual Guide https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/172026</p>	<p>This visual guide to coastal flood hazards (including a glossary) can be distributed at community meetings for people to take home. It explains complex coastal flood mapping concepts with easy-to-understand language and visual aids.</p>
<p><u>Guidance for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping: Incorporating Mitigation Planning Technical Assistance into Risk MAP Projects</u></p>	<p>This Risk MAP guidance describes how a project team can provide communities with technical assistance for mitigation planning at every phase of a Risk MAP project and during each touchpoint of the project lifecycle.</p>

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9.0 Key Terms Defined

The key terms listed below are used in this and other stakeholder engagement guidance documents.

- **Adoption/Compliance Period** – The period, usually lasting six months, that begins when a Letter of Final Determination (LFD) is issued and ends when a new or revised Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) becomes effective. During this time, a community must enact and adopt the new or revised floodplain management ordinances required for participation in the NFIP.
- **Appeal** – A formal objection to proposed new or modified flood hazard determinations, such as new or revised Base Flood Elevations (BFEs), base flood depths, Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs), flood zone designations, or regulatory floodways. An appeal, which may be submitted by a community official or by a resident who owns or leases a property within the community, must be based on data showing that the proposed flood hazard information is scientifically or technically incorrect. (It must satisfy the requirements for an appeal under Part 67 of the NFIP regulations.) Additional guidance on appeal processing is available in Guidance Document No. 26, *Guidance for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping, Appeal and Comment Processing*.
- **Appeal Period** – The 90-day period during which community officials or a resident who owns or leases a property within the community may submit formal objections to proposed flood hazard information shown on a new or revised FIRM panel or FIS Report. The period begins on the date of the second publication of FEMA's notice about proposed flood hazard determinations in a local newspaper with wide circulation. Appeals should include data showing that the proposed flood hazard information is scientifically or technically incorrect. Additional guidance on appeal processing is available in Guidance Document No. 26, *Guidance for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping, Appeal and Comment Processing*.
- **CCO Meeting** – A meeting with community officials and select stakeholders for Flood Risk Projects under FEMA's Risk MAP program. The Consultation Coordination Officer (CCO) meeting focuses on the release of the preliminary version of the FIRM and FIS Report and the processes for reviewing and adopting the FIRM.
- **Cooperating Technical Partner** – The Cooperating Technical Partners program creates partnerships between FEMA and participating NFIP communities, regional agencies, state agencies, tribes and universities that have the interest and capability to become active participants in the FEMA flood hazard mapping program.
- **Changes Since Last FIRM** – A FEMA Flood Risk Product dataset that provides information regarding changes made to a jurisdiction's mapped floodplain and regulatory floodway boundaries during an updated study of flood hazards. It is created by comparing the current effective flood zones with the new/revised flood zones.
- **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** – The official of a community who has the authority to implement and administer laws, ordinances, and regulations for that community.
- **Comment** – An objection to an element of a new or updated FIRM that is not directly related to the proposed flood hazard determinations. A comment could include changes

to road names and configurations, corporate boundaries, and requests to incorporate a LOMC. While not provided with the same status as appeals, FEMA generally addresses comments before the affected FIRM panels and FIS Report are finalized. Additional guidance on comment processing is available in Guidance Document No. 26, *Guidance for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping, Appeal and Comment Processing*.

- **Consultation Coordination Officer (CCO)** – The individual on the FEMA Regional Office staff who is responsible for coordinating with a community on NFIP-related activities.
- **Discovery** – The process, during a Risk MAP Flood Risk Project, for collecting information that provides a more comprehensive understanding of the flood risk and flood mitigation capabilities within a watershed or other geographical area. The data gathered during Discovery includes information that influences flood hazard or risk decision-making, historical flooding information, existing flood hazard data and information, and mitigation activities.
- **Discovery Map** – A map, set of maps, or Geographic Information System [GIS]-generated series of map layers created to display the data and information collected during Discovery. The Discovery map is used to facilitate decision-making during the Discovery Meeting.
- **Discovery Meeting** – A meeting with community officials and stakeholders during a potential Risk MAP Flood Risk Project. During the Discovery Meeting, FEMA, community, and stakeholder representatives discuss the results of the data collection and coordination effort during the Discovery process as depicted on a draft Discovery map, a watershed vision, flood risks, and mitigation needs.
- **Flood Elevation Determination Docket (FEDD)** – The file established and maintained for each community with a Flood Risk Project, to assist FEMA in meeting the requirements of Section 67.3 of the NFIP regulations (44 CFR 67.3(44 CFR 67.3)). The FEDD file includes all correspondence between FEMA and a community concerning a Flood Risk Project; reports of meetings held by FEMA representatives, community representatives, the state NFIP Coordinator, private citizens, FEMA and community contractors, and other interested parties; communication with community officials and local media to educate property owners about the appeals and map revision processes; relevant publications (e.g., newspaper notices, proposed and final Flood Hazard Determination notices published in the FEDERAL REGISTER); the LFD; and copies of the FIRM and FIS report.
- **Flood Risk Database** – The FEMA Flood Risk Product that stores all flood risk data for a Flood Risk Project, including the information shown in the Flood Risk Report and on the Flood Risk Map. The Flood Risk Database contains a wide variety of flood risk data, ranging from potential annual flood losses to the probability of being flooded in any given year or in a 30-year period.
- **Flood Risk Dataset** – A compilation of data gathered during a Flood Risk Project. The information in a Flood Risk Dataset is typically provided electronically in table format and can be used in other formats, such as GIS. Four groups of information typically provided as a result of a Flood Risk Project are the Changes Since Last FIRM, Areas of Mitigation Interest, Flood Depth and Analysis Grids, and Flood Risk Assessment datasets.

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- **Flood Risk Map** – An optional Flood Risk Product that provides a high-level overview of specific flood risk data for the project area, such as the potential flood losses associated with a 1-percent-annual-chance event, reported for each census block within the project area. Community and elected officials may use the Flood Risk Map to visually support presentations, proposals, and discussions about flood risks.
- **Flood Risk Open House** – The public open house held after the CCO Meeting with community officials and select stakeholders, to familiarize the public with the Flood Risk Project and resulting Preliminary FIRM and FIS Report.
- **Flood Risk Products** – Non-regulatory resources that help community officials and the public assess, visualize, and communicate local flood risk. Flood Risk Products include Flood Risk Maps, Flood Risk Reports, and Flood Risk Databases.
- **Flood Risk Report** – The Flood Risk Product that provides summary flood risk data for the entire project area, as well as for individual communities within the project area. The Flood Risk Report is not a regulatory or final source of flood risk data for the project area. Rather, it is used in conjunction with other data sources to provide a comprehensive picture of flood risk within a project area.
- **Flood Risk Review Meeting** – A meeting with community officials and stakeholders during a Risk MAP Flood Risk Project, during which the results of the analyses performed during the Data and Product Development Phase are discussed, and draft work maps are presented.
- **Floodplain Administrator (FPA)** – The official responsible for operating a floodplain management program in a community, in accordance with NFIP regulatory standards. The FPA may also be known as the Floodplain Manager.
- **Hazard Mitigation Plan** – A comprehensive, long-term planning document that includes identified risks and vulnerabilities associated with natural disasters and the community's long-term strategies for protecting people and property from future hazard events.
- **Key Influencers** – Public- or private-sector organizations and individuals who have direct or indirect power to affect the decisions of others because of their real or perceived authority, knowledge, position, or relationship.
- **Mitigation** – A sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate a hazard's long-term risk to people and property. Mitigation distinguishes actions that have a long-term impact from those that are more closely associated with preparedness for, immediate response to, and short-term recovery from specific events.
- **Outreach** – The activity, process, or channel used to engage or communicate to others.
- **Project Charter** – A document, usually produced during the Discovery process for a Flood Risk Project carried out under the Risk MAP program, that summarizes the watershed/project area vision; the products that each affected community will receive; mitigation technical assistance to be provided; roles and responsibilities for all parties involved; data to be provided with associated deadlines; projected timeline for the project; and an explanation of what is expected from partners at each milestone on the project timeline.

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- **Project Management Team** – The individuals who manage a Risk MAP Flood Risk Project for its entire lifecycle. The project management team includes the FEMA Risk Analysis Branch staff member who is the FEMA Project Officer; a project manager, or senior-level staff from the Cooperating Technical Partners (CTPs) and/or Risk MAP providers who are participating on the project team; the state NFIP Coordinator; and the FEMA Regional Office Contracting Officer.
- **Project Stakeholders** - The scalable group of stakeholders per Flood Risk Project based on the type of Flood Risk Project and specific needs identified within the regionally prioritized area being studied.
- **Project Team** – The individuals and organizations who execute a Flood Risk Project over its lifecycle. In addition to the FEMA Project Officer, the project team can include management and staff from the CTP(s) and/or Risk MAP provider(s) who are participating in the project; the state NFIP Coordinator and State Hazard Mitigation Officer (SHMO); other federal agencies; and others, such as regional planning agencies and water management districts.
- **Regulatory Products** – The term used to collectively refer to the FIRM, FIS Report, and FIRM database. These products help community members and officials view and visualize flood risk and serve as the basis for NFIP regulations and flood insurance requirements.
- **Resilience Meeting** – A meeting with community officials and other key stakeholders during a Flood Risk Project. The Resilience meeting focuses on building local capacity for implementing prioritized mitigation activities.
- **Risk MAP Providers** – The teams of private-sector companies that support the Risk MAP program under contract to FEMA. These include the Customer and Data Services (CDS), Community Engagement and Risk Communication (CERC), Production and Technical Services (PTS), and Program Management (PM) providers.
- **Stakeholder Engagement** – The way an organization involves people or organizations who may be affected by its decisions or who can influence the way its decisions are carried out.
- **Summary of Map Actions (SOMA)** – A list, generated by FEMA and delivered to a community, that summarizes the Letters of Map Amendment (LOMA), Letters of Map Revision Based on Fill (LOMR-F), and Letters of Map Revision (LOMR) that are or will be affected by updates to the effective FIRM.

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