



Unified Federal Review Process Fact Sheet

The mission of Unified Federal Review is to expedite and unify the process of completing environmental and historic preservation reviews required for disaster recovery projects, while maintaining the federal and state, local, Territorial, and Tribal (SLTT) partner responsibilities and public participation associated with those reviews. This purpose of this fact sheet is to provide applicants an overview of the Unified Federal Review (UFR) process and to describe how it fits into the environmental planning and historic preservation (EHP) compliance review process for disaster recovery projects.

Defining the Unified Federal Review Process

The UFR process is implemented by coordinating EHP compliance reviews across various federal agencies that may have different requirements consistent with their agency-specific mission and regulations. Interagency coordination facilitates compliance review by developing agreements and tools which streamline federal agency collaboration. As the size of a disaster increases, so does the likelihood that there will be other federal agencies besides FEMA governments, involved in disaster recovery projects, such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development or the US Army Corps of Engineers. In such cases, projects resulting from the same disaster event may receive funding and or require approvals from multiple agencies. Through the UFR process, federal agencies that perform EHP compliance reviews can coordinate their reviews to streamline the decision-making process and improve delivery of disaster-related services and assistance.

How the UFR Process Can Help Applicants

Various agencies have their own disaster assistance policies and requirements, which can be a difficult process for applicants to navigate. Through the UFR process, an applicant may rely on one agency as the primary funding source of a disaster project and another agency to provide cost-share or matching dollars for the same project. Through early coordination and communication, the UFR process can help streamline agency efforts so that the applicant can fully utilize each agency's assistance program benefits.

Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Compliance

Prior to approving funding for disaster assistance, federal agencies must ensure the actions comply with environmental planning and historic preservation (EHP) requirements. EHP compliance reviews are typically prepared by the federal agency funding the project. These reviews evaluate the potential impacts of proposed actions to determine whether they will comply with laws, Executive Orders, and other regulations governing natural and cultural resources such as water, air, coastal areas, wildlife, undeveloped land, agriculture, and historic and archaeological



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resources. Compliance evaluations also include assessment of environmental justice concerns which may result from implementation of the proposed projects, such as disproportionate impacts on low-income or minority populations.

When the Unified Federal Review Process Applies to You

The UFR Process is particularly beneficial when an applicant is working with multiple federal agencies on the same or similar disaster recovery projects. In such cases, it is essential to notify FEMA EHP staff, as well as other federal agency representatives, that the project is being reviewed by more than one federal agency. This allows better coordination between the agencies through the UFR process, which can make obtaining assistance faster and easier. The UFR process can also benefit applicants when they are working on projects from multiple disaster events at the same time. When working with a federal agency on past disaster projects, such as damage to roads from a prior year’s flooding event, applicants should inform the agencies they are currently working with about these previous projects.

Unified Federal Review Does	Unified Federal Review Does Not
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduces paperwork and time required for environmental reviews by helping organizations coordinate ▪ Enhance working relationships and coordination across agencies ▪ Encourage the development of disaster specific agreements to streamline benefits to applicants ▪ Make it easier to get answers by coordinating agency responses to your questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a single review process for multiple agencies funding a single project ▪ Guarantee approval or funding for FEMA or other federal agency grant programs ▪ Change existing regulations or interagency agreements

Early Communication and Coordination Benefits Applicants

Early coordination and communication are key to successful UFR implementation, and begins with FEMA-SLTT communication during disaster planning. SLTT representatives, applicants and FEMA staff then work together from the beginning of the disaster recovery process to identify areas where UFR processes can coordinate and streamline EHP compliance reviews during disaster response and recovery. FEMA employees are available to support SLTT emergency managers and applicants to facilitate communication between federal agencies involved in disaster response and recovery. In fact, SLTT emergency managers are often the first to recognize the potential for applicants to utilize funding from multiple federal agencies for proposed projects. It is important for applicants to communicate with SLTT emergency management staff as well as the federal assistance agencies early in the disaster recovery process.

In addition to fostering coordination between agencies on environmental and historic preservation compliance for disaster recovery, UFR recognizes the importance of safeguarding natural and cultural resources during the disaster response period. Applicants are encouraged to incorporate and consider natural and cultural resources into the development of their emergency management plans for response, recovery, and planning activities. This should include working with SLTT historic preservation and environmental agencies to identify natural and cultural resources that should be minimally impacted by applicant projects.

Figure 1. FEMA Internal UFR Process

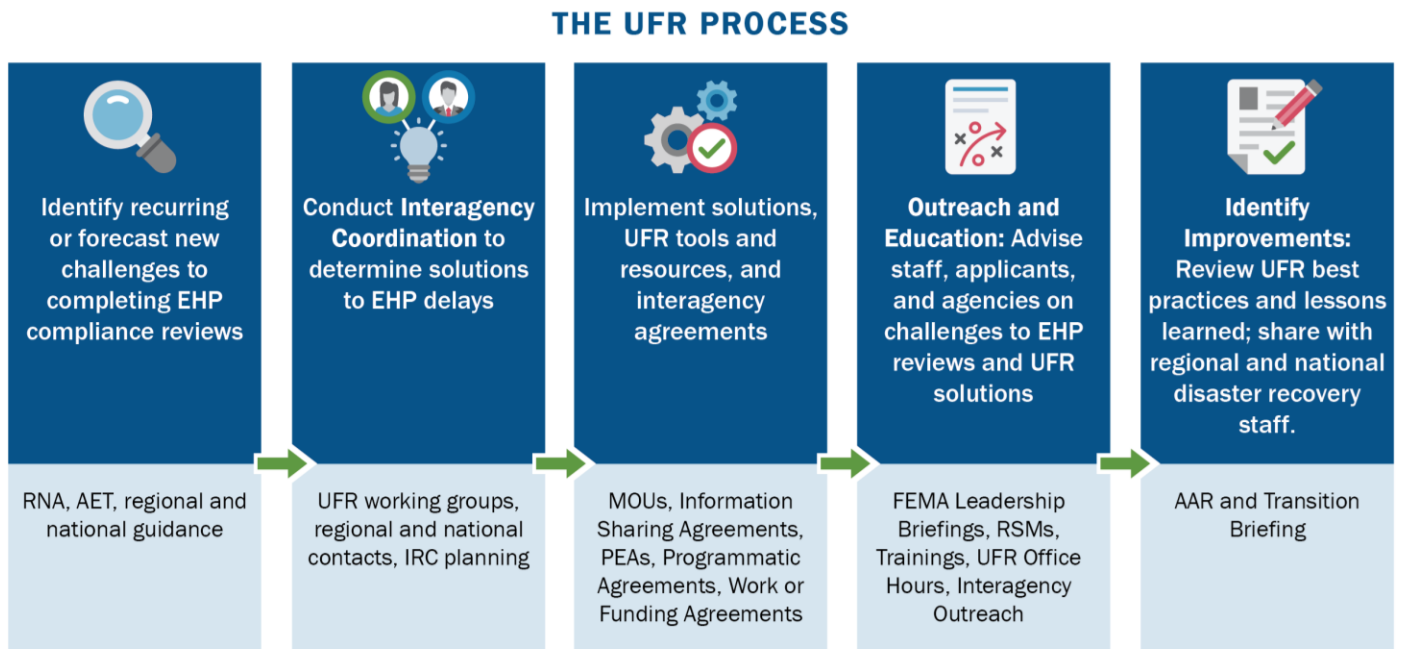


Figure 2. External Applicant UFR Process

