



Guide to Expanding Mitigation

MAKING THE CONNECTION TO THE WHOLE COMMUNITY



FEMA

RiskMAP
Increasing Resilience Together



Communities are unique, multidimensional and complex. Their varied demographics, geographies, history and systems of governance shape and influence how people relate to each other and how groups and institutions are connected. Exploring how a community functions, both socially and institutionally, reveals new sources for collective action and decision-making.

When it comes to reducing natural hazard risk, a realistic understanding of the community's daily life helps community officials and emergency managers determine how they can best collaborate with and support the community. This understanding helps with tailoring engagement strategies, developing partnerships, identifying solutions with co-benefits, leveraging diverse funding sources, and shaping programs to meet the diverse needs of the Whole Community.

"Whole Community" is distinct from our individual definitions of "community," and in this context, refers to the groups and organizations who share responsibility in emergency preparedness and mitigation.

- Individuals.
- Families.
- Businesses.
- Faith-based and community organizations.
- Nonprofit groups.
- Schools and academia.
- Media outlets.
- Local and state government.
- Artists and Arts Organizations.
- Tribal partners.
- Territories.
- Other federal partners.

This guide provides recommendations for working across the Whole Community to support hazard mitigation, especially in planning and project development. It is designed to help community officials initiate a conversation about mitigation investments that can help engage communities to become more resilient, and provides details on four key FEMA initiatives:

- **Expanding Mitigation Series:** Resources that highlight innovative and emerging partnerships for mitigation.
- **Community Lifelines:** A framework communities can use to identify and address vulnerabilities across seven critical services.
- **National Mitigation Investment Strategy:** Best practices and recommendations for identifying, supporting, influencing, and aligning Whole Community mitigation investments.
- **Hazard Mitigation Assistance:** Funding for mitigation plans and projects focused on reducing or eliminating risk to people and property from future disasters.

The term "community" is broad. It encompasses neighborhoods, districts, municipalities, counties, regions, and everything in between.



This Guide to Expanding Mitigation is part of a [series](#) highlighting innovative and emerging partnerships for mitigation.



EXPANDING MITIGATION SERIES

Anyone interested in reducing their community's risk from hazards can benefit from insights found in the *Guides to Expanding Mitigation*. The guides are a resource used across communities who are investing in mitigation planning, projects and programs. They are designed to:

- Help engage parts of the community that may not yet be actively involved in mitigation efforts.
- Help expand the number and type of organizations involved in mitigation planning and implementation, increasing efficiency and bandwidth.
- Bring in partners who help increase the quality of mitigation plans and projects by making them more representative of the Whole Community, its inhabitants and businesses.
- Foster relationships to bring underrepresented populations and partners to the hazard mitigation process.
- Establish credibility with the Whole Community through inclusive planning and project development.
- Encourage efficiency and creative thinking around mitigation projects to better meet the many needs and interests of communities.
- Provide information on potential funding streams and other resources.

Within each guide, you can expect to find:

1. Insights into the sector or topic.
2. Potential vulnerabilities to hazards.
3. Ideas for mitigation projects with co-benefits.
4. Examples of successful collaboration.
5. Additional resources.

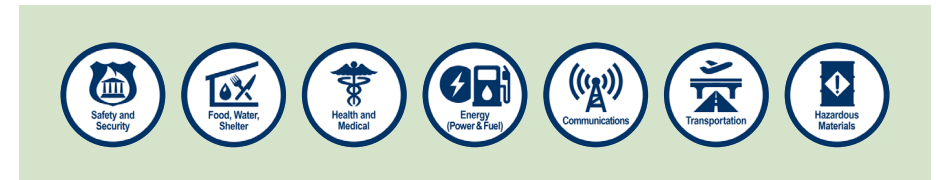
Considered together, the guides are an invaluable introductory resource that highlight community connections. When used to spark conversations, the guides can help community officials work toward incorporating new and strategic ideas into their mitigation program to ensure that investments benefit the Whole Community. The guides can also be used to help representatives of sectors and organizations not often engaged better understand opportunities to get involved in hazard mitigation and advocate for inclusion in the hazard mitigation process.

COMMUNITY LIFELINES

When disaster strikes, there are critical government and business functions — like communications, energy and medical care — that must keep going in order to keep communities safe and secure. To help identify and coordinate planning, FEMA established the Community Lifelines framework to help communities increase their effectiveness and responsiveness during disaster incidents. To do this, leaders must be empowered to:

- Rapidly determine the scale and complexity of a disaster's potential impact to critical life-saving and life-sustaining services.
- Prioritize and determine the most effective way to continue delivering key services in impacted areas.
- Communicate disaster-related information across the Whole Community so everyone understands the potential impact and actions to take.

Each lifeline below includes the general scope of services for these key functions, and identifies more specific functions communities may want to explore to ensure continuity and access to these critical functions during a disaster.



Individual communities may vary in terms of the specific functions needed across each lifeline, so mitigation planning and projects may be based on each community's specific needs for maintaining and strengthening lifelines.



NATIONAL MITIGATION INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Communities benefit most when federal agencies and nonfederal partners work together to identify, support, influence, and align Whole Community mitigation investments. To help achieve this goal, the National Mitigation Investment Strategy seeks to empower communities to identify and measure the effectiveness of their mitigation investments so more informed decisions can be made on when and where to make future investments.

In particular, the Investment Strategy encourages the Whole Community to invest in pre- and post-disaster mitigation, and to adopt the Strategy's three shared goals:

- Showing how mitigation investments reduce risk.
- Coordinating mitigation investments to be more effective at reducing risk.
- Making mitigation investment standard practice.



IDENTIFYING THE ROOT CAUSES OF VULNERABILITY: AN EXAMPLE FROM THE ENERGY LIFELINE

During a disaster, keeping power can be one of the most important tasks for maintaining critical, life-saving equipment during response and immediate recovery. Community leaders who are assessing risks and vulnerabilities to its power grid should consider the potential reasons for power outages and how they could be prevented or minimized.

Here are a few examples of actions a community might take after identifying root causes of power instability during a disaster:

- If overhead lines are continuously knocked out, the community can consider undergrounding utility lines or using composite power poles.
- If transmission stations are in a floodplain, the community should consider if the transmission station can be moved or elevated.
- If the power generation system is in a known earthquake liquefaction zone, the community should consider seismic retrofits to the power generation system. A good vulnerability assessment will work backwards through lifelines to determine root causes of disaster impacts.





FEMA'S HAZARD MITIGATION ASSISTANCE

FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance provides funding for eligible mitigation plans and projects that reduce or eliminate risk to people and property from future disasters. As of late 2020, there are three grant programs that focus on long-term solutions to break the cycle of disaster damage.

While each program has its own unique requirements, funds awarded will reduce losses, promote individual and community resilience, and result in safer communities. For example, Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) is a pre-disaster hazard mitigation program with the following guiding principles:

- Supporting communities through capability- and capacity-building.
- Encouraging and enabling innovation.
- Promoting partnerships.
- Enabling large projects.
- Maintaining flexibility.
- Providing consistency.

The *Guides to Expanding Mitigation* support the guiding principles of BRIC and other mitigation grant programs by highlighting opportunities for innovative partnerships that build community capability and capacity while meeting multiple community benefits. The guides can help community officials take the first step toward building new partnerships and more effective projects. The guides also provide information about other funding sources outside of FEMA, such as federal grants (e.g., Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery funds) and state, local, philanthropic, or private opportunities.

EMERGENCY MANAGERS AS RISK AMBASSADORS

Emergency managers are uniquely positioned to collaborate with new partners on mitigation projects and serve as risk ambassadors to the Whole Community.

While resilient communities rely on a diverse array of highly technical professionals, local emergency managers often know more about local risk information that could influence decision-making. For example, a scientific report or periodic engineering study may not capture critical areas of interest that experience repetitive flooding, frequent rockslides, or seasonal ice jams. Emergency managers are aware of these nuances and are in a position to share this collective disaster knowledge with community partners to facilitate more sustainable investments. And when emergency managers engage the Whole Community early and often, residents can grow into partners in response and emergency managers can grow into community allies.



RESOURCES

Guides to Expanding Mitigation

<https://www.fema.gov/about/organization/region-2/guides-expanding-mitigation>

Link to all available Guides to Expanding Mitigation

FEMA Hazard Mitigation Planning

<https://fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-planning>

Review standards and guidance for the planning process

FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance

<https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation>

Learn about currently available mitigation grant programs

Mitigation Action Portfolio

https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-08/fema_mitigation-action-portfolio-support-document_08-01-2020_0.pdf

Showcases mitigation projects to provide practitioners with examples of activities

A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management: Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action

https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/fema_whole-community_120211.pdf

Review strategic guidance around Whole Community concepts

Community Lifelines Implementation Toolkit

<https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-05/CommunityLifelinesToolkit2.0v2.pdf>

Comprehensive information and resources for implementing lifelines during incident response

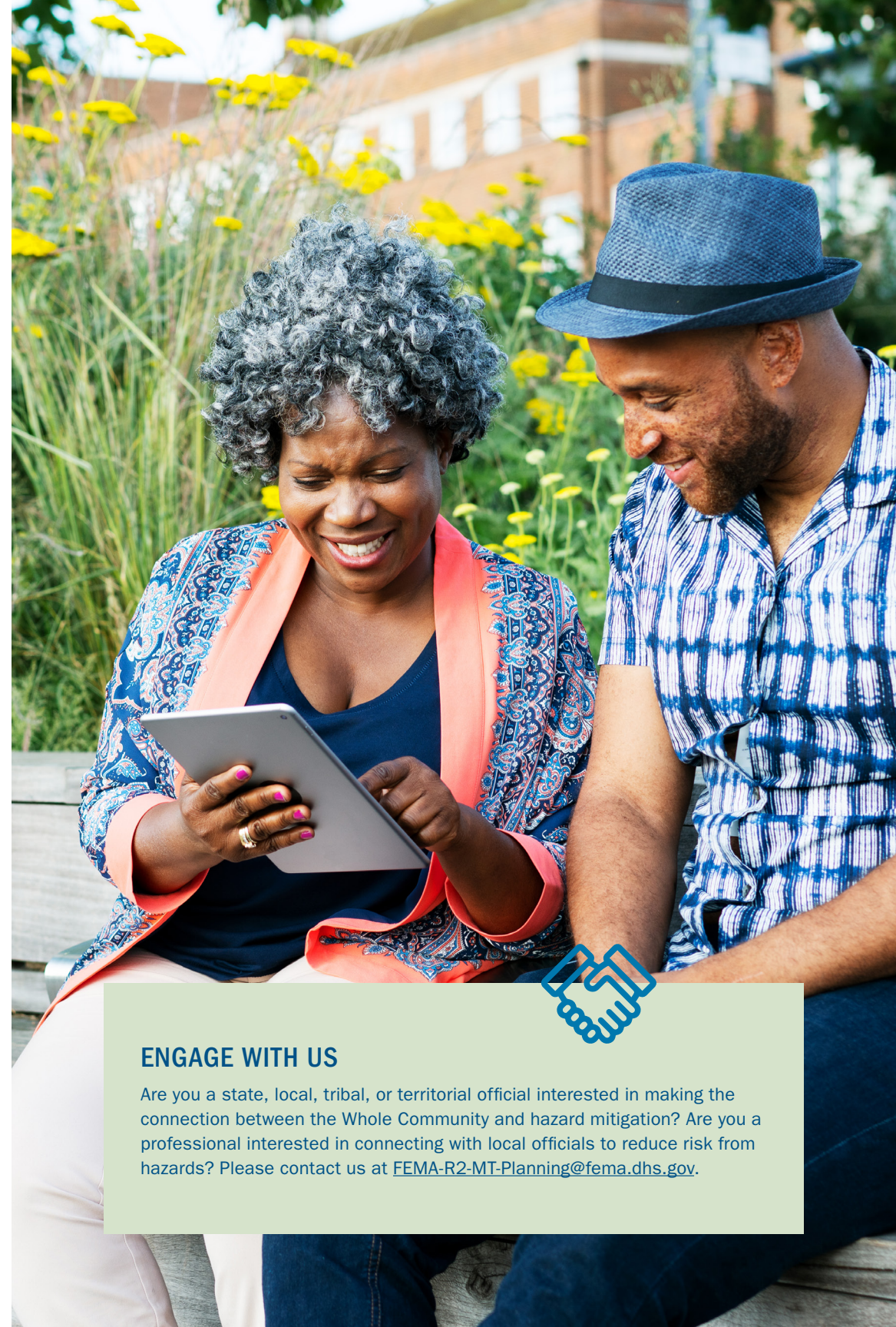
National Mitigation Investment Strategy

https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-10/fema_national-mitigation-investment-strategy.pdf

National strategy for advancing mitigation investment

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ENGAGE WITH US

Are you a state, local, tribal, or territorial official interested in making the connection between the Whole Community and hazard mitigation? Are you a professional interested in connecting with local officials to reduce risk from hazards? Please contact us at FEMA-R2-MT-Planning@fema.dhs.gov.

