



MITIGATION VALUE TO SOCIETY

Mitigation is the effort to reduce the loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. A recent study by the Multi-hazard Mitigation Council* shows that each dollar spent on mitigation saves an average of four dollars.

Value to Society

Mitigation yields benefits to society and therefore:

- It creates safer communities by reducing loss of life and property;
- It enables individuals to recover more rapidly from floods and other disasters; and
- It lessens the financial impact on the Treasury, states, tribes and communities.

FEMA's Mitigation Directorate implements numerous congressionally authorized programs that address the effects of natural hazards through mitigation activities.

Mitigation creates safer communities

In any disaster, buildings constructed to a higher standard not only reduce property damage but can also save lives. Homes constructed to National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) standards incur 80 percent less damage from floods than structures not built to those standards.

Mitigation speeds recovery

Mitigation is key to decreasing the time it takes to rebuild and recover after a disaster. By using existing, proven plans and building standards, mitigation allows individuals and communities to lessen post-disaster disruption and rebuild more quickly. Long-term hazard mitigation planning and projects enable communities and individuals to break the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction and repeated loss. Mitigation saves money.

Mitigation activities have been proven to lessen the financial impact on individuals, communities and society as a whole. Floodplain management actions save the country more than \$1 billion in prevented damages each year.

Mitigation is cost-effective

In December 2005, the MMC of the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS) released Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves: An Independent Study to Assess the Future Savings from Mitigation Activities. The report was the culmination of a 3-year, congressionally mandated independent study.

Case Study: Grand Forks, North Dakota

In 1997, the Red River flooded 8,600 homes in Grand Forks, North Dakota, causing \$3.7 billion in flood losses. Following the 1997 disaster, the State of North Dakota, local governments and FEMA worked together to buy out almost 700 of the most vulnerable homes in the state with FEMA mitigation grant program funds.

The Red River flooded again in 2006, yet losses were kept to \$6.5 million as a result of the mitigation projects and studies. Demonstrating mitigation's cost-effectiveness is critical to the continued success of FEMA mitigation programs.

###

"FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards."

May 2011