



Somerset County Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan
Update Process

FREQUENTLY ASKED
QUESTIONS

1. When is the last day a local jurisdiction can sign-on to be a part of the countywide Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan?

Municipally-adopted participation resolutions are due for submission to the Somerset County Planning Division by September 30, 2017.

2. What does municipal participation involve?

- *Designation of a Hazard Mitigation Plan Coordinator to represent the municipality on the County HMP Planning Committee.*
- *Establishment of a Municipal HMP Committee tasked with conducting outreach to local residents, businesses and other stakeholders; completing various plan update worksheets; reviewing draft HMP plan components; and attending meetings.*
- *Adoption of a municipal resolution endorsing and adopting the plan.*
- *Submission of routine implementation reports concerning the status of the action strategies identified in the municipal HMP annex.*

For more information, please review the document entitled, "Planning Partner Expectations" available at the following link: <https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/government/public-health-safety/hazard-mitigation/about-hazard-mitigation>

3. What grant funds will a municipality gain access to by participating?

Currently, FEMA administers three programs that provide funding for eligible mitigation planning and implementation projects that reduce disaster losses and protect life and property from future disasters as follows:

- *Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP): Assists in implementing long-term hazard mitigation planning and projects following a presidential major disaster declaration. HMGP funding is generally 15% of the total amount of Federal assistance provided to a State, Territory, or federally-recognized tribe following a major disaster declaration.*
- *Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Program: Provides funds for planning and projects to reduce or eliminate risk of flood damage to buildings that are insured under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) on an annual basis. FMA funding depends on the amount appropriated by Congress each year for this program.*
- *Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Program: Provides funds for hazard mitigation planning and projects on an annual basis. PDM funding depends on the amount appropriated by Congress each year for this program.*

Individual homeowners and business owners may not apply directly to FEMA for funding through these programs. Eligible local governments may apply on their behalf.

4. If a municipality chooses not to participate in the plan, what are the consequences?

The municipality will be ineligible to apply to FEMA for hazard mitigation project funds that have been allocated to New Jersey, regardless of damages sustained by individuals in that community, if the municipality does not have an approved municipal annex as part of the countywide HMP.

5. If a municipality chooses not to participate in the plan, will it still be eligible for federal disaster recovery funds?

The municipality would be eligible for public assistance funds for addressing damages to public facilities and infrastructure only.

6. Can a municipality choose to adopt the Somerset County Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan in the future, without participating in the planning process?

Yes. However, the municipality will be responsible for writing their portion (municipal annex) of the countywide multi-jurisdictional HMP without the assistance of the consultant, county and other group planning resources available during the current update process. The municipal annex would comprise a "stand alone" Hazard Mitigation Plan, and would be required to meet all of FEMA's requirements. It would also be subject to FEMA's review and approval process. The new municipal annex must then be adopted as an amendment to the Countywide WMP.

7. If a municipality already has a flood mitigation plan in place, why does it need to be part of the countywide Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan?

The multi-jurisdictional HMP addresses all natural hazards. Municipalities that have flood mitigation plans will have a reduced workload since they will be able to supply the data from their flood mitigation plan for inclusion in their municipal HMP annexes. Floodplain Management Plans qualify a community for HMGP and Pre-Disaster Mitigation Competitive (PDM-C) grant program funds. Historically, HMGP and PDM-C have provided substantially greater levels of funding than FMA. In addition, municipalities participating in the multi-jurisdictional HMP will be eligible to apply for all FEMA grants, including those after a presidential disaster declaration.

8. If a municipality does not have any flooding problems, why should it participate in the Multi-jurisdictional HMP?

Each municipality is vulnerable to all hazards affecting the region: wind, snow, earthquake, hurricane, tornado, etc. Without an approved HMP in place, they will not be eligible for funds to undertake mitigation projects for non-flood hazards. The Multi-jurisdictional HMP will address all types of natural hazards. Use of HMGP and PDM funds are not limited to flood-related projects.

9. If a municipality's representative(s) cannot attend the required meetings, can it still participate?

Municipalities have been requested to identify a representative and an alternate that can act on the municipality's behalf. If efforts have been made to participate but unavoidable scheduling conflicts arise, the Steering Committee will try to bring all parties together and share information via another meeting or other venue.

10. What is the relationship between the countywide Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan and the municipal-specific plan?

The municipal plan, known as a Municipal Annex to the County Plan, will be contained in a separate part of the countywide HMP. The municipal annex will address vulnerabilities and risks unique to the locale and provide action strategies that specifically benefit the community.

11. How much grant money is at stake?

At this time, the NJ Office of Emergency Management (NJOEM) within the State Police is managing over 30 million grant dollars. Local government entities must have a valid HMP in place to be eligible to apply for federal funds. For more grant program information, see: <https://www.fema.gov/grants> and <https://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-assistance>.

12. What kinds of projects are eligible for grant money?

Information about the kinds of projects that are eligible is described in the following report: "A Natural Hazard Mitigation Project Saves Money," which is available at the following link: <https://www.fema.gov/grants>

13. How are the grants awarded?

Applications are submitted to the NJOEM, who determines eligibility. NJOEM then reviews and prioritizes the applications. All eligible applications are submitted to FEMA for evaluation of technical feasibility, cost effectiveness and possible award.

14. If a municipality has already identified projects (say in its flood mitigation plan), can grant applications be submitted while the update of the Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan is underway?

If a municipality is eligible to submit an application under a Federal mitigation grant program, the NJOEM will accept "Letters of Intent" prior to a complete application. LOIs are only accepted through NJEMGRANTS.org. The NJOEM will not accept applications from a municipality that does not meet eligibility requirements. Once eligibility requirements have been addressed, the ability to submit a LOI through the system will be activated.

15. What is involved in putting together a grant application?

A considerable amount of information is required to complete a grant application. For detailed guidance, please see the document entitled "LOI" at the following link: <https://www.fema.gov/grants>

If you have additional questions, would like to provide feedback, and/or to find out how you can become involved, please contact your local Hazard Mitigation and/or Emergency Management Coordinator, The Somerset County Planning Division (908) 231-7021 or the County Office of Emergency Management: (908) 725-5070. Information is also available on our web site: <http://www.co.somerset.nj.us/government/public-health-safety/hazard-mitigation>. Comments and questions can be submitted using the “Feedback” button at the top of this webpage.