




FEMA

September 30, 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR: Regional Mitigation Division Directors
FEMA Regions I-X

FROM: Michael M. Grimm 
Assistant Administrator for Mitigation

SUBJECT: Climate Resilient Mitigation Activities Eligible for Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA)

The President's 2015 Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative; Executive Order 13653 Preparing the United States for the Impacts of Climate Change; the President's 2013 Climate Action Plan; FEMA's Climate Change Adaptation Policy; and the 2014-2018 FEMA Strategic Plan, all identify the risks and impacts associated with climate change on community resilience to natural hazards and direct Federal agencies to support climate resilient infrastructure. With this memorandum, FEMA is announcing the eligibility of three Climate Resilient Mitigation Activities under the Hazard Mitigation Assistance programs to support communities in reducing the risks and adverse impacts associated with climate change. These activities are: Aquifer Storage and Recovery, Floodplain and Stream Restoration, and Flood Diversion and Storage.

Climate change can exacerbate natural hazard risk to a community by increasing the intensity and/or frequency of storms, floods, wildfires, and drought. The effects of the current drought in western states underscores the need to provide HMA program resources on mitigation methods for this hazard. FEMA encourages communities to incorporate climate resilient infrastructure into eligible HMA risk reduction activities. In addition to guidance on the three flood and drought Climate Resilient Mitigation Activities, FEMA is providing information on green infrastructure methods to reduce risk and increase resilience, and expand ecosystem service benefits.

Attached to this memorandum are four Fact Sheets. Three of the Fact Sheets provide high-level technical information on the three mitigation activities, Aquifer Storage and Recovery, Floodplain and Stream Restoration, and Flood Diversion and Storage that best address the effects of drought within the HMA program framework. Also attached is a Fact Sheet on using green infrastructure methods as a sustainable approach to flood and storm water management that increases benefits to the ecosystem and increases community resilience to climate change impacts. Ecosystem services are beneficial goods and services provided by nature for people. FEMA is building on the existing ecosystem services that can currently be used for cost effectiveness evaluation for acquisition/open space projects to allow more ecosystem service benefits for Climate Resilient Mitigation Activities.

These Climate Resilient Mitigation Activities may be used to mitigate any applicable natural hazards. However, the activities and their benefits are especially focused on mitigating the impacts of flood and drought conditions through measures that increase water storage and recovery and groundwater re-charge, and on using green infrastructure principles for sustainable water resources management. These are not an exhaustive list of potential risk reduction actions that can mitigate climate change impacts. FEMA encourages communities to be innovative in developing mitigation projects that reduce risk and offer creative methods to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Over the next several months, FEMA will be developing and releasing more detailed technical guidance on these Climate Resilient Mitigation Activities, implementation tools for ecosystem services as part of the cost effectiveness evaluation, and guidance on the principles of green infrastructure and methods of incorporating them into mitigation activities. This will include an assessment and guidance on any special environmental, historic, or cultural resource considerations associated with these activity types.

The Climate Resilient Mitigation Activities are available for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding resulting from a major disaster declared on or after the date of this memorandum, and for HMA funding for which the application period opens on or after the date of this memorandum.

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Cecelia Rosenberg, Chief, Grants Policy Branch at (202) 646-3321 or Cecelia.Rosenberg@fema.dhs.gov.

Attachments