COASTAL STATES ORGANIZATION

FEMA'S PUBLIC ASSISTANCE MITIGATION

Opportunities to achieve coastal resilience with PA Mitigation

Why *use PA Mitigation?*

Public Assistance (PA) mitigation funding can be used to protect disaster-damaged public facilities resulting in increased community resilience. Because there is no funding cap for PA, this is a prime opportunity to take advantage of available disaster funding to cover the bulk of public infrastructure mitigation costs while conducting repairs. This provides public facilities and communities the opportunity to build back better and ensure continuity of services during future disaster events, increasing long term resilience.

Where *can PA Mitigation fund projects?*

A county for which a Presidential major disaster has been declared.

When *are PA Mitigation funds available?*

Mitigation is conducted during the recovery phase after a disaster.

Who *can apply for PA Mitigation funding?*

State, territory, tribe, county, municipal governments, and eligible private non-profits who have requested Public Assistance for facilities damaged by a Presidentially-declared disaster may add mitigation to permanent repair and restoration projects.

How *do I access PA Mitigation funds?*

The first step is to request Public Assistance within 30 days of a disaster declaration in order to be eligible for funds. Project applications and hazard mitigation proposals are created in conjunction with FEMA. Questions regarding PA Mitigation should be directed to the State Public Assistance Officer or the Program Delivery Manager (PDMG) for existing FEMA PA Applicants. More information can be found here.

BEST PRACTICES FOR PA MITIGATION?

01. PA Mitigation is a great source of funding to be aware of in the pre-disaster environment, so that when a disaster does strike your area, local governments and public facilities can take advantage of PA Mitigation funding to mitigate future damages on damaged public facilities during the recovery and repair process.

02. PA Mitigation can be a source of large-scale mitigation project funding for critical public facilities and infrastructure, having mitigation priorities for public infrastructure identified makes post-disaster access to PA Mitigation easier.

03. Under PA Mitigation there are two options to determine cost effectiveness that do not require a Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA).

IN 2019

$305.4M

WAS MADE AVAILABLE FOR PA MITIGATION GRANTS.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COASTAL RESILIENCE THROUGH PA MITIGATION

01. If a presidentially declared disaster happens to your state or community, often damages are associated with it. During the recovery process, if it is found that public facilities or eligible private non-profits have been impacted by the disaster, mitigation funding may be available for those facilities.

02. PA Mitigation funds should be maximized for any disaster-damaged facilities that are utilizing PA funding for repairs, so that HMGP funds can be reserved for projects that are ineligible for PA or other state mitigation priorities outside of a disaster declaration.

03. Unlike some HMA Grants, PA Mitigation is non-competitive grant funding and there is no overall funding cap for mitigation projects.

04. The available mitigation funding for a PA permanent work project depends on the estimated cost of the repair and the vulnerability of the damaged facility. If the mitigation measure is eligible under PA Mitigation and proven to be cost effective, then it can typically be funded.

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What *does PA Mitigation do?*

PA Mitigation provides resources to implement mitigation along with permanent repairs on facilities damaged by a Presidentially-declared disaster. FEMA supports applicants with damage assessments and Hazard Mitigation Proposal development. FEMA covers a minimum of 75% of project costs for cost effective and feasible mitigation projects. The mitigation project cost share is dependent on the PA project cost share for the disaster. PA is a non-competitive grant.

PA Mitigation is only available for eligible PA permanent work projects (Categories C-G), and any eligible PA permanent work project may include mitigation. Damages must be a result of a declared disaster and proposed mitigation measures must meet four eligibility criteria (based on FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide V4) :

1. The mitigation measures must directly reduce the potential of future damage to the damaged portion(s) of the facility.
2. The mitigation measures must be cost-effective, by meeting one of the following criteria:
   - The cost of the mitigation measure does not exceed 15% of the total eligible repair cost of the facility or facilities for which the mitigation measure applies (do not need to complete a BCA).
   - The cost of the mitigation measure does not exceed 100% of the total eligible repair cost of the facility or facilities for which the mitigation measure applies AND is specifically listed in Appendix J: Cost-Effective Mitigation Measures of the FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide V4 (do not need to complete a BCA).
   - The recipient or applicant demonstrates through an acceptable benefit-cost analysis (BCA) methodology that the measure is cost effective. FEMA's BCA software provides appropriate BCA methodologies.
3. The mitigation measures must be technically feasible.
4. The mitigation measures must be compliant with federal laws, regulations and Executive Orders.

Cost Share: FEMA will provide a minimum of 75% of the funding while the sub-applicant must cover a maximum of 25%. The other 25% can be any match of non-federal funds including cash, other non-federal grants, in-kind donations like community volunteer hours, or donated materials or services.

Cost share match percentage can be lower (90% federal/10% match or 100% federal/0% match) and is based off of the cost share determined for Public Assistance for that specific disaster.

PA Mitigation Resources:

FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG V4)

Public Assistance Mitigation Fact Sheet

FEMA's Benefit-Cost Analysis

PA MITIGATION IN ACTION

EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY

Erosion caused by Hurricane Sandy impacted Egg Harbor Township, NJ. Storm surge and coastal wave action over-washed 3000+ linear feet of protective dunes that were partially protected by gabion rock mattresses and sand fencing.

A Public Assistance hazard mitigation proposal was approved to expand and add additional rock-filled gabion mattresses and vegetated dunes to protect rebuilt dunes from future, similar damages.

PA Funding (including mitigation) is only available for beaches when:

1. The beach is not a federally constructed shoreline under the specific authority of US Army Corps of Engineers.
2. The beach was constructed by the placement of imported sand—of proper grain size—to a designed elevation, width, and slope.
3. The Applicant has established and adhered to a maintenance program involving periodic re-nourishment with imported sand to preserve the original design.

Positives of PA Mitigation for Dunes: There is a growing interest in green infrastructure and natural features for coastal protection. Dunes are a great alternative to hard armoring or rip-rap. Dunes may require less maintenance than hard armoring. The 100% Rule and Appendix J in PAPPG includes "or similar measures" language which should include geobags or geotubes.

Challenges of PA Mitigation for Dunes: Environmental regulations and requirements (e.g. Endangered Species) and other laws/regulations (COBRA zone, V Zone) can cause challenges for approval. It can be difficult to use PA mitigation to protect engineered beaches – dunes need to protect public infrastructure (e.g. boardwalk, road, wastewater treatment plant). Project timing can be an issue as the approval process may take much longer than traditional engineering.

MEXICO BEACH, FLORIDA

Mexico Beach, FL was devastated by Hurricane Michael in 2018, destroying or severely damaging over three-quarters of the homes. The City of Mexico Beach and US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) utilized FEMA's Public Assistance Program and a large scale public engagement process to develop six different project designs to reduce future damage from similar events by controlling stormwater and flooding.

Mitigation projects aim to protect infrastructure such as roads which severely limit access to other critical infrastructure. Proposed mitigation projects include creating a regional stormwater detention network by utilizing existing wetlands; establishing several wetland parks; converting an existing canal into a stormwater pond; extending an existing greenway; creating a greenway-blueway trail system throughout the city; and restoring a local park that was partially destroyed during Hurricane Michael.