

**Tribal Relations and Mitigation**

Mitigation poses challenges to tribal governments. Tribes must:

- Invest time and effort to meet planning requirements for mitigation.
  - Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of grantee and subgrantee status under the HMGP. In some cases it is illegal for the State to represent the tribe.
  - Overcome barriers to NFIP participation by getting tribal lands mapped and passing floodplain ordinances.
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**Building Mitigation Partnerships**

In working with tribes to promote mitigation:

- Provide careful explanations of mitigation and NFIP programs and requirements.
  - Offer to meet with tribal leaders and tribal council to explain planning and NFIP requirements.
  - If the tribe is to act as subgrantee, offer to provide assistance to the tribe to develop a project that will meet HMGP eligibility requirements.
  - Suggest ways to gain the greatest benefit from available funding.
  - Find partners within tribal administration such as Water Resources or Emergency Management agencies to bring proposals to the tribal council.
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**HMGP Applicants' Briefings**

The State generally conducts Applicants' Briefings unless the tribe plans to be the grantee in which case FEMA would conduct the briefing. If the State is responsible for the briefing, tribal representatives can attend the same briefings as local communities or they can request that a separate briefing be held for the tribe. Staff should assure that the briefings:

- Serve to form or strengthen mitigation partnerships with a tribe.
  - Include HMGP steps and timelines, and aids such as sample mitigation plans and project applications.
  - Explain differences between grantee and subgrantee status.
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**Mitigation Planning**

To receive Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM), HMGP, and other mitigation grant funds, tribes need to develop mitigation plans. Mitigation personnel should:

- Describe planning as avoiding damage rather than preparing for disasters. According to grassroots sentiment, if you prepare, it will happen.
  - Provide technical assistance. Most tribes probably will need help developing required mitigation plans. Tribes choosing grantee status under the HMGP program will especially need help meeting planning requirements as well as administering the program.
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**Grantee Versus Subgrantee Status**

Tribes may apply as grantees or subgrantees under the HMGP program and/or Public Assistance (PA) program. Some factors to consider include the following:

- A tribe may choose either status for current and future disasters, and may choose a different status for PA and HMGP programs for the same disaster.
  - As grantees, tribes need to develop a mitigation plan and pay the entire grant cost share.
  - As subgrantees, tribes may not have to pay the full 25% match, as some States will pay a percentage of the cost share.
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**Reasons To Join the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)**

Tribal governments show increasing interest in NFIP participation. These communities may want to participate in the NFIP because:

- Floodplain mapping allows planning, so people can be moved out of harm's way.
  - NFIP offers comprehensive insurance coverage that does not follow claims with fee increases or dropped policies.
  - Potential developers want to insure projects on reservations, but insurance is not available without floodplain management.
  - Tribes gain control over State and Federal construction projects that would alter water flows.
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**NFIP Adoption Process**

Advice and information should be provided to tribes throughout the adoption process. Below is a list of steps that tribes follow to participate in the NFIP:

- First, a tribal agency will review information about the NFIP to decide whether the tribe should join.
  - After deciding to recommend NFIP membership, the agency will present a model resolution to the tribal council stating the tribe's intention to participate.
  - Tribes should then work with FEMA to decide what should be studied.
  - Following passage of the resolution, the council may need support to adopt or develop a floodplain ordinance.
  - Finally, flood maps will be developed as funding becomes available.
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**Resources**

Review the following resources for mitigation planning – FEMA's "How To" series of publications:

- How To Guide #1 "Getting Started: Building Support For Mitigation Planning"
- How To Guide #2 "Understanding Your Community's Risks, Identifying Hazards, and Determining Risks"
- How To Guide #7 "Integrating Human Caused Hazards into Mitigation Planning"

The following websites provide more information about mitigation programs:

- Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration: <http://www.fema.gov/fima/>
  - Mitigation success stories: <http://www.fema.gov/fima/success.shtm>
  - National Flood Insurance Programs: <http://www.fema.gov/fima/nfip.shtm>
  - Mitigation training: <http://www.fema.gov/fima/education.shtm>
  - Hazards: <http://www.fema.gov/hazards/>
  - Emergency preparedness for people with disabilities:  
<http://www.disabilitypreparedness.com>
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**Conclusion**

This lesson presented:

- Issues that influence tribal mitigation and strategies for building mitigation partnerships.
  - Factors that help tribes decide to apply as grantees or subgrantees under the HMGP.
  - Why and how tribes join the NFIP.
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