



**OHIO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY  
MITIGATION BRANCH**

**ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN**

**for the  
HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM (HMGP)**

**Location Map**

**Legend**

**Designated Counties**

- No Designation
- Individual Assistance
- Individual Assistance and Public Assistance

**FEMA**

ITS Mapping & Analysis Center  
Washington, DC  
09/11/07 -- 05:41 PM EDT  
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Amendment No. 3 - 09/11/07

*All counties are eligible for Hazard Mitigation*

**Updated for DR-1720-OH  
DECLARED:  
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## **I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, Public Law 93-288, as amended, and the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, Public Law 106-390, establishes a cost-sharing Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) used to fund state and local hazard mitigation projects. This section is closely tied to the post-disaster hazard mitigation plans defined and required in Section 409 of the Act, and is implemented following a Presidential declaration of a major disaster. Sections 322 and 404, in combination with several other state and federal programs and activities, help to form an overall pre- and post disaster hazard mitigation strategy for the State of Ohio and affected local governments in the State.

The purpose of this document is to delineate the general organization staffing, policies, and procedures which the State of Ohio will use when administering Section 404 HMGP and Section 322 Hazard Mitigation planning requirements.

## **II. REFERENCES AND AUTHORITIES**

- A. The Robert T. Stafford Act of 1988, Public Law 93-288, as amended
- B. Hazard Mitigation Relocation and Assistance Act of 1993, Public Law 103-181
- C. Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, Public Law 106-390
- D. 44 Code of Federal Regulations
  - 1. Part 206
  - 2. Part 7, Nondiscrimination in Federally assisted Programs
  - 3. Part 9, Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands
  - 4. Part 10, Environmental Considerations
  - 5. Part 13, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments
  - 6. Part 14, Administration of Grants: Audits of State and Local Governments.
- E. National Flood Insurance Acts of 1968 and 1973, as amended
- F. 42 U.S.C. 4001 et seq.
- G. Executive Orders 11988 (Floodplain Management), 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), 12612 (Federalism), and 12898 (Social Justice)
- H. Ohio Revised Code, Section 5502, and implementing rules
- I. Ohio Emergency Operations Plan, 2001
- J. State of Ohio Enhanced Mitigation Plan, 2005

### III. DEFINITIONS

APPLICANT - A state agency, local government, eligible non-profit organization, or Indian tribe.

GOVERNOR'S AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE (GAR) - The person empowered by the Governor to execute, on behalf of the state, all necessary documents for disaster assistance. In Ohio, the functions of the GAR and the State Coordinating Officer (SCO) may be assigned to the same individual.

GRANTS - An award of financial assistance. The total Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) award shall not exceed fifteen percent (15%) of the estimated eligible disaster assistance programs under the Stafford Act. (For example: Public Assistance, Individual and Family Grant, and Disaster Housing Programs)

GRANTEE - The government entity to which a grant is awarded and accountable for the use of the funds provided. The grantee is the entire legal entity even if only a particular component of the entity is designated in the grant award document. (Except as noted in 44 CFR, Part 206.236 (g) Subpart N, the State is the Grantee.)

INTERAGENCY HAZARD MITIGATION TEAM (IHMT) - The mitigation team that is activated following flood-related disasters pursuant to the July 10, 1980 Office of Management and Budget directive on Nonstructural Flood Protection Measures and Flood Disaster Recovery, and the subsequent December 15, 1980 Interagency Agreement for Nonstructural Damage Reduction.

MEASURE - Any mitigation measure, project, or action proposed to reduce risk of future damage, hardship, loss or suffering from disasters. The term "measure" is used interchangeably with the term "project" in FEMA regulations.

MITIGATION BRANCH PROJECT MANAGER – The staff person from the Ohio EMA Mitigation Branch that has been assigned by the SHMO to be the Branch point of contact for that particular project.

PROJECT - Any mitigation measure, project, or action proposed to reduce risk of future damage, hardship, loss or suffering from disasters. The term "project" is used interchangeably with the term "measure" in FEMA regulations.

44 CRF Parts 201 and 206 Hazard Mitigation Planning and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program; Interim Final Rule - The All Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (ANHMP) mandated by this law (and its subsequent modification and finalization) details the requirement to complete an ANHMP to qualify for grant funding. During the phase-in period, plans may be completed concurrent with project development.

STATE ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN FOR THE HMGP - The plan developed by the State to describe the procedures for the administration of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP).

STATE COORDINATING OFFICER (SCO) - The person appointed by the Governor to act in cooperation with the Federal Coordinating Officer to administer disaster recovery efforts. In Ohio, the functions of the SCO and GAR may be assigned to the same person.

STATE HAZARD MITIGATION OFFICER (SHMO) - The person designated by the GAR as the responsible individual on all matters related to the HMGP.

STATE HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNER - The individual responsible for preparing the Section 409 Plan.

STATE HAZARD MITIGATION TEAM - The state agencies and departments that have a role in developing, updating, and implementing an all-hazard state Hazard Mitigation Plan; and assisting in recommendations and selection of projects for the HMGP.

SUBGRANT - An award of financial assistance under the grant by a grantee to an eligible Subgrantee.

SUBGRANTEE - The government or other legal entity to which a subgrant is awarded and which is accountable to the grantee for the use of the funds provided. Subgrantees can be a state agency, local government, private non-profit organization, or Indian tribe.

SUPPLEMENT - A request that the state submits to FEMA to add to, or modify the project(s) for which it initially requested Section 404 funding.

## IV. CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

### A. ORGANIZATION

#### 1. Staffing Plan

**Refer to Attachment 2.**

#### 2. Mitigation Staffing Assignments

a. The Ohio Emergency Management Agency (Ohio EMA) and various State agencies will provide personnel who will perform the following functions:

1. Governor's Authorized Representative (GAR) – Executive Director, Ohio EMA
2. Alternate GAR – Director Preparedness, Recovery, Mitigation Grants Division, Ohio EMA
3. State Coordinating Officer (SCO) – Executive Director, Ohio EMA
4. Hazard Mitigation Officer (SHMO) –Chief, Mitigation Branch, Ohio EMA
5. Finance Officer – Business Manager, Ohio EMA and support from the ODPS Fiscal department
6. Disaster Services Consultant employees – will generally serve as Mitigation Branch Project Managers overseeing multiple subgrants. One DSC is also assigned to be the Branch Fiscal point-of-contact
7. Disaster Relief Grant Employees (DRG) staff will be hired as dictated by the staffing plan for the disaster – will generally serve as Mitigation Branch project managers overseeing multiple subgrants
8. Members of the State Hazard Mitigation Team

b. Cost of State personnel assigned to administer the HMGP in the Joint Field Office (JFO) may be eligible when approved by the Regional Administrator. The State shall submit a staffing plan for the JFO within five (5) days of the opening of the office.

c. After the close of the JFO, costs of State personnel (regular time salaries only) for continuing management of the HMGP may be eligible when approved in advance by the Regional Administrator. The State shall submit a plan for such staffing in advance of the requirement.

#### 3. Securing Other Specialized Technical Assistance

a. Mitigation Project Development Assistance – Assistance will be sought to implement the pilot expedited acquisition/demolition project development

process. Skills necessary will include knowledge of HMGP application development, NFIP, and historic preservation/SHPO issues. FEMA may be asked to provide DAE's to assist.

b. Contractual Assistance – Traditional areas where assistance is needed and it is either not possible or cost effective to have such skill sets on staff include data development for benefit-cost analysis, expert appraisal review, and specialized research assistance to complete NEPA requirements (i.e., records review by the Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources)

## B. ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

### 1. Governor's Authorized Representative (GAR)

a. The GAR is the state official ultimately responsible for ensuring that the state properly implements its responsibilities under Sections 322 and 404 in a Presidential disaster declaration. The GAR shall supervise/monitor the activities of the SHMO. The GAR is responsible for the submission of a Section 404 grant application to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), on behalf of the State of Ohio, including state agencies, local governments, and private non-profit organizations.

### 2. State Hazard Mitigation Officer (SHMO)

a. The SHMO is responsible for the State's Mitigation Program and the Section 404 program, as well as other mitigation programs, including development and maintenance of this Administrative Plan and procedures.

b. Major responsibilities include:

1. Prepare Section 404 program materials for distribution at briefings and training sessions
2. Train mitigation staff to assume their responsibilities
3. Provide direction for mitigation staff, as necessary
4. Disseminate Section 404 program information, initial application forms, and other program material.
5. Participate on mitigation team, brief local officials on mitigation; work with County Points-of-Contact, as related to HMGP.
6. Ensure all required reports and correspondence are prepared and distributed.
7. Chair meetings of the State Project and Review Team, and follow-up on team recommendations, in support of HMGP.
8. Ensure project development and technical assistance is provided to interested communities.
9. Participate in, and set-up meetings, with State Project Review and Selection Team to discuss mitigation issues and problems.

10. Ensure project selection is in compliance with administrative plan guidelines and mitigation planning.
11. Submit projects selected to FEMA for review and approval.
12. Ensure proper grant management of HMGP projects approved by FEMA.
13. Monitor the status of projects
14. Ensure projects are completed in a timely manner and within federal rules and regulations governing the HMGP.
15. Ensure review of audits for compliance.
16. Ensure projects are closed properly and in a timely manner.

### 3. Fiscal Officer

- a. Managing SMARTLINK, including:
  - b. Performing disbursements and financial revisions;
  - c. Preparing appropriate forms for closeout of projects/disasters; and,
  - d. Providing monthly status reports on expenditures to program managers.
- b. Processing, or supervising the processing, of HMGP checks or the transfer of funds to Subgrantees, recording disbursements, determining correct mailing addresses for checks, and entering disbursements into the state financial management system.
- c. Maintaining records of administrative expenses and state management costs eligible for reimbursement for each open disaster.
- d. Other duties as identified in **Attachment 2**.

### 4. Other Mitigation Staff

- a. Work on project development and implementation. Duties are outlined in the staffing plan. (**Attachment 2**)

## V. FUNDING

### A. FEMA will make HMGP monies available to the State of Ohio as follows:

1. The total federal funds available for the HMGP shall be up to 20% of the total Stafford Act assistance provided.
  - a. FEMA will provide an initial estimate of the total available HMGP funds to the State Mitigation Officer within ninety (90) days of the disaster declaration.
  - b. The first lock-in of HMGP funds will occur six (6) months following the declaration. HMGP funding estimates may be less than the original estimate.
  - c. The final lock-in of funds will be provided one (1) year from the date of declaration. HMGP available funds may increase but will not be less than the amount of funds identified at six (6) months.
2. The federal funds provided each community will be based on the cost-sharing provisions outlined in the FEMA-State Agreement or state legislation or as determined for each disaster. The federal share of projects may not exceed 75% of the cost of approved projects.
3. The non-federal share of projects may exceed the federal share, and it may be provided from a combination of federal, state, local, or private funding sources. However, Section 404 funds cannot be used as a substitute or replacement to fund projects or programs that are available under other federal authorities, or used as a match for other federal funds.
4. Applicants must invest in the project cost through cash or in-kind contributions accounting for 25% of the total project cost, unless state funds are provided and the GAR approves a lesser share.

### B. The availability of state funding for Section 404 projects will be determined at the time of a Presidential disaster declaration. If such funds are made available, the amount of state funds for hazard mitigation projects available to communities will be equal to or less than the amount of HMGP funds awarded.

1. If State funding is provided, the funding shall be allocated in accordance with any requirements set by the Governor and/or the Ohio General Assembly. If there are no requirements set by the General Assembly or of the requirements apply to only a portion of state funds, combined HMGP and State funds will provide no more than 75% of the project cost; however, if additional funds are needed, the GAR may increase the percentage of funds to a level above 75% but not greater than 90%. It is the approach of Ohio

EMA that applicants must invest in at least a portion of the cost of a mitigation project.

2. State agencies may receive a state share toward a project under the same percentages as local governments.
- C. All potential funding sources from other agencies and programs will be explored, and utilized, wherever possible.
- D. The State can set-aside 5% of the total HMGP available to use at its discretion. Any 5% project submitted to FEMA for approval must still meet environmental and benefit-cost requirements (although it is only a narrative BCA). Examples of projects eligible for 5% funding are experimental action and measures not identified in the State's priorities (As noted in Section VII of this document).
- E. The State can utilize up to 7% of the total HMGP available to award planning grants to Sub-grantees receiving project funds through the program. Any community receiving HMGP funds must agree to develop an all hazard plan, complying with Section 322 requirements as amended in 44 CFR Parts 201 and 206.
- F. Fiscal Procedures
1. Sub-grantee fiscal procedures
    - a. Sub-grantees with approved projects will make requests for an advance of funds using the Mitigation Grant Program Request for Payment form (**Attachment 10**) at least 4 – 6 weeks prior to the actual need for the funds. This will allow enough time for the State to issue the state warrant or transfer funds. A community may elect to use electronic transfer of funds (EFT), funds.
    - b. The Sub-grantee Project Coordinator should request funds to pay salary on a quarterly basis. These funds should be identified appropriately on the request for payment form.
    - c. The advance of funds request should specify how the funds would be utilized. For example, the request should indicate the need for administrative costs and/or project costs, and what supplies or equipment and the number of structures to be acquired or demolished.
    - d. The final payment of HMGP and/or state share for planning grants will be held until the final, FEMA approved locally adopted plan has been provided to the Ohio EMA. The amount held will not exceed 10% of the total project cost.

- e. The Sub-grantee will follow established fiscal procedures and comply with the 44 Code of Federal Regulations Part 13. Expenditures will be tracked by funding source and show the balance of federal, state, and local funding. **Attachment 12** is an example of the appropriate spreadsheet for tracking funds that will be used in all HMGP projects.

## 2. State fiscal procedures

- a. State fiscal procedures include built in redundancy – the Mitigation Branch fiscal point-of-contact (POC) works closely with the Ohio EMA Business Manager and ODPS fiscal office. Procedures to ensure proper fiscal management include the program fiscal point-of-contact reviewing, on a monthly basis, grant expenditures to ensure proper coding.
- b. A monitoring program as described in this document will be used to monitor both programmatic and fiscal issues.
- c. Procedures have been developed to manage fund drawdowns including ensuring that quarterly reports from the subgrantee are up-to-date before processing the drawdown.
- d. Quarterly reports are required to be submitted by subgrantees to the grantee. These reports are reviewed for programmatic and fiscal issues.

## VI. ELIGIBILITY

### A. Applicants

1. Applicant eligibility criteria will be in accordance with federal regulations. Eligible applicants are: state agencies, local governments, and certain eligible private non-profit organizations. Ohio does not have any Federally recognized Indian tribes. Any questions regarding the eligibility of an applicant will be resolved by the SHMO or, if necessary, by the GAR.
2. The entire State is declared for Hazard Mitigation with a presidential declaration. The process for selecting applicants is explained in Section VIII.

### B. Projects

1. **Eligible Project Types.** Projects may be of any nature that will result in protection to public or private property. Specific types of eligible projects include but are not limited to:
  - a. Acquisition of real property in a hazard area/physical relocation of structures from a hazard area;
  - b. Elevation of structures above the base flood elevation (BFE);
  - c. Retrofit of structures by wet or dry flood proofing (according to local code/building standards, compliant with NFIP standards); high wind strengthening; seismic strengthening of structures or their nonstructural components; application of wildfire resistant materials.
  - d. Minor structural flood control and stormwater management measures, to include, debris basins; storm water detention basins or infiltration wells; culvert upgrades; diversions; flap gates or floodgates; and localized flood control system to protect critical facilities;
  - e. Vegetation Management, such as natural windbreaks; living snow-fences, shoreline stabilization; natural dune restoration using native vegetation and sand-fencing; urban-forest practices, landslide stabilization.
  - f. Phase I or II design, engineering, or feasibility study for complex mitigation projects that are reasonably expected to be funded and implemented;
  - g. The state may utilize up to 5% of total HMGP funds for non-technically proven projects that would not normally be funded under the program. Projects may be for, but are not limited to, research and development; generators for non-critical facilities; development of codes and standards; education/public awareness programs with mitigation as central feature.

Hazard warning systems, sirens, NOAA weather radios may be eligible if the declaration includes a tornado event. Projects funded through this initiative are determined on a case by case basis.

- h. The state may utilize up to 7% of total HMGP funds for mitigation planning purposes. Projects may be for, but are not limited to, updating/revision of state and/or local mitigation plans (or portions thereof), or the creation of new local mitigation plans.
2. Minimum Project Eligibility Criteria
- a. **Federal Criteria.** To be eligible for the HMGP, a project must meet the minimum project criteria established by FEMA:
    - 1. Be in conformance with the Hazard Mitigation Plan developed as a requirement of section 322 of the Robert T. Stafford Act, 42 U.S.C.5165.
    - 2. For all disasters declared on or after November 1, 2004 local government applicants for subgrants must have an approved local mitigation plan in accordance with 44 CFR 201.6 prior to receipt of HMGP subgrant funding.
    - 3. Have a beneficial impact upon the designated disaster area, whether or not located in the designated area;
    - 4. Be in conformance with 44 CFR Part 9, Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands, and 44 CFR Part 10, Environmental Considerations;
    - 5. Be cost-effective and substantially reduce the risk of future damage, hardship, loss, or suffering resulting from a major disaster. The grantee must demonstrate this by documenting that the project:
      - a. Addresses a problem that has been repetitive, or a problem that poses a significant risk if left unsolved.
      - b. Will not cost more than the anticipated value of the reduction in both direct damages and subsequent negative impacts to the area if future disasters were to occur. Both costs and benefits will be computed on a net value basis.
    - 6. Has been determined to be the most practical, effective, and environmentally sound alternative after consideration of a range of options.

7. Contributes, to the extent practicable, to a long-term solution to the problem it is intended to address.
  8. Considers long-term changes to the areas and entities it protects and has manageable future maintenance and modification requirements.
- b. **State Criteria.** In addition to the above criteria, the State of Ohio has considered other basic criteria for evaluating potential Section 404 projects:
1. The community is participating and in good standing with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). If a community is on probation with the NFIP they may still be awarded a grant under the HMGP. As a general rule, only mitigation activities involving pre-FIRM or post-FIRM compliant structures are eligible.

## VII. PRE-DECLARATION AND JOINT FIELD OFFICE ACTIVITIES

- A. Concept of Operations. As an event unfolds that may result in a Presidential disaster declaration, State Mitigation Branch staff initiate activities that, in the eventuality of a declaration, will lay the groundwork for appropriate and successful project applications, will maximize the technical assistance given limited resources, and will result in effective mitigation. These activities are divided into the following phases: Incident assessment, declaration, and Joint Field Office (JFO) activities.
- B. Incident Assessment. Incident may include but is not limited to the following activities:
1. Reviewing local and state mitigation plans including hazard identification / risk assessment; potential mitigation activities; any problems or vulnerable critical infrastructure identified,
  2. Generate HAZUS models to project possible impacts in case of flood or earthquake;
  3. Participating in CAS briefings,
  4. Coordinating with ODNR during flood incidents to identified NFIP sanctioned communities in impacted areas, and
  5. Participate on joint federal/state hazard mitigation teams formed during the preliminary damage assessment (PDA). Information acquired during this assessment process may be used to identify potential projects, and develop the mitigation strategy for that disaster.
- C. Disaster Declaration
1. Develop staffing plan and logistics information for JFO, and
  2. Begin to work on Mitigation Action Plan in consultation with FEMA, and ODNR (for flood incidents).
- D. JFO Activities
1. Develop Mitigation Action Plan (MAP). The MAP will identify the different activities that are to be conducted as a result of the disaster declaration. It will be prepared in consultation with FEMA and ODNR,
  2. Provide technical and other assistance to impacted communities,
  3. Attend meetings / briefings, including FCO meetings,

4. Complete mitigation section of the Recovery Report,
5. Implement MAP, and
6. Conduct Mitigation Briefings. Mitigation staff will offer to conduct countywide mitigation briefings in all counties included in the declaration to discuss mitigation with local officials. Since Ohio has frequent disaster declarations, counties sometimes opt to not have a mitigation briefing (they may have had one recently), packets will be offered to them for distribution to local officials. Briefings are part of the State's education and public awareness process necessary to the effective implementation of mitigation. Local officials will, during this process, be given the opportunity to identify mitigation issues and concerns. Although primarily focused on HMGP eligibility issues, application process/development, and types of mitigation actions; the National Flood Insurance Program, disaster recovery programs, FEMA's other mitigation programs and mitigation planning are also discussed briefly. The briefing is given as a Powerpoint presentation (see **Attachment 3**).

In DR-1720, the briefing will be a joint NFIP/mitigation briefing as the flood event was in an area with high flood insurance policy coverage and Increased Cost of Compliance will be triggered due to the large number of substantially damaged structures.

## VIII. APPLICATION PROCESS / PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

- A. Concept of Operations. In this event, due to the severity of flooding in the declared counties and high number of substantially damaged buildings, there will be pilot expedited acquisition/demolition application process, and a normal HMGP project application process.

Expedited application. The expedited application would begin with the an explanation during the joint NFIP/HMGP briefing that the process is available. Pre-applications would be requested for such projects based on the following criteria: acquisition/demolition is the chosen mitigation option, the structure has been determined to be substantially damaged (and by virtue of such declaration is in the 100-year floodplain). The expedited applications would be the highest priority projects and would be considered in a much quicker timeframe than normal project applications. Additionally communities submitting expedited applications would get intensive assistance to develop the application. For additional information see **Attachment 16 – Concept Paper Expedited Buyouts through HMGP.**

Normal application. The normal application process is actually a two part process. Pre-applications must be submitted first. Pre-applications will be reviewed and ranked by the SHMT and enough pre-applications to expend 200% of the estimated project funds will be selected for full project application development (this is to allow for projects that could be withdrawn and for the submission of zero funded projects so all Federal and state funds can be appropriated and expended). Full project applications will again be evaluated by the SHMT after the deadline for submission has passed. Projects will then undergo a cost-effectiveness, environmental, and completeness review conducted by Mitigation Branch staff. Projects will then be submitted to FEMA for approval. It is hoped that this can occur on or near the one year anniversary date of the disaster declaration.

The timeline for this process is as follows:

<b>EXPEDITED APPLICATION</b>	
Time Period	Event
Week 0	Disaster Declared
Week 3-4	Pre-application period opens
Weeks 5-6	Once pre-application is received, community assigned staff person to review for eligibility into expedited program and begin work on full application
Week 8	Pre-application period closes
Week 10	SHMT meets to review expedited full applications and normal pre-applications and select those for full application

	development
Week 16	Full expedited applications due to Ohio EMA
Week 24	OEMA completes completeness and eligibility review, begin to submit projects to FEMA for approval
Week 32	Completion of submission of projects to FEMA; FEMA begins to approve projects

<b>NORMAL APPLICATION</b>	
Time Period	Event
Week 0	Disaster Declared
Week 3-4	Pre-application period opens
Week 8	Pre-application period closes
Week 10	SHMT meets to review full applications and normal pre-applications and select those for full application development
Week 24	Full normal applications due at Ohio EMA
Week 36	OEMA completes completeness and eligibility review, begin to submit projects to FEMA for approval
Week 52	Completion of submission of projects to FEMA; FEMA begins to approve projects

## B. Pre-Application Development and Submission

1. The community will submit a pre-application to the Ohio EMA Mitigation Branch by the deadline identified on the pre-application. The pre-application will be announced/distributed at the mitigation briefing.
2. Pre-applications will be assigned to state Mitigation Branch staff to review and complete a staff report that will be presented at the SHMT meeting where pre-applications will be reviewed.
3. The SHMT will meet and rank community projects from the pre-applications according to established criteria (see item IX. Project Review, Ranking and Selection below), adjusted to the level of detail that the pre-applications provide. This meeting will occur within approximately (60) days from submission of all pre-applications.
4. Selection of a pre-application by the SHMT triggers the full project application development process, except in the case of the expedited process. In the case of the expedited process, after Ohio EMA staff have reviewed the completed pre-application (and provided the project meets the criteria for the expedited program), a staff person will be assigned to the community and

they are asked to begin development on the full project application immediately. All pre-applicant submitters will be notified as to the disposition of their pre-application and will be given a not-to-exceed budget amount from which they will develop a full project application.

### C. Full Project Application Development and Submission

1. The SHMO is responsible for ensuring that Application Forms and other supporting information are provided to HMGP applicants (**Attachment 6 – HMGP Project Application Form**). Application Forms will be provided to the local point of contact, along with other information to assist them in developing the project. A Mitigation Branch staff member will be assigned to each project to provide technical assistance. Applicants will be encouraged to complete the full application by using the 10-step application development process and forming a local mitigation committee.
2. Applicants for HMGP funds must submit a complete application and will be instructed to develop a project based on a not-to-exceed budget. If an applicant is unable to submit a complete application by the above mentioned time frames, their project will be reviewed in the next round of funding.
3. Mitigation Branch staff will review all applications to determine if required information has been provided, and the minimum application and project eligibility criteria have been met. If it has not, the applicant will be notified of the need to provide additional information. Projects will not be approved unless they are complete. Full project applications consist of the following:
  - a. A letter of submittal signed by the chief elected official
  - b. Signed application
  - c. Project Description
  - d. Budget with supporting fiscal documentation and funding sources
  - e. Implementation plan, including land use plan if acquisition
  - f. Work schedule
  - g. Other supporting documentation, including public notices and minutes from committee meetings.
4. The SHMT will meet for a second time to review and rank the full project applications (normal application process) using a similar format for ranking project pre-applications, with the most significant difference being that there will be more information available upon which to base decisions such as for NFIP compliance and potential cost effectiveness.
5. For selected full applications, state Mitigation staff will then complete the environmental review including the completion of the Record of Environmental Review (REC), cost-effectiveness review including conducting a benefit-cost analysis for each project, and a completeness review. This will

be conducted as the final step before sending to FEMA. FEMA is the final decision-maker for all environmental requirements.

## **IX. PROJECT REVIEW, RANKING, AND SELECTION**

### **A. Priority**

The following priorities are established by the State of Ohio under HMGP for DR-1720 based on the unique characteristics of the event, the DR-1720 *Mitigation Action Plan* and the *State of Ohio Standard Mitigation Plan*:

- Priority will be given to projects in the declared counties over projects in other counties.
- If there are enough eligible “bricks and mortar” projects from the declared counties, 5% initiative funds will be folded into general project funds. Similarly 7% planning funds will be folded into general project funds in the same scenario except for pilot flood loss reduction studies for small, rural communities in the declared counties which will lead to the development of comprehensive strategies for flood loss reduction, viable hazard mitigation project ideas for future FEMA mitigation program opportunities, and update the community hazard mitigation plan.
- Among flood loss reduction projects, priority will be given for the acquisition of repetitively flood prone properties as it is the only permanent mitigation solution.

### **B. Review Process**

1. The SHMO and/or Mitigation Branch staff will perform the initial review of pre-applications and full project applications to ensure all information and documentation is provided. A mitigation branch staff member will be assigned to each pre-application and to each applicant developing a full project application. That staff member will make the staff presentation at the SHMT meetings for that particular project.
2. The SHMO will chair the SHMT for the HMGP. Representatives from the following agencies/organizations are permanent members of this team:
  - a. Ohio EMA
  - b. Department of Development, Office of Community Partnerships
  - c. Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water, Floodplain Management
  - d. State and Local Government Commission
  - e. Emergency Management Association of Ohio (EMAO)
  - f. US Army Corp. of Engineers (USACE)
  - g. US Fish and Wildlife Service
  - h. US Environmental Protection Agency
  - i. Ohio Public Works Commission

- j. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- 3. Additional State Agency representatives will be determined by the nature of the projects for which HMGP funds have been requested. Appropriate Federal agencies may also be asked to help review the merits of certain types of projects.
- 4. In keeping with the MOU between FEMA and the USACE, the appropriate Corps district will be advised of all proposed mitigation projects in Ohio prior to the recommendation to forward to FEMA for approval.

### C. Evaluation and Ranking of Projects

- 1. The SHMT will review all applications according to established criteria. Evaluation of projects is based on two types of criteria: NFIP compliance and the composite team score.
  - a. **NFIP Evaluation** - Ohio Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will evaluate each community according to NFIP/Floodplain Management criteria utilizing findings from Community Assistance Visits (CAVs), Community Assistance Contacts (CACs) or NFIP Self Assessments. For the pre-application SHMT meeting, the NFIP evaluation will be based on a file review and, if there has been a current evaluation, those findings. Subsequent to the pre-application SHMT meeting but prior to the full project application SHMT meeting, ODNR will have evaluated each community developing a full project application using any of the above mentioned evaluations.
  - b. **Composite Team Score and Additional Evaluation Criteria** - The membership of the Review Team will evaluate each project according to the other criteria worth another 115 points (see **Attachment 7**). Criteria used to evaluate the projects include but are not limited to the following:
    - 1. Whether the community was in the declared or impacted area,
    - 2. Consistency with state and local mitigation plans,
    - 3. The community's ability to manage a grant,
    - 4. Durability (longevity) of the proposed mitigation solution,
    - 5. Repetitive nature of the hazard the mitigation option is designed to protect against,
    - 6. Implementation of day-to-day mitigation programs outside of HMGP,

7. Other criteria as necessary

Projects are ranked according to their total evaluation score, highest to the lowest.

2. Normally, the SHMT will meet to review both HMGP pre-applications and full applications. The evaluation criteria will roughly be the same for both meetings.

D. Selection

1. For project pre-applications, the SHMO will select the highest 200% of the pre-applications based on estimated available funding and SHMT ranking. The selected pre-applications will be invited to develop full project applications.
2. For full project application, following the evaluation and ranking of projects, the SHMT will make the following recommendations to the GAR:
  - a. Projects recommended for approval, and,
  - b. The order in which projects should be funded (i.e., a listing of the projects by priority).
3. In the event two or more projects are tied in rank, they will be listed according to their benefit-cost ratios (B/C). In the event of another tie, the NFIP score will determine the highest score.
4. The GAR will make the final decision regarding the selection, level of funding for, and ranking of projects by priority. Those projects not selected for funding will be forwarded to FEMA for approval as zero funded projects. This means that if additional funds become available, or if cost-underruns occur in other projects, the zero funded project can receive funding for the approved project
5. The GAR will notify all applicants of the decision made by the state relative to their proposed project.
6. Following notification of the applicant, the projects will have a final environmental, cost-effectiveness, and completeness review. The GAR will then submit the applications to FEMA for approval. Submittal will be done in NEMIS as well as hard copy. Hard copy application documents include the Project Summary, B/C Analysis narrative, and Record of Environmental Consideration (REC) with supporting letters and documentation will be forwarded to the FEMA Region V, Director for approval. The application materials, which the GAR will forward to FEMA, will include the following

- a. A SF 424 (Application for Federal Assistance – see **Attachment 1**).
  - b. A SF 424D (Assurances for Construction Programs), if appropriate.
  - c. A Project Summary that includes:
    - 1. Community point of contact, address, phone and fax numbers
    - 2. Major disaster number
    - 3. Project number
    - 4. Applicant name
    - 5. Location of the project
    - 6. Description of the project
    - 7. List of alternatives considered
    - 8. Congressional district
    - 9. Record of Environmental Consideration
    - 10. Benefit Cost Analysis
    - 11. Project Review and Results statement
7. All approved mitigation projects must be submitted to FEMA for environmental concurrence and obligation of funds eighteen (18) months from the date of the disaster declaration. If necessary, the state can request up to two additional (2) ninety (90) day extensions to the one year application deadline (for a total of 18 months). FEMA must obligate all HMGP funds within twenty-four (24) months of the declaration date.

#### E. Award

- 1. FEMA will sign the REC and approve projects when all submittal requirements are met and in a timely manner. Within seven (7) days of project approval, the state will be notified and a joint press release will be issued.
- 2. Prior to project approval and if notice has been received by the SHMO, the local official of the community (project point-of-contact), the County EMA Director, the OEMA Field Liaison, the EMA PIO (if not already notified), and Ohio EMA Executive Director will be notified by the SHMO. Preferably this will be done by e-mail or FAX to ensure that local and state staff are aware in the case that there is media follow-up due to an early FEMA and/or Congressional press release.
- 3. After either a FAXed or mailed copy of the FEMA approval of a project has been received by the Mitigation Branch, the Executive Director will send a congratulatory letter followed by the State/Local Agreement and other administrative forms from the SHMO.

## X. PROJECT INITIATION

### A. General

1. Ohio EMA will serve as the Grantee for project management and accountability of funds in accordance with 44 CFR Part 13 and appropriate OMB Circulars. (Subgrantees are accountable to the Grantee for funds that have been awarded to them and will utilize the same resources.)
2. The SHMO will provide the approved community with the State/Local Agreement, two W-9 forms, and a sample Designation of Applicants Agent (see **Attachments 8, 9**). The Chief Elected Official (CEO) must sign the agreement and return to the Ohio EMA within thirty (30) days of receipt. If a problem should arise with the agreement, the SHMO should be notified as soon as possible to avoid any delays in beginning the project.
3. The GAR must sign the agreement and the Mitigation Branch Project Manager will provide the Subgrantee with a copy of the completed document, along with program requirements and information during the Implementation meeting.
4. The designated local Project Manager will meet with the Mitigation Branch Project Manager within thirty (30) days of submission of the signed State/Local agreement (see Section XIV(A)(3) on more specific information on this *Implementation Meeting*).
5. Based upon the approved project application and work schedule for a project, both the Ohio EMA and local community will implement a record keeping and financial system relative to the project.
6. Subgrantees will submit quarterly progress reports (**Attachment 11**) to the SHMO. Program regulations and this Administrative Plan identifies specific due dates for these reports (see Section XIV – Reports.). The SHMO will submit quarterly progress reports to FEMA. The final report will be a complete assessment of project accomplishments and will meet 44 CFR Part 206 requirements.
7. The Mitigation Branch Project Managers will monitor and evaluate project accomplishments, and adherence to the work schedule. Problems will be reported to the SHMO, GAR and FEMA HMO as soon as identified (see Section XIV).
8. The Mitigation Branch Project Manager, SHMO, and Fiscal Officer will review advance of funds requests, time extension requests, and cost overruns. Time extensions will be granted at three-month intervals.

9. The Mitigation Branch project Manager will coordinate individual project close out and the SHMO will coordinate the overall grant closeout.

## B. Advance of Funds

1. The state may advance a portion of the federal share of the cost of an approved hazard mitigation project, along with a percentage of administrative costs.
2. An initial advance will be made to an applicant based on expenditures necessary to start the project; ensuring that the remaining work to be completed is well within the dollar amount of the approved project. Additional advances will be made as long as expenditures can be documented, good recordkeeping is maintained, and sound fiscal procedures are used.
3. A request for an advance of funds must be submitted in writing to the SHMO. The request must be made using the form in **Attachment 10**. Request for funds should be made at least 4 – 6 weeks prior to the identified need, and should be expended within thirty (30) days of receipt.
4. If the request for an advance of funds is approved, disbursement documentation will be prepared and the applicant advised that its request has been approved. The applicant will also be advised as to the dollar amount approved, and the approximate date by which a state warrant may be expected.
5. If the request is denied, the applicant will be so advised, and given the reason for the denial. Requests will be denied if the subgrantee is not up-to-date in submitting quarterly reports.

## C. Time Limits and Extensions

### 1. Time Limits

- a. As a general rule, projects must be initiated within ninety (90) days of the approval date. When FEMA approves a project, the initial approval period is (3) three years, however, the state-local grant agreement has a timeframe of two (2) years from the date of project approval by FEMA. Exceptions to these time limits may be granted for certain types of projects and/or special circumstances.

### 2. Time Extensions

- a. If an subgrantee determines that it will not be able to complete its project by the time specified in the state-local grant agreement, it must

immediately notify the Mitigation Branch Project Manager, and request a time extension. In its letter, the subgrantee must:

1. Explain why it will not be able to meet the completion deadline;
  2. What project work remains;
  3. When it anticipates the project will be completed.
  4. Provide a signed request for extension by the appropriate local authority.
- b. Upon receipt of the time extension request, the Mitigation Branch Project Manager will review the request for appropriateness and determine whether the extension request is necessary for the state-local agreement, for the FEMA approval, or both. The Mitigation Branch Project Manager will send the extension request form (for a state-local agreement extension request) to the subgrantee for signature. If a FEMA extension request is needed, the Mitigation Branch Project Manager will complete the extension request form and prepare the request letter for the GAR signature. **Extension requests to the FEMA period of performance must be submitted to the FEMA Regional Office no later than 60 days prior to the expiration of the period of performance.**
- c. The Mitigation Branch Project Manager will then forward the request, signed form(s) and prepared letters (if necessary) with a recommendation to the SHMO who will then forward the request to the GAR and/or FEMA (if necessary), along with a recommendation for approval or disapproval.
- c. The Mitigation Branch Project Manager is responsible for ensuring that projects are operational within approved timeframes.

#### D. Cost Overruns/Under runs

1. Subgrantees will be required to notify their assigned Mitigation Branch Program Manager by letter as soon as they determine that they will have a project cost overrun. The letter should include the dollar amount of the overrun, the reason for the overrun, and an appropriate justification and documentation (invoices, copies of contracts, pictures, and so on) to support the additional costs.
2. The SHMO in consultation with the Mitigation Branch Project Manager will evaluate each cost overrun. If the evaluation indicates that the cost overrun is justified, and if funds are available, the SHMO may recommend to the GAR approval of cost overruns. Cost overruns will be approved only if funds are available in the grant program to support the additional amount requested.
3. The GAR will forward all such cost overruns, along with a recommendation for approval, to the FEMA Region V, Regional Administrator. The Regional

Administrator will notify the GAR of the final determination made on the overrun.

4. The community must notify the SHMO as soon as possible if a cost under runs will occur.
5. Any request for deviation from an approved project must be consistent with and approved in accordance with current FEMA policy guidance as it relates to a change of project scope. This may trigger the need to review the project environmentally and a new benefit-cost analysis completed. FEMA must approve the amended project. The Mitigation Branch Project Manager will be responsible for any NEMIS changes that may be needed as well.

## XI. APPEALS

- A. An eligible applicant or subgrantee may appeal a decision made by the Mitigation Branch staff regarding projects submitted for funding under the HMGP. The appeal must be in writing, and contain sufficient additional information beyond that submitted with the original application, to warrant consideration. There are two types of appeals: those appealing state policies and those appealing Federal (FEMA) policies. The appeal will be made to the SHMO who will then determine whether the appeal is to a state policy or Federal policy. Upon this determination, the processes identified below will be followed accordingly.

Appeals relate to state decisions based on state policies such as determinations made by the State Hazard Mitigation Team, NFIP compliance, state mitigation priorities, state/local agreement issues, reasonable and necessary costs associated with project management, etc. are usually state appeals. For issues regarding program eligibility, time extensions beyond the FEMA approved time for the grant overall, determination of allowable project management and administrative costs, allowable project costs, and other project implementation requirements, or the state's interpretation of any Federal policy related to these issues is usually a Federal appeal. Any appeal disputing the benefit-cost ratio (BCR) for a specific property or project must be accompanied by a benefit-cost analysis conducted by the appellant in accordance with FEMA guidelines.

- B. State Appeals. There are two levels of state appeal. The Division Director (DD) for Grants is the decision-maker for the first appeal. If a second appeal is necessary the Governor's Authorized Representative (GAR) makes the decision on the second appeal.
1. All applicant appeals must be submitted in writing to the DD within thirty (30) days of the date of the letter notifying the applicant of the State Mitigation Officers decision. The Division Director will respond within thirty (30) days of the applicant's letter.
  2. If the applicant does not agree with this decision they can appeal to the GAR. The applicant must provide additional information supporting their position to the GAR within thirty (30) days of the first decision letter. The GAR will respond within thirty (30) days of receipt of the request for appeal. The GAR's decision is final and no other state appeals will be considered.
  3. The GAR may, on behalf of an applicant or the state, request guidance and/or a decision from FEMA related to an applicants appeal to the state. If guidance is requested from FEMA, the GAR will notify the applicant and an additional thirty (30) days will be added to the time frame for response from the GAR.

C. Federal Appeals. The applicant or subgrantee has the option of appealing to FEMA for a decision relating to Federal policy.

1. In that instance the appeal will be in writing, and will be submitted to the SHMO. All Federal appeals on behalf of the applicant or state are made by the Executive Director, the Ohio Emergency Management Agency.
2. The Mitigation Branch may prepare materials and information including a summary and staff recommendation related to the issue being appealed to be forwarded to FEMA.
3. The appeal will then be forwarded to the FEMA Regional Administrator within sixty (60) days of the date the applicant requests the appeal.
4. Per the 44 CFR Part 206.440 FEMA will respond within ninety (90) days.
5. An appeal of the FEMA decision may be made within the following ninety (90) days to the FEMA Associate Director in Washington. FEMA will respond within ninety (90) days and the decision is final. No other appeals exist.

FEMA's decision will be in writing to the state. The state will copy the applicant with FEMA's decision.

## **XII. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

As a general rule, applicants for HMGP funds will be responsible for obtaining any technical assistance they may need in order to develop a hazard mitigation project proposal, or to carry out a hazard mitigation project. Technical assistance will be available from the Ohio Emergency Management Agency Mitigation staff, and FEMA Region V, Mitigation Division. Applicants may also request assistance from Regional Planning Councils, and State agencies. Applicants who want such assistance will be advised to notify the SHMO.

The exception to this rule is for the development of data necessary to perform the benefit-cost analysis. In this case, Ohio EMA will generally develop data such as first floor elevations and perform flood studies to perform the full data option of the benefit-cost analysis. However, for stormwater mitigation projects, the applicant shall be responsible for providing enough data and information to adequately assess flood frequencies and damages.

### XIII. REPORTS

- B. Subgrantees will submit a Quarterly Progress Report (QPR) (**Attachment 11**) to the SHMO within fifteen (15) days of the end of the quarter, on the following schedule:

<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Months</u>	<u>Report Due</u>
1 <sup>st</sup>	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. 15
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Jan. - Mar.	Apr. 15
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Apr. - June	July 15
4 <sup>th</sup>	July - Sept.	Oct. 15

- B. QPR's will be used to monitor and follow-up on projects. Failure to submit reports may result in suspension of HMGP funds. Copies of QPR's will be maintained by the State. The SHMO will submit a quarterly report to FEMA on the status of all mitigation projects by the end of the month following the end of the quarter.

## XIV PROGRAM MONITORING

### A. Purpose of Project Monitoring

1. As the Grantee for federal mitigation funds, the Ohio Emergency Management Agency (EMA) is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of Grantee and Subgrantee supported activities. Ohio EMA must monitor Grantee and Subgrantee supported activities to assure compliance with applicable Federal requirements and that performance goals are being achieved. Monitoring must cover each program, function or activity.
2. Role of Mitigation Staff
  - a. The Mitigation Branch staff person assigned the project (herein referred to as the Mitigation Branch Project Manager) will be responsible for reviewing and documenting the community's ability to implement the project according to their project application, grant agreement, and program requirements, and to administer the grant funds including their local share according to federal regulation. This is accomplished through the review of quarterly progress reports, on-site review of the project and fiscal records and the project area to ensure the scope of work as outlined in the project application is being fulfilled and funds are expended and accounted for properly.
  - b. The SHMO will be notified as soon as possible of any significant issues related to the above. Reporting requirements are discussed under section XIII Reporting.
3. Implementation Meeting & Monitoring Visits
  - a. **Implementation Meeting.** An on-site meeting will be conducted no later than three (3) months after the grant agreement has been signed by the community. This meeting is to ensure the local Project Manager understands of program requirements. Often, the local Project Manager will not be the person who was involved in the development of the project and may not be as familiar with requirements of the program. The local Project Manager, local officials, and fiscal officer for community are encouraged to attend. Meeting topics include:
    - Presentation and review of the Implementation Binder. The Implementation Binder includes guidance materials, forms, timelines, and reporting requirements.
    - Review of file management procedures, fiscal management procedures.
    - Review of procedures that are specific to the mitigation action taking place.

The implementation meeting should also consist of a tour of the project site, especially if it had not been visited by Mitigation Branch Project Manager to date.

- b. Following the implementation meeting, monitoring visits will be conducted. The frequency of monitoring visits will be based on the project type:
  - For 5% Projects, such as single warning siren, that does not constitute significant construction, an annual monitoring visit shall be conducted at a minimum.
  - Planning projects shall not necessitate any additional monitoring visits beyond the first on-site visit. Provided drawdown requests are tied to plan progress milestones and the final drawdown is contingent on the final plan being submitted.
  - For all other mitigation projects, monitoring visits shall be conducted no less than two (2) times each year. The monitoring visits may rotate between a review of programmatic files and fiscal records. At least one visit should include an on-site visit to the project area. These visits will occur through project completion.
- c. Additional monitoring visits may be scheduled by assigned Mitigation Branch Project Manager(s) in communities displaying an inability to manage the mitigation grant properly. Determination of an inability to manage the grant would include, but not be limited to the following inconsistencies in project implementation:
  1. The project is not on schedule for completion within the two-year grant agreement.
  2. Project/program activities are not being documented properly.
  3. Quarterly progress reports are not being provided each quarter or are not complete.
  4. The community does not appear to be meeting their local share responsibility.
  5. More than one instance of a failure to follow our guidance on issues related to the project.
- d. The SHMO or immediate supervisor will determine if additional monitoring visits are needed after discussion with the assigned Mitigation Branch Project Manager. The Community will be notified in writing, within ten (10) days of the most recent monitoring visit, of any corrective actions and the date of the next monitoring visit.
- e. A community's failure to comply with requested corrective actions may result in enforcement actions as outlined in 44 CFR Part 13.43.

4. Scheduling the Implementation Meeting and Monitoring Visit(s)
  - a. The scheduling of the implementation meeting should be done through the local Project Manager. Minimally, local officials, the local Project Manager, and whoever is responsible for fiscal management in the community should attend.
  - b. The first monitoring visit will be scheduled during the implementation meeting. Other monitoring visits should be scheduled during each subsequent visit.
  - b. A letter to the local Project Manager will be used to confirm the implementation meeting and monitoring visits. The local officials should be copied along with the County EMA Director. The letter should outline the purpose of the visit, what the Mitigation Branch Project Manager wants to review, and who should be at the meeting, if other officials are needed in addition to the local Project Manager.
5. Conducting the Monitoring Visit
  - a. The Mitigation Branch Project Manager shall review the project application prior to the monitoring visit and take the project to the monitoring visit. At a minimum the Mitigation Branch Project Manager should be as familiar with the project as the local Project Manager.
  - b. The project must be implemented according to program guidance and the scope of work outlined in the project. Discrepancies should be discussed with the local Project Manager. If needed, clarification will be requested from the community officials or committee members. This is especially true early in project implementation.
  - c. Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs) are required to document the progress of the project. The QPR should reflect the amount of funds expended, and the steps taken with each structure in the project.
  - d. The QPR should be used in the review of project files. For example, if the QPR indicates a property has been acquired, the file should include the appropriate documentation.
  - e. The Mitigation Branch Project Manager shall review the fiscal information and spreadsheets to assess the funding levels and the amount advanced. All funds advanced prior to the last thirty (30) days should be expended. The only exception to this would be management costs.
    1. The fiscal documentation should be compared to the last QPR and/or the spreadsheet.

2. Use the Fiscal Closeout Form (**Attachment 13**) to determine the amount of the local share of the project. Calculating the local share is especially important after the project is a year old and/or actions are documented for over half of the properties in the project. All communities are aware of their local share commitment and should be prepared to document availability.
  3. Verify the exact percentage of local share budgeted in the project. The federal funds contributed will never be greater than 75%. In some instances, State funds may be contributed toward the project cost or the local match requirement.
- f. Each property file should be reviewed to ensure compliance with the Duplication of Benefit (DOB) requirement. Documentation related to how disaster assistance was expended should be provided in each file.
  - g. The Record of Environmental Consideration (REC) should also be reviewed during the monitoring visit, especially if further coordination has been requested or required by an agency. For example, the Indiana bat is commonplace in Ohio and will impact the cutting of trees. You should document whether trees have been removed during implementation of the project. Or, if an elevation project requires obtaining a local floodplain development permit, this should be in the file. The REC should be reviewed during the first monitoring visit and in subsequent visits if conditions have been identified requiring compliance by the community.
  - h. The Project Monitoring Forms will be used to document the review of individual property files. The appropriate form will be completed for each property file. Identify whether the file was complete or incomplete in the box in the upper right corner.
  - i. The Mitigation Branch Project Manager shall discuss corrective actions with the local Project Manager at the time of the monitoring visit. The local Project Manager can begin working on the corrections before the follow up letter is sent.
6. Reporting Requirements
- a. After the implementation meeting, the Mitigation Branch Project Manager will follow-up on specific issues with the local Project Manager but a follow-up letter is not required.
  - b. A written report for monitoring visits and implementation meetings will be completed within five business days of the visit by the Mitigation Branch Project Manager. The report should outline the above and in as much

detail as possible. The report shall be placed in the project file and copied to the SHMO.

- c. Following monitoring meetings (not implementation meetings) a follow up letter will be sent by the Mitigation Branch Project Manager to local officials with a copy to the local Project Manager within 10 days of the monitoring visit. The letter will outline the results of the visit and any corrective actions required. The local Project Manager will be given 30 days to complete the corrective actions.

## 7. Follow-up

- a. The completed Project Monitoring forms should be given to the designated staff person upon return from the visit.
- b. This individual will prepare property listings with property owner, address, and parcel numbers for the completed files, and property owner, address, and the information missing from the file.
- c. The monitoring forms and property listings will be filed when completed. A copy of the property listings will be provided to the appropriate staff person.
- d. The property listings will be used during future monitoring visits to identify the files already reviewed and prevent duplication of effort.

## XV. PROJECT COMPLETION AND CLOSE OUT

A. FEMA guidance on periods of performance indicates that the standard period of performance for new HMGP grants is three (3) years from the date of the grant award to the state. The deadline can be extended if necessary, but only in unusual circumstances (see Section X(C)(2)). The total period of performance should not exceed five (5) years.

### B. Project Completion by Subgrantee

1. The Project Manager **must** notify its OEMA Mitigation Branch Project Manager within ten (10) days of the completion of **all** work on the project. This contact may be by phone with a follow up written notification by fax, or by letter.
2. The notification should be accompanied by a Final Progress Report (which is a quarterly report modified to indicate that it is a final report) and fiscal documentation including a completed Subgrantee Expenditure Spreadsheet (Attachment 12).
3. Upon receiving this notification the Mitigation Branch Project Manager will schedule a final monitoring visit to review all program and fiscal records related to the project. All project funds are suspended at the time of completion of the project unless approval to spend is given in writing by the SHMO.

### C. Final Monitoring Meeting -- Programmatic Closeout

1. At the time of closeout all files not previously reviewed or complete will be reviewed to ensure all appropriate documents are included. The Project Monitoring Form (Attachment 14) will be utilized for the review. At closeout, the Mitigation Branch Project Manager should be able to fully complete a monitoring form for each property in the project.
2. If a file does not contain all required documentation, the local Project Manager will be required to provide the information within thirty (30) days of closeout, if not readily available at the monitoring meeting. If this time frame is not appropriate, a greater amount of time may be granted by the Mitigation Branch Project Manager. However, failure to provide the documentation may result in the requirement to repay some or all of the grant amount for a particular property or activity.
3. A picture of the final state of each property should either be provided by the local project manager or be taken by the Mitigation Branch Project Manager at the closeout meeting. These are needed to close out the project with FEMA.

4. An Environmental Closeout Declaration must be presented to the local project manager and signed by them at the closeout meeting. This form is to verify compliance with the provisions of the REC.

#### D. Final Monitoring Meeting - Fiscal Closeout

1. If possible, the local Project Manager should provide copies of spreadsheets to the Mitigation Branch Project Manager before conducting the closeout meeting.
2. The total project cost will be determined and appropriate cost shares calculated. Any discrepancies will be noted and brought to the attention of the local project manager. The Mitigation Branch project manager will work with the local project manager to reconcile any discrepancies. If the closeout identifies unspent funds being held by the community they must return the funds upon notification by the Mitigation Branch Project Manager. If funds are due the community, the Mitigation Branch Project Manager will request those funds as soon as possible and will forward the state warrant within sixty (60) days of identifying the short fall.
3. In the event final closeout cannot be completed, funds due the community will be held until all required information has been provided to the Mitigation Branch project manager.

#### E. Completing Project Closeout with Subgrantee

After the fiscal issues have been reconciled, monitoring forms are completed, and the necessary documentation has been obtained from the local project manager, the Mitigation Branch Project Manager shall provide a final closeout package to the community. The package will include:

- A letter of congratulations (under the signature of the SHMO) indicating that the documents and fiscal records were reviewed and accepted by the Mitigation Branch, and
- A completed Fiscal Closeout Spreadsheet with the reconciled / adjusted project costs (**Attachment 13**).

#### F. Completing Project Closeout with FEMA

1. De-Obligation of Funds. If funds are to be de-obligated because of cost underruns, it is necessary to request that FEMA de-obligate funds. The Mitigation Branch must have confirmation of FEMA's de-obligation of the funds (a letter) before a Closeout Package can be sent to them. The de-obligation request letter will be under the signature of the Alternate GAR or GAR to the FEMA V Regional Administrator.

2. Transmittal of Closeout Package to FEMA. Upon completion of the project closeout with the subgrantee, a closeout package shall be submitted to FEMA. The closeout package will include:

- A letter of transmittal to the FEMA V Regional Administrator, cc: HMO, (under the signature of Alternate GAR or GAR) requesting that FEMA closeout the project,
- A completed Fiscal Closeout Spreadsheet with the reconciled / adjusted project costs (**Attachment 13**),
- Property Information Sheet for each property mitigated,
- Pictures of properties in their final, mitigated state,
- Completed and signed Environmental Closeout Declaration, and
- Completed NEMIS Project Closeout Verification Form.

G. The Ohio EMA and community will comply with the Single Audit Act, as amended, and maintain all project documentation for a period of three years following project or disaster closeout.

H. Specific audit requirements information will be included with the State/Local Agreement.

## **XVI. PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING**

A. This Administrative Plan and procedures will be reviewed annually by the SHMO or when a Presidentially declared disaster occurs, whichever comes first, to ensure compliance with law, implementing regulations, and state policies. It will be updated as needed to reflect regulatory or policy changes, or to improve program administration and will be submitted to FEMA for approval during the second quarter of the federal fiscal year.

B. Following a Presidential disaster declaration, the SHMO will prepare any updates, amendments, or revisions to the plan that are required in order to meet current policy guidance or changes in the administration of the HMGP, and submit the plan to FEMA for approval.

C. FEMA will reply in writing that the plan is approved and/or if any further revisions required. FEMA will provide a timeframe for submission of any corrections in their letter.

D. At this time no formal decision regarding the FEMA policy memo dated November 26, 2007 on Section 324 Management Costs has been made. It is recognized that for the next update of the Administrative Plan, decisions will have to be made as to the allocation of Grantee and Subgrantee management costs – and working within the framework of the 4.89%. The next revision of the Administrative Plan will contain this information. However, in accordance with

the policy memo, declarations prior to November 13, 2007 will have management costs and administrative costs provided through current mechanisms.

## **XVII. ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1 – Federal Application SF 424
- Attachment 2 – State Management Cost & Staffing Plan/ Budget Worksheet
- Attachment 3 – County Briefing Powerpoint
- Attachment 4 – Pre-Application Form
- Attachment 5 – Project Development Process
- Attachment 6 -- Project Application Form
- Attachment 7 – SHMT Project Evaluation Form
- Attachment 8 – State/Local Agreement (includes audit standards)
- Attachment 9 – Sample Designation of Applicants Agent
- Attachment 10 – Mitigation Grant Program Request for Payment form
- Attachment 11 – Quarterly Progress Reports (QPR)
- Attachment 12 -- Subgrantee Expenditure Spreadsheet
- Attachment 13 -- Fiscal Closeout Spreadsheet
- Attachment 14 -- Project Monitoring Forms
- Attachment 15 -- Mitigation Action Plan
- Attachment 16 -- Concept Paper: Expedited Buyouts through HMGP [Need to update to show what did happen\_CB\_3.26.08]