

4.4 PRIORITIZING LOCAL MITIGATION FUNDING ASSISTANCE

The 44 CFR 201.4 (c)(4)(iii) requires states to include criteria for prioritizing communities and local jurisdictions that would receive planning and project grants under available funding programs. The criteria should include consideration for communities with the highest risks, repetitive loss properties, and most intense development pressures. The plan also needs to include a principal criterion for non-planning grants based on the extent to which benefits are maximized according to a benefit cost review.

Demand for hazard mitigation funds almost always exceeds fund availability. For example in the past three Federal disaster declarations, available Federal mitigation funds have only met 15% of the demand.

Table 4.4.a

EVENT	HMGP FUNDS REQUESTED	HMGP FUNDS AVAILABLE (FED)	DIFFERENCE
DR-1651	\$15,191,356	\$1,798,019	-\$13,393,337 (-88%)
DR-1656	\$18,166,108	\$3,411,736	-\$14,754,372 (-81%)
DR-1720	\$44,888,432	\$6,630,799	-\$38,257,633 (-85%)

Therefore, it is important that the State of Ohio prioritize local mitigation funding assistance. Section 3.4 explained how Ohio has established both eligibility and prioritization criteria. Appendix G includes the worksheets the SHMT uses to rank project applications for funding. **The final project ranking by the SHMT is also the prioritization of eligible projects for funding.** The exceptions to this are under HMGP where 5% and 7% projects are funded outside of the SHMT ranking process. Projects submitted under these categories are funded in accordance with the specific priority outlined in the Administrative Plan and Mitigation Strategy for that particular event.

In the event that there is not enough funding for an eligible, high-ranking mitigation project, Mitigation Branch staff will work with the subapplicant to refine and submit in another grant funding cycle or program.

Although Federal planning guidance indicates criteria for local mitigation funding assistance should include consideration for communities with the highest risks, repetitive loss properties, communities with the most intense development pressures, and maximizing benefits based on a benefit-cost analysis; Ohio only considers repetitive loss and benefit-cost. For the nationally competitive grant

programs, state criteria match the national ranking and evaluation criteria exactly. Doing otherwise would put Ohio projects at a competitive disadvantage as compared to other projects that used the national criteria. For HMGP and FMA, repetitive loss is considered as is benefit-cost; however, communities with the highest risks and high development pressures are not. The reason for this is that it is assumed that almost all Ohio communities have high risk from the most serious hazards (flooding, tornado) and mitigation projects are used to remedy the “already built” environment, not the developing environment, that is much better handled through appropriate codes and land use measures.

One emerging issue is that of priority of funding updates to LHMPs. To date, this priority has not been determined.