



HAZARD MITIGATION ASSISTANCE EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER WORKING GROUP CHARTER

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Abstract

This charter establishes the Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) External Stakeholder Work Group (ESWG). The HMA ESWG is a collaborative working group established to strengthen ties and increase transparency between the HMA program and its stakeholders.



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“FEMA’s mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and Improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.”

1. Overview

This charter establishes and describes the structure of the Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) External Stakeholder Working Group (ESWG). The ESWG will review this charter annually and determine if any updates or changes are necessary.

1.1. Introduction

The External Stakeholder Working Group will provide an opportunity for FEMA staff to increase engagement and transparency with non-federal partners in the HMA programs at the state, local community or jurisdiction, tribal nation, or territorial (SLTT) levels. The HMA programs provide pre- and post-disaster funding to implement mitigation actions in communities across the country. The Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) program and the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program are both funded by an annual appropriation. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) provides funding as a result of a Presidentially declared disaster.

The intent of the ESWG is to:

- Maintain open the channels of communication between federal staff and state, local, tribal, and territorial mitigation staff;
- Gather insight into mitigation and/or HMA program issues from the state, local, tribal, or territorial perspective;
- Increase transparency in HMA goals, program priorities, and policy development;
- Help HMA provide a consistent, predictable experience for external stakeholders; and,
- Delve more deeply into issues identified during the Hazard Mitigation Stakeholder Workshop.

The Workshop included a series of listening sessions designed to collect feedback from state, local, tribal, and territory stakeholders on ways in which HMA can improve communication, facilitate implementation of the programs, ensure policies and programs meet existing needs, and better engage stakeholders.

Input from the ESWG will support FEMA in its efforts to streamline and strengthen HMA program delivery overall, provide better customer service to external stakeholders, and facilitate effective and expedient pre-disaster mitigation planning and mitigation projects that reduce risk and post-disaster community recovery.

1.2. Purpose and Value

The stated purpose of the HMA ESWG is to increase engagement and transparency with non-federal partners in hazard mitigation, including states, local communities and jurisdictions, tribal nations, and territories (SLTT).

Working towards this purpose, the HMA ESWG will provide a venue to open the channels of communication between Federal staff and SLTT stakeholders, gather the perspective and insight into mitigation and/or program issues from the SLTT perspective, and increase transparency in HMA goals, program priorities, and policy development.

2. Primary Functions

The primary functions of the ESWG include the following:

- Operate as a working body that acts as a bridge between Federal staff and SLTT stakeholders, by providing insight and external perspective on HMA priorities, issues, and program resources;
- Support FEMA as it streamlines and strengthens HMA program delivery overall;
- Provide appropriate customer service to external stakeholders;
- Facilitate effective and expedient pre-disaster mitigation planning and post-disaster mitigation implementation;
- Delve more deeply into issues identified during the Hazard Mitigation Stakeholder Workshop and HMA Café, to ensure we are providing a consistent experience for external stakeholders;
- Bring unique perspectives on HMA communications, and offer insight into or help craft communication related resources;
- Act as the points of contact for other non-federal stakeholders; and,
- Participate as a key partner in future efforts from HMA Headquarters (HQ) on surveys and outreach to SLTT stakeholders.

3. Context

Over the last year (i.e., 2016) within FEMA's HMA Division, strategic and intentional engagement with stakeholders has grown as an area of interest for FEMA leadership and staff, as well as HMA stakeholders. Each group has expressed a strong interest in improving stakeholder engagement and communication.

This group, the HMA External Stakeholder Working Group is one of the mechanisms being used to shift HMA towards a stronger, better positioned, more organized, and more informed future state. Building on the momentum and continued energy surrounding stakeholder engagement, HMA leadership articulated that this effort coincides with other, broader elements of continuous program improvement within HMA. Governance

4. Leadership (FEMA HQ)

The ESWG leadership includes two roles from FEMA HQ: Executive Sponsor and Chair.

- **ESWG Executive Sponsors** include the HMA Division Director, the Assistant Administrator for Mitigation, and the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Mitigation.
- **ESWG Chair** role will be filled by a FEMA HQ, HMA Branch Chief or designee, in consultation with HMA leadership.

5. Membership

ESWG members provide valuable input, feedback, and insight into HMA resources to support HMA as it delivers robust, responsive programs that help stakeholders mitigate the loss of life or property due to natural hazards.

5.1. Composition

ESWG membership includes state, local, tribal, territorial, and Federal government representatives. The ESWG consists of the twelve (12) members outlined in sections 5.2 and 5.3.

5.2. Federal Representation

The primary Federal entities represented on the ESWG include:

- **FEMA HMA HQ Representative and Chair:** There is one (1) FEMA HQ, HMA Branch Chief or designee, representative. This member is also be the ESWG Chair.
- **FEMA HMA Regional Representatives:** There are two (2) FEMA HMA Regional representatives. The two Regional member positions are filled via the competitive application process.

5.3. State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial (SLTT) Representation

Representation for state, local, tribal nation, and territorial stakeholders on the ESWG includes:

- **State or Territorial Representatives:** There are three (3) members who are HMA stakeholders at the state or territorial level currently working in a role that directly relates to HMA programs.
- **Local/regional Representatives:** There are three (3) members who are HMA stakeholders at the local or regional level currently working in a role that directly relates to HMA programs. Note that local/regional representatives could include representatives from either single-jurisdiction bodies or multi-jurisdictional bodies (e.g., counties, regional planning commissions, council of governments).
- **Tribal Representatives:** There are three (3) members who are HMA stakeholders at the tribal nation level currently working in a role that directly relates to Hazard Mitigation Assistance programs.

5.4. Selection

The ESWG member selection process is competitive and balances diverse perspectives on a number of dimensions, including but not limited to:

- Community type,
- Geographic area represented, and
- Level of experience with HMA programs.

Active ESWG members will contribute to future membership selections.

5.5. Service Periods

- The ESWG will establish rotating service periods to ensure continuity of work and to manage the transfer of institutional knowledge from year to year.
- Each ESWG service period will last 2 calendar years, with detailed start and end dates to be determined by active ESWG members and the ESWG Chair.
- Consecutive service periods may be possible and are decided at the discretion of the ESWG Chair, in consultation with active ESWG members.
- If an ESWG member leaves the ESWG mid-term, the ESWG Chair will confer with active ESWG members and determine an appropriate course of action.

5.6. Subject Matter Experts

While not ESWG members, other Federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial staff with relevant subject matter expertise may attend and participate in ESWG meetings on an ad-hoc basis when appropriate. These subject matter experts may be particularly helpful when the ESWG addresses items that fall outside the purview of the ESWG or HMA more broadly. For example, it could be helpful for FEMA Office of Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) staff to attend when discussing EHP review processes. Involvement of other Federal staff is at the discretion of the ESWG Chair.

6. Work Streams

Based upon available resources, the ESWG may establish (A) standing, semi-permanent works streams or (B) ad-hoc work teams, as needed. All work streams adhere to a set of standards:

- Each work stream will have both a Lead (must be an ESWG member) and a Deputy (not required to be an ESWG member) to manage and guide work stream activities. The purpose of having two leaders identified for each work stream is to provide sufficient coverage and support.
- Work streams may carry out liaison-type efforts or conduct targeted research that guides development and dissemination of meaningful HMA communications products and stakeholder engagement strategies.
- Each work stream will regularly report to and inform the ESWG of actions it has taken and major developments.

7. Work & Meetings

7.1. ESWG Work Plan

Each year, the ESWG will select annual goals to pursue and will develop a work plan to meet said goals. Once the goals and work plan have been set, they may be used to guide the agenda and discussion of ESWG Quarterly Meetings.

7.2. ESWG Quarterly Meetings

The ESWG Chair will convene a meeting of the full ESWG on a regular basis (i.e., roughly once per quarter) as needed to discuss progress on HMA ESWG activities and promote decision making among the group.

- Agendas will reflect input from ESWG members, SLTT representatives, relevant HMA stakeholders, and other sources as applicable (e.g., annual ESWG Work Plan, input from the HMA Café).
- HMA ESWG members are expected to attend and participate in meetings and complete assignments according to the agreed-upon work plan.
- HMA ESWG members will serve as a liaison with the wider community of external stakeholders, ensuring stakeholder perspectives are represented in work products and decision making.

8. Roles & Responsibilities

8.1. Executive Sponsors

Though not ESWG Members per se, Executive Sponsors may be responsible for:

- Championing HMA ESWG by sharing messages and promoting accountability;
- Addressing escalations of critical risks, issues, and schedule conflicts;
- Making key decisions, as necessary; and,
- Attending and participating in HMA ESWG and status reporting meetings as appropriate.

8.2. ESWG Members

Member representatives will be responsible for:

- Attending and participating in ESWG meetings, with one meeting per quarter (two virtual meetings and two in-person meetings each year);
- Note that two missed meetings leads to a probation period, during which the ESWG Chair engages the member in question in a conversation (1) to inform them of their probationary status, (2) to explore strategies to help said member re-engage with ESWG meetings, and (3) to communicate that another ESWG meeting absence may lead to dismissal from ESWG membership.
- Providing insight and external perspective on HMA priorities, issues, and program resources;
- Bringing a unique perspective on HMA communications and offering insight into or help craft communications-related resources, as needed;
- Acting as points of contact for other external stakeholders;
- Supporting development of HMA ESWG work plan and schedule;
- Monitoring agreed upon actions coordinated by the ESWG by being responsible for following up with relevant stakeholders or executing relevant tasks;

- Leading sub-committees/work teams focused on specific topics in between HMA ESWG meetings, as needed; and,
- Seeking consensus on HMA stakeholder engagement-related issues.

8.3. ESWG Chair

The Chair will be responsible for:

- Championing HMA ESWG by developing and sharing messages with stakeholders and liaising with HMA and Mitigation Directorate leadership;
- Overseeing development of HMA ESWG approach and work plan;
- Convening, attending, participating in, and leading HMA ESWG working meetings;
- Monitoring action items, risks, issues, and decisions;
- Escalating critical and unresolved risks and issues to Executive Sponsor(s)
- Providing clarity when information shared with the ESWG is confidential or for official use only – and should not be shared with non-ESWG staff; and,
- Contributing to HMA ESWG work products.

8.4. HMA Grants Policy Staff and Contract Support

In support of the ESWG, HMA Grants Policy contract support will be responsible for:

- Providing meeting design, planning, and facilitation support for HMA ESWG meetings, as needed;
- Documenting meeting outcomes and action items;
- Supporting development of HMA ESWG approach and schedule; and,
- Offering best practices on stakeholder engagement and communication approaches, strategies, tools, and tactics.

8.5. Other Federal Staff

Though not ESWG members, other Federal staff may be responsible for:

- Participating on ad-hoc basis as needed (e.g., FEMA Office of Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation staff will attend when discussing EHP review processes).

8.6. Subject Matter Experts

Though not ESWG members, other stakeholders or subject matter experts may be responsible for:

- Participating on ad-hoc basis as needed (e.g., a non-member local representative has a project that exemplifies an issue or success story).

9. Funding

Note that funds for travel to in-person ESWG meetings will be provided by FEMA Headquarters.

10. References

The documents listed below are available as a means of reference:

- [Fiscal Year 2015 Hazard Mitigation Assistance Guidance and Addendum](#) (*for major disasters declared on or after February 27, 2015*)
- [2018 – 2022 FEMA Strategic Plan](#)
- [Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018](#)
- [National Mitigation Framework](#)
- [National Disaster Recovery Framework](#)
- [Tribal Multi-Hazard Mitigation Planning Guidance](#)
- [Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018](#)
- [Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, PL 100-707](#)

The following mission statements are included for general reference:

- DHS mission statement: “With honor and integrity, we will safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values.”
- FEMA mission statement: “FEMA’s mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from and mitigate all hazards.”

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