

Report on Status of FEMA's Post Disaster Recovery Curriculum for Local Officials

Submitted by Gina Wightman

FEMA's Recovery Directorate conducted a Recovery Curriculum Development Workshop on August 24, 2018. The participant list is promised but has not yet been provided. In the meantime, I would estimate around 50 participants, including numerous federal staff (majority FEMA but also USDA, EPA, and HUD), a few state and local governments, and a significant number of non-governmental organizations. All of the following organizations were invited, and most were represented: ASFPM, ICMA, NACo, GFOA, APA, NGA, COSCDA, NADO, NCSA, CSG, COF, ASMI, Pennington Family Foundation, and Purdue University.

During introductions we were able to briefly describe our organization's existing training that can be useful for local officials and stakeholders during recovery. I provided an overview of the DRR Ambassador Curriculum, emphasizing its focus on the same audience, and on the expertise of the NHMA volunteers involved in its development. (Prior to the workshop I had already sent the curriculum overview to Michael Gumpert, the lead for the project.) After the introductions we received a briefing from the City Manager of Lyons, CO, about their horrific flood disaster and subsequent recovery needs, and a national perspective on local recovery from Beth Kellar of ICMA. The briefings provided context for the focus group activities that consumed the remainder of the Workshop. The activities collected participants' thoughts on recovery milestones and key recovery decision points; and the critical knowledge, information, and education needed to make key recovery decisions. The direction for the recovery curriculum appears to be to develop (or revise existing) FEMA foundational training for each phase of recovery, and then to create a compendium of existing training that may or may not need to be modified to provide knowledge and/or skills in specialized recovery topics. Many of NHMA's modules are relevant for this purpose. I had a conversation with Matt Campbell at the conclusion about resources, if needed, for modifying existing DRR modules into recovery-specific versions, and he said that perhaps we can get the assistance of FEMA Mitigation in providing case studies for that purpose.

The next phase of the recovery curriculum development effort will involve workshop(s) to create a syllabus and timeline. This work is expected to occur in December 2018.