

**Vermont DR-4720 July 2023 Severe Flooding
Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)
Funding Announcement**

Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) is pleased to announce the availability of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds for Presidential Declaration: DR-4720 Severe Flooding.

FEDERAL FUNDS AVAILABLE:	up to \$64,170,000 (for projects) * up to \$4,830,000 (for planning)
ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES:	Implementing Hazard Mitigation Projects and Hazard Mitigation Planning Related Activities
DATE ANNOUNCED:	February 15, 2024
APPLICATION PERIOD:	Opening: 12:00 AM EST February 15, 2024 Closing: 11:59 PM EST June 21, 2024
APPLICATION DEADLINE:	All Pre-Applications must be received by 11:59 PM EST June 21, 2024.
WHERE TO SUBMIT:	dps.hazardmitigation@vermont.gov
WHAT TO SUBMIT:	Pre-Application Form: vem.vermont.gov/funding/mitigation
APPLICATION PROCEDURE:	VEM will be accepting Pre-Application Forms on a rolling basis throughout the Application Period up to the Application Deadline. Pre-Applications will be evaluated for HMGP eligibility, feasibility, and cost-effectiveness. Projects found to meet these requirements will then be invited to apply, provided technical assistance (if requested), and submitted to FEMA once completed, by late 2024.

VEM staff are available upon request to provide technical assistance at any point in the process and encourage subapplicants to submit a Pre-Application Form as soon as possible to allow time for initial review.

Technical Assistance is available at: dps.hazardmitigation@vermont.gov.

HMGP funding will be available statewide and does not need to be related to damages from the July 2023 flood. All municipalities, as well as other governing entities, are eligible for this funding opportunity. There is no federal funding cap associated with this grant opportunity.

*Total funding available is an estimate and is anticipated to increase. Visit: vem.vermont.gov/funding/mitigation for the most up to date information.

What is the HMGP?

After a Presidential declaration, Vermont receives HMGP funds to administer grant programs that support mitigation planning and long-term hazard mitigation measures that enhance the State's resilience posture, avoid loss of life, and reduce damages to improved property.

- **The State of Vermont**, acting through VEM, is the applicant for FEMA's HMGP.
- **Eligible subapplicants** include local governments (to include State-recognized Indian Tribes and authorized Indian Tribal organizations), state agencies, and certain Private Non-Profits (PNPs) that perform a government-like function. Eligible subapplicants under FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) program are also eligible subapplicants under HMGP.
- **Ineligible subapplicants** for HMGP assistance include individuals and businesses; however, eligible subapplicants may apply on their behalf.
- **FEMA's planning requirement** must be met by all subapplicants at the time of project approval. A FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) is required. More information is available here: vem.vermont.gov/plans/LHMP.
- **HMGP funded projects must be cost-effective** through verification that future benefits (losses avoided) are equal to or greater than the project's cost (see more on this below). This must be shown through a Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA). More information here: vem.vermont.gov/funding/mitigation/bca.
- **HMGP provides up to 75%** reimbursement of eligible costs. The remaining 25% non-federal match will be the responsibility of the subapplicant; however, additional resources may be identified through the application process, including the potential for State-funded match for certain subapplications. The non-federal cost share may consist of cash, donated or in-kind services, materials, or any combination thereof. While most Federal funds cannot be used for the non-federal match, there are some exceptions.¹
- **Pre-award costs:** any funding expended after July 14, 2023, to develop sub-applications, e.g., engineering work for conceptual designs or Benefit-Cost Analyses (BCAs), may be eligible for FEMA funding under a sub-grant application to implement the project. Funding will need to be included in the submitted budget with actual cost values as a pre-award cost.
- **Information about HMGP** and all program requirements are available in FEMA's [Hazard Mitigation Assistance \(HMA\) Unified Guidance and Addendum \(2023\)](#).

State Priorities for Project Grants

HMGP allows the State of Vermont to establish priorities for each event. The State priorities for DR-4720 target residential projects, such as Buyouts and Structural Elevations, as well as natural resource projects that give the river space, including floodplain restoration activities. Priority will be given to frontline and disadvantaged communities and activities that enhance resilience by promoting strategies and activities identified in the 2023 Vermont State Hazard Mitigation Plan: Vermont Stronger: vem.vermont.gov/plans/SHMP.

¹ Please consult FEMA's cost share guide (https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-08/fema_hma_cost-share-guide.pdf) for more information.

To be eligible for HMGP funding, FEMA requires that certain projects be proven cost-effective using FEMA's Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) Toolkit.² If required, a formal BCA achieving a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 1.0 or greater (with supporting documentation) must be provided. VEM may provide technical assistance to complete the BCA; however, *supporting documentation* to demonstrate that a BCR of 1.0 or greater is achievable will be required during the application process. Supporting documentation can include, but is not limited to, documentation of project costs, maintenance costs, historical damages (e.g., detailed attestation by a community official, copies of invoices, Project Worksheets (PWs) from FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) program), or likelihood of future damages (including the population impacted), project useful life, and level of protection for the project solution. Subapplicants with questions about BCA and cost-effectiveness should reach out to VEM for assistance. Upon review, VEM will coordinate with the subapplicant to address any gaps in documentation for the BCA.

Following application development, complete and eligible applications will be considered based on project types identified below:

Eligible Project Types:

- Flood-vulnerable buyout and structural elevation projects, landslide-vulnerable buyouts, such as:
 - Buyouts of developed properties that are within Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) and/or with repeat past damage.
 - Structural elevation, structural mitigation reconstruction, or structural relocation projects within the SFHA and/or with repeat past damage.
 - Properties at risk of landslide may also be eligible with a letter from the State Geologist clarifying that they are at imminent risk of failure (i.e., within the next five years).
- Natural resource projects, such as:
 - Restoring natural floodplain access to improve ecological floodplain function.
 - Dam removal projects that have the benefit of reducing flood risk.
 - Natural infrastructure and nature-based solutions for flood storage, flood protection, or improved floodplain and river functions.
 - Green infrastructure and low-impact development to manage stormwater and reduce future flooding.
- Infrastructure projects, such as:
 - Upsizing undersized infrastructure, such as bridges and culverts.
 - Other drainage improvements, flood storage, or localized flood risk reduction for areas with a history of damages or projected damages.
 - Road relocation, elevation, soil stabilization, or other resilience improvements to roadways with repeated past damage or imminent risk of damages.
 - Dry or wet floodproofing of municipal or commercial buildings.
 - Soil stabilization against landslide hazards that threaten structures (e.g., critical facilities, utilities, non-residential facilities, residences).
- Utility resilience projects, such as:
 - Burying utilities or fortifying lines or poles.

² Visit FEMA's Benefit Cost Analysis website for more information: <https://www.fema.gov/grants/guidance-tools/benefit-cost-analysis>

- Generators and associated components for utilities (e.g., drinking water, wastewater, telecom) or other critical facilities (e.g., fire station, police station, hospital, medical facility, emergency operations center).
- Net-zero energy projects, such as: solar microgrids, heat pumps, certified high-performance appliances and passive heating or cooling.
- Non-traditional projects (sometimes referred to as 5% Initiative), such as:
 - Public warning systems for flood (or other) risk.
 - Public awareness or education campaigns about mitigation.
 - Evaluation of model building codes for future adoption.
 - Hazard identification or mapping for the implementation of mitigation activities.
 - Generators for non-traditional facilities that are difficult to evaluate for cost-effectiveness.
- Planning activities such as:
 - Updates or development of Local Hazard Mitigation Plans (LHMPs) or activities that strengthen LHMPs or assist with their integration into other planning mechanisms.
 - Statewide planning activities or pilot projects that are in alignment with the 2023 Vermont State Hazard Mitigation Plan: Vermont Stronger.

Additional State-specific information on eligible project types is available: vem.vermont.gov/disaster-based-funding.

Please also see FEMA's [Hazard Mitigation Assistance \(HMA\) Unified Guidance and Addendum \(2023\)](#) for additional information.

Justice40 Initiative:

In accordance with the guiding principle of promoting equity and in implementing the Justice40 Initiative, the HMGP program is prioritizing assistance that benefits disadvantaged communities as referenced in [Presidential Executive Order 14008](#). A disadvantaged community may be characterized by variables including, but not limited to: Low income; high and/or persistent poverty; high unemployment and underemployment; racial and ethnic segregation, particularly where the segregation stems from discrimination by government entities; linguistic isolation; high housing cost burden and substandard housing; distressed neighborhoods; high transportation cost burden and/or low transportation access; disproportionate environmental stressor burden and high cumulative impacts; limited water and sanitation access and affordability; disproportionate impacts from climate; high energy cost burden and low energy access; jobs lost through the energy transition; access to health care; and all geographic areas within Tribal jurisdictions.

As a condition of receiving this funding, Recipients and Subrecipients must focus the use of FEMA funding on the highest-risk communities and underserved populations as determined by established measures of social and economic disadvantage using the [CDCs Social Vulnerability Index \(SVI\)](#). The US Census Bureau also contains additional Select Social, Economic and Housing Characteristic data that may be used to support high-risk criteria.

How to Apply

Online: Guidance Documents, including the Pre-Application Form, can be found on VEM's website at: vem.vermont.gov/funding/mitigation.

For municipalities interested in pursuing **Property Buyout** or **Structural Elevation** projects for private residences, please reach out directly to dps.hazardmitigation@vermont.gov. You **do NOT** need to fill out the Pre-Application Form, but we will need to hear from you by the same deadline of 11:59 PM EST **Friday, June 21, 2024**.

Property buyout and structural elevation projects that have contacted VEM and have an application in process by **Friday, March 29**, will receive priority.

For any of the other project types, please complete the Pre-Application Form, which can be found here: vem.vermont.gov/funding/mitigation.

The Pre-Application Form will be accepted through the above link until 11:59 PM EST June 21, 2024.

Technical Assistance and Questions

Please submit any requests for technical assistance and/or questions to: dps.hazardmitigation@vermont.gov.

To disseminate program information to the widest possible audience, VEM places program information on its website and asks that Local Emergency Managers, Regional Planning Commissions, and other recipients of this notice forward the information to interested eligible subapplicants. For more information, please visit vem.vermont.gov/funding/mitigation.