



FEMA



# Does Your Jurisdiction Need Assistance with Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Development?

The following resources are available for helping answer questions regarding how to select assistance with developing a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

<http://www.planning.org/consultants/choosing/part1.htm>

<http://www.planning.org/consultants/choosing/>

<http://www.lpa.state.mn.us/pdf/Choosingconsultant.pdf>

Developing the mitigation plan will require leadership from the local jurisdiction(s) but you also may need or want to have outside assistance with implementing the planning process and writing the plan document. Although leading the mitigation planning process does not require formal training in planning, sometimes it is helpful to hire expertise to assist you in all or portions of the planning process. You may need assistance if:

- You wish to have targeted assistance in identifying hazards, risks, and vulnerabilities, and in performing loss estimates;
- You feel you need an outside facilitator to manage public meetings or to assist in goal setting or prioritizing; or
- No one in the community feels comfortable leading the planning process, or has the time to devote to it.

There are several different options when considering outside assistance for plan development. In addition to private consultants, consider contracting with your regional planning agency, or working with a local university with planning or emergency management degree programs. Before enlisting outside assistance from any of these source, you must consider the scope of work, the extent of the assistance to be provided, and how those involved will interact with the lay planners and other members of the local planning team.

Many communities hire outside consultants to assist them in the coordination, facilitation, and implementation of the mitigation planning

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process. If your community decides to hire a consultant to assist with your mitigation plan, consider looking for a planner that:

- Understands that each community has unique demographic, geographic, and political considerations that need to be taken into account when creating a fully integrated mitigation plan.
- Understands all pertinent regulations, laws, and guidance and considerations as they apply to the mitigation plan (e.g., requirements of DMA 2000, state and local ordinances, and NFIP requirements).
- Recognizes that community input and public participation are keys to any successful mitigation plan.
- Has experience with developing risk assessments and with mitigation action implementation.
- Is familiar with emergency management and multi-hazard mitigation concepts.
- Will provide you with the names and phone numbers of past clients.

If your community decides to hire a private contractor to assist with development of the plan, keep in mind the following important considerations:

- Require that the contractor's final deliverable be a **FEMA-approved** hazard mitigation plan. The contractor should make themselves available to assist with the plan review and approval process and the local adoption process; however,
- Be sure to include language in the contract that the jurisdiction will review draft sections of the plan during development so the final plan is not the first opportunity to see the written document.
- The **project timeline** is very important. Is the contractor's proposed timeline based on the community's meeting schedule, staff availability and expiration of the current plan? Also, does the timeline take into account time for the State and FEMA to review the plan, and to make any revisions if necessary?
- Consult with the State Hazard Mitigation Officer to discuss what is actually required for a FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan. For example, it may not be necessary to conduct robust data entry for a sophisticated hazards analysis (that costs more than the community has to invest) when a more simple narrative description of hazards (that costs less to produce) will be sufficient.

- Ask the contractor to provide samples of other FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plans that they have developed.
- Before requesting proposals from contractors, determine what professional skills will be provided by the community staff. For example, what services can be provided in-house, or in-kind if matching a Federal grant?
- When a county/parish/township includes a local **federally-recognized tribe** in their HMP and contracts out their plan to a consultant, they must include the provisions for 44 CFR 201.7 (per (a)(3)), as well. All provisions for both regulations should be completed at the same time so the plan has only one review cycle with FEMA. There are only a few things that tribes need to have in addition to 201.6:

To receive reduced cost share for FMA and SRL programs they must comply with: (a)(2)  
(c)(2)(ii)(D) Cultural and sacred sites  
(c)(3)(iv) Pre- and post-disaster hazard management policies, programs and capabilities and evaluation of laws, etc.  
(c)(3)(v) Current and potential sources of funding for mitigation activities (which is also in 201.6)  
(c)(3)(vi) Repetitive Loss (for applicants seeking grantee status); and,  
(c)(6) Assurances in adoption language