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Comment Submitted by Anonymous

Posted by the **Federal Emergency Management Agency** on May 12, 2025

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Challenges with the Grant Application Process:
We experienced a significantly long and drawn-out application process, which we believe took approximately three years. During this time, our initial application was passed over in favor of a county that, to our understanding, had not been included in a state disaster declaration. This decision was made without explanation, requiring us to subsequently update our application and re-apply.
Furthermore, the extended duration of the application process led to an increase in the cost quoted by our prospective contractor. This created an unforeseen financial challenge as the originally allocated funding might not have fully covered the updated contractor fees.

Importance of Consistent Federal Support for Local Mitigation Efforts:
Hazard mitigation is a critical function at the local level, directly impacting the safety and resilience of our communities. I believe that consistent and reliable federal funding for HMP development and implementation is essential, regardless of potential variations in priorities or values between state and federal levels. Local jurisdictions should not face financial disadvantages in pursuing hazard mitigation planning due to such discrepancies, as the need to understand and reduce local risks remains constant.


Importance of Contractor Funding for Smaller Jurisdictions:
We strongly believe it is crucial for FEMA to continue providing funding specifically for local jurisdictions to hire qualified contractors to develop their HMPs. Many smaller jurisdictions, often operating with only one emergency management personnel or do not have an emergency management agency and the position is "other duties as assigned", simply do not have the capacity to undertake the complex task of writing these plans in-house. These personnel are simultaneously managing a multitude of other critical responsibilities. Funding for contractors is not just helpful; it is a vital necessity for these communities to effectively develop comprehensive and compliant HMPs.

Clarity of HMP Guidance and Need for Examples:
We appreciate that the existing guidance for writing an HMP plan is generally clear. However, to further enhance the process, we would greatly benefit from access to more examples of complete HMP plans or specific sections that FEMA considers exemplary. This would provide valuable insights into FEMA's expectations and help local jurisdictions develop more robust and effective plans. With recent shifts in the inclusion of climate change impacts and needs of vulnerable populations, we thought more examples of each of these sections would be helpful.

Value of Hazard Mitigation Planning and Sustained Federal Support:
We want to emphasize that HMPs are invaluable tools for local jurisdictions. They provide a crucial framework for understanding our specific disaster risks and for developing feasible and effective risk reduction measures. Ensuring that the development and maintenance of these plans remain federally grant-funded, thereby keeping the cost low for communities, is paramount. This continued support is key to ensuring that disaster risks to our populations and critical assets are continuously assessed and strategically reduced to the greatest extent possible.

Data Challenges in Smaller Jurisdictions:
Finally, we have observed that some smaller jurisdictions face challenges in accessing comprehensive data beyond local records when utilizing tools like RAPT and the National Risk Index (NRI). While these are valuable resources, they may benefit from updates to improve accuracy and granularity at the local level. In our experience, our specific area within the state is sometimes conflated with larger, geographically distinct regions, which can impact the relevance of the data provided.

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