

Rebuild Florida CDBG-Mitigation General Infrastructure Program

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Hello everyone, my name is Lecia Behenna and I serve as the Bureau Chief for Business Economic Recovery, in the Office of Long-Term Resiliency. Welcome to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's (DEO) Rebuild Florida Mitigation General Infrastructure Program for Michael-Impacted Communities presentation.

Today's presentation will provide an overview of this grant funding opportunity including eligibility and application requirements, scoring criteria and methods for getting more information.

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Our goals for today's webinar are to explain the program objectives and outline how communities can apply for this transformative mitigation funding. We will begin with a description of DEO's Office of Long-Term Resiliency, which you may hear me refer to as OLTR, and follow with a brief overview of general mitigation requirements. We will then cover program objectives, eligible activities and costs, the application process, and the scoring criteria that will be used to evaluate submitted applications.

If you have questions that arise during the presentation, please type them in the question box and we will answer them at the end of the presentation as time allows.

As a point of information, the slides, the transcript, and a recording of today's webinar will be made available on the Rebuild Florida Mitigation website. At the end of today's program, we will also provide information on requesting and receiving further technical assistance moving forward.

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DEO is a state partner of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development or HUD. We administer HUD grant programs including Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). DEO's Office of Long-Term Resiliency oversees both CDBG-Disaster Recovery and Mitigation programs. Disaster recovery funds must have a direct tie-back to specific storms. (Most recently for Florida: Hurricanes Hermine, Matthew, Irma, Michael, and Sally.) Mitigation grants, however, do *not* require a storm tie-back but instead considers projects that will reduce risk and losses from future disasters in areas of the state identified as "most-impacted and distressed (MID)."

To date, DEO, with HUD funding, has provided mitigation programs for: rebuilding critical infrastructure; general planning programs; and two rounds of general infrastructure projects in areas of the state that were impacted by storms in 2016 and 2017.

Funding for this 10-county opportunity is a result of a HUD-approved substantial amendment to the state's original 2020 Mitigation Action Plan that added the 2018 hurricane (Michael) to its scope.

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In compliance with HUD's definition of mitigation, proposed activities should increase resilience by lessening the impact of future disasters. This would reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of loss of life, injury, damage to and loss of property, and suffering and hardship.

Proposed projects should mitigate against the hazards identified in the State Action Plan. These are flooding, tropical cyclones, severe storms, wildfires, and coastal erosion.

Please note that applications should not be for disaster recovery projects or for repairs and maintenance of existing facilities and infrastructure (that should have been undergoing regular maintenance). Instead, we are looking for enhancements to infrastructure for the purpose of increasing disaster resilience.

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In the Spring of 2018, HUD announced that Florida would receive \$633 million in Mitigation funding.

Initially 51 counties impacted by 2016 and 2017 storms were eligible for this mitigation funding. DEO launched the Critical Facility Hardening Program in April of 2020, and the General Planning Support Program in May of the same year. The first round of the Mitigation General Infrastructure Program opened in June of 2020; the second round was opened in June 2021.

The opportunity we are discussing today is exclusively for Hurricane Michael-impacted counties.

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The 10 counties eligible for this funding are identified in this slide. The nine shaded in dark blue are HUD-designated MIDs; the light blue one (Holmes) is a state-designated MID.

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Program requirements are those to which the State of Florida (DEO) must adhere. Details on all *project* requirements are available in the General Infrastructure Program Guidelines for Michael-Impacted Communities available on the Rebuild Florida Mitigation website.

The National Objective requirement is mandatory. HUD places a strong focus on serving Low to Moderate Income (LMI) persons and communities. Therefore, a project's LMI percentage is always the highest-ranking section of a mitigation program's scoring rubric. The LMI area of benefit must be 50 percent or higher. If an applicant falls short of the 50 percent, they must also submit an Urgent Need justification.

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As with previous mitigation programs, DEO will use a subrecipient model to administer the grant funds to eligible applicants. Subrecipients will be selected through a competitive application process.

Each eligible applicant may submit up to five applications. The minimum request per application is \$500,000; the maximum is \$42,223,400.

Eligible applicants are counties and municipalities in the designated MID areas as well as state agencies. Non-profits and regional planning councils that partner with local governments may also apply. Applications must address the hazard risks identified in the State Action Plan and will be required to identify the community lifelines the project(s) will protect.

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Proposals must be in conformance with the state of Florida's Mitigation Action Plan and have a beneficial impact on the designated disaster area. They must also solve a problem independently or constitute a portion of a solution with assurance that the project, as a whole, will be completed. All projects must substantially reduce future risks and be deemed cost effective.

Reference Section 2.5 in the Program Guidelines for more examples and information.

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Projects must clearly increase community resilience.

They might involve restoration of critical infrastructure renourishment of protective coastal dune systems and state beaches, building or fortifying buildings that are essential to the health, safety and welfare of a community, rehabilitation or construction of stormwater management systems, and road repair improvement and bridge strengthening.

This is not an exhaustive list, but rather just ideas to get you started as you think through potential eligible projects that will positively impact your communities.

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Eligible costs include but are not limited to materials and supplies related to Mitigation General Infrastructure Program activities, construction and design costs, support services, participant outreach, program management and program administration.

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Ineligible activities include funding for buildings used primarily for the conduct of government business, Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) or emergency response services, dam and levee enlargements, assistance to private utilities, and political or lobbying activities.

Mitigation funds cannot be used to supplant funds available from another source nor can they be used for duplicating benefits. Community Development Block Grant-Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) funds are considered funds of last resort.

There are some rare exceptions to ineligibility of buildings used for the general conduct of government. If a facility functions as a shelter, a Food Distribution Center, or a Disaster Recovery Center as identified in your Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), it *might* be eligible for funding under this program.

Applicants should refer to Section 5.1 in the Program Guidelines for more information about ineligible activities and costs. There are also sections in Part 5 pertaining specifically to supplanting funds and duplication of benefits.

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Ineligible costs include but are not limited to: material or supply costs unrelated to Mitigation General Infrastructure Program activities, furnishings and personal property, payments to entities which are not in compliance with CDBG assistance, and operating and maintenance expenses.

Refer to Program Guidelines for the full list of costs that are considered ineligible pursuant to federal laws or regulations.

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The Program Guidelines will answer most questions regarding this program, including the application and scoring process.

Please preview the entire application before you begin entering your responses. Use the checklist and be sure to follow the instructions provided in the Program Guidelines, Appendix A.

Be sure to justify budget requests in your application. If, for example, you enter \$1,000,000 and simply label it “construction costs,” the program will consider this inadequate. Your budget request should include an explanation of how prices were calculated and what the requested amount will cover.

Please note, Applications are due by 5:00p.m. Eastern Time, on Friday, June 24.

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To request an application link, complete the application registration form, which is found on the Mitigation program webpage. Use the registration form to provide basic contact information and indicate how many applications you intend to submit. For example, if you want to submit three applications, you must register three times to receive three unique links.

Once registered, you will be emailed an individualized application link. The application will be available from the CDBG-MIT website until June 24, 2022. Please note that in some areas of the application you cannot enter an answer if the previous question isn't answered.

When your application has been successfully submitted, a confirmation email will be sent to the email address that you provided. Due to the influx of applications in the final days leading to the deadline, the acknowledgement receipt of your submissions may take several hours.

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DEO will apply a two-phase process to review and score applications.

During the Phase 1 Scoring Evaluation, the program will check that the following threshold compliance criteria have been met: the application has been signed, the applicant is an eligible entity in one of the Hurricane Michael HUD-designated or State-designated MIDs, the LMI and/or Urgent Need sections have been completed, and there is evidence of meeting the public notice requirements. If the threshold requirements are not met, the application will not progress to Phase 2 for scoring.

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Applications that progress to Phase 2 are scored by a team that independently reviews the narrative answers and templates provided in response to the Scoring Rubric requirements. The total points that each scorer awards for an application's Project Description, Community Value, Capacity Plan, Implementation Plan, and Budget are added together to get that reviewer's score on the subjective sections.

The five Non-Subjective point categories have values that are pre-set. For example: a State MID gets 5 points; a HUD MID gets 10.

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We are dedicating the remainder of our time today to answer the questions you have submitted. Priority will be given to questions that are not project-specific.

Unanswered questions and new questions can be submitted to the Mitigation email address (CDBG-MIT@DEO.MyFlorida.com) at any time. We will also be updating the Frequently Asked Questions on our website in the near future.

As a reminder, the slides along with a transcript and recording of today's presentation, will be made available on the Mitigation program webpage.

In closing and on behalf of our entire team, we look forward to seeing your project applications and ultimately working together to make a meaningful difference in improving disaster resiliency in your communities.