

# Collaborating Your Way to Coastal Resilience

## Tips for Creating Partnerships with FEMA, NOAA, and State Emergency Programs

**A**long the coast, the population is growing, as is the risk from flooding and other natural hazards. State coastal management programs and national estuarine research reserves have many initiatives dedicated to making communities safer and more resilient. Joining forces with other organizations with similar goals is a powerful way to strengthen these efforts.

Coastal management programs and research reserves can use the information found here to spark ideas regarding partnership opportunities that support coastal resilience, risk reduction, and storm preparedness goals. Topics covered in this quick reference include the following.

### People to Know, Resources to Use

- FEMA
- State hazard mitigation staff
- NOAA Office for Coastal Management
- Digital Coast

### Partnership Opportunities

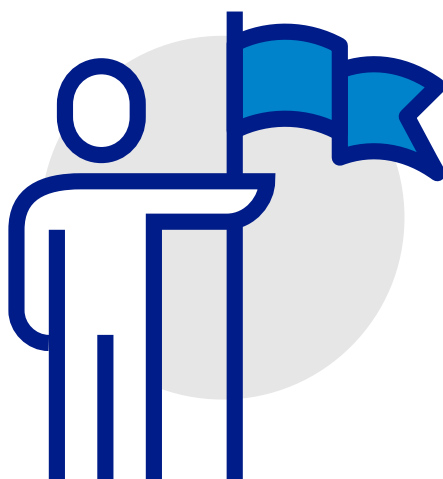
- Planning
- Funding
- Incentives
- Stakeholder engagement
- Training

This quick reference sheet is one of many resources available from NOAA's Digital Coast. Visit the Digital Coast Academy ([coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training](https://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training)) for additional quick reference materials, online and in person training courses, case studies, and more.

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**Office for Coastal Management**  
**Digital Coast**  
[coast.noaa.gov](https://coast.noaa.gov)





## People to Know, Resources to Use

**FEMA's Mitigation Division regional staff** – The responsibilities of these regional divisions include floodplain management and insurance, risk analysis and flood mapping, hazard mitigation planning, and funding assistance. Start by discovering what FEMA region your state is located in: [fema.gov/regional-contact-information](https://www.fema.gov/regional-contact-information).

**State hazard mitigation staff** – Building relationships here, before a disaster strikes, will increase your ability to coordinate resources and hit the ground running when time is of the essence. Start by identifying your state's emergency management agency: [fema.gov/emergency-management-agencies](https://www.fema.gov/emergency-management-agencies).

**NOAA's Office for Coastal Management regional staff** – This NOAA office provides support for regional collaboration and offers data, tools, training, and other relevant resources. The office can also help you locate the appropriate FEMA contacts. To learn more, contact the regional director in your region: [coast.noaa.gov/about/staff](https://www.coast.noaa.gov/about/staff).

**Digital Coast** – This website is an enabling platform developed for the coastal management community. It provides not only coastal data, but also the tools, training, and information needed to make these data truly useful. Content comes from many sources, all of which are vetted by NOAA. Visit the “topics” section on the front page, where users have easy access to the resources most used to address various topics, including adaptation strategies, natural Infrastructure, risk communication, and vulnerability assessments: [coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast](https://www.coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast).



# Partnership Opportunities

## PLANNING

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Many organizations are working toward similar goals. Aligning these efforts (including stakeholder engagement, data and resources, and various local and state planning initiatives) can save time and effort, limit confusion, and increase everyone's ability to advance coastal resilience.

### **Opportunity: Hazard Mitigation Plans**

Hazard mitigation plans are developed at state, tribal, and local levels. The hazard mitigation planning process helps communities think about risk and develop mitigation actions, making it easier to recover from future events. State, tribal, and local governments are eligible for non-emergency FEMA funding if they have FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plans.

Developing or updating a state or local hazard mitigation plan provides opportunities to align mitigation strategies with coastal adaptation planning efforts. Coastal management programs and reserves can support and expand stakeholder engagement, leverage data collection and inputs, and provide additional perspectives on risks, vulnerabilities, and strategies for reducing impacts from natural hazards and climate change. One place to start is by reviewing the state hazard mitigation plan, or a local plan, to see hazards of high concern and priorities for mitigation projects already identified. The plans are often publicly available online, or can be requested from state, county, or local agencies.

### **Key FEMA Resources**

- FEMA's hazard mitigation planning website – [fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-planning](https://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-planning)
- Mitigation planning fact sheets and resources – [fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-planning-resources](https://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-planning-resources)
- *Integrating Hazard Mitigation in Local Planning* (2013) – [fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/31372](https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/31372)
- *Mitigation Ideas* (2013) – [fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/30627](https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/30627)

### **FEMA Contacts**

To learn about aligning various planning processes, contact your **FEMA regional mitigation planner** in the Risk Analysis branch. Each regional FEMA Risk Analysis branch chief oversees the work of the planning, engineering, and outreach staff. The mitigation planner helps review and approve plans.

### **State Contacts**

To learn more about your state or local hazard mitigation plans, contact your **state hazard mitigation officer**. This person typically works in the state's emergency management agency and is an important contact for hazard mitigation planning. Contact information for every state's hazard mitigation officer can be found here: [fema.gov/state-hazard-mitigation-officers](https://www.fema.gov/state-hazard-mitigation-officers).

### **NOAA Contacts**

To learn how NOAA can support the alignment of hazard mitigation plans and other local and state plans, contact the **NOAA Office for Coastal Management regional director** in your region.



## FUNDING

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FEMA funding assistance exists to help communities plan and undertake the actions needed to increase their ability to withstand hazardous weather and impacts from climate change. These “blue sky” planning opportunities include support for pre-disaster resilience planning, climate adaptation actions, living shorelines, and green infrastructure projects.

### **Opportunity: Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program**

This FEMA program provides grant funding to state, tribal, and local governments for hazard plans and projects through the following:

- **Pre-disaster Mitigation Grant Program:** Awarded annually as a nationally competitive program to support hazard mitigation planning and project implementation for flooding, seismic, wildfire, and other natural hazards.
- **Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program:** Annual grants that support efforts that reduce flood risks to structures that are insured by the National Flood Insurance Program.
- **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program:** These grants are disaster-driven and fund long-term mitigation planning and mitigation projects after a disaster is declared.

Funding varies because these grants are dependent on congressional appropriations. Eligibility requires an approved hazard mitigation plan. FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Assistance branch oversees the grant process.

#### **Key FEMA Resources**

- Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant programs – [fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-assistance](https://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-assistance)
- Pre-disaster Mitigation Grant Program – [fema.gov/pre-disaster-mitigation-grant-program](https://www.fema.gov/pre-disaster-mitigation-grant-program)
- Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program – [fema.gov/flood-mitigation-assistance-grant-program](https://www.fema.gov/flood-mitigation-assistance-grant-program)
- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program – [fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-grant-program](https://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-grant-program)
- Hazard mitigation assistance brochures – [fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/107704](https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/107704)
- Sign up for hazard mitigation assistance updates and grant notifications – [service.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDHSFEMA/subscriber/new](https://service.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDHSFEMA/subscriber/new)

### **Opportunity: Cooperating Technical Partners Program**

This FEMA funding vehicle is for flood hazard mapping and related activities. The cooperative agreements can support joint priorities or objectives shared with a FEMA region.

#### **Key FEMA Resources**

- Cooperating Technical Partners Program – [fema.gov/cooperating-technical-partners-program](https://www.fema.gov/cooperating-technical-partners-program)
- Contact information for the program’s national and regional coordinators – [fema.gov/cooperating-technical-partners-program-key-contacts](https://www.fema.gov/cooperating-technical-partners-program-key-contacts)

#### **FEMA Contacts**

To learn about the various funding opportunities overall, contact your **FEMA Regional Hazard Mitigation Assistance branch chief** and the designated grants specialist. This branch manages the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Pre-disaster Mitigation Grant Program, and Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program.

#### **State Contacts**

Your **state hazard mitigation officer** and other state floodplain leaders can connect you to relevant planning-related funding opportunities and resources. To learn about specific funding availability in your state and how applications are selected and prioritized, contact your state hazard mitigation officer. The person in this position reviews applications developed and submitted by local jurisdictions, tribal governments, and state agencies for hazard mitigation assistance funding and in turn submits the applications to FEMA. When FEMA awards the funds, the state hazard mitigation officer administers the sub-awards to the successful applicants.

#### **NOAA Contacts**

To learn how NOAA can help identify funding opportunities, including NOAA grant programs, contact the **NOAA Office for Coastal Management regional director** in your region.



## INCENTIVES

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FEMA programs can provide incentives for local communities to engage in floodplain management, including using open space preservation and natural infrastructure for shoreline and flood protection.

### **Opportunity: Community Rating System**

FEMA's Community Rating System, a component of the National Flood Insurance Program, encourages community efforts to reduce flood risk with discounts on flood insurance premiums for policyholders. The Community Rating System uses credit to determine the amount of the insurance discount. A key way communities can earn these credits is by preserving floodplains through conservation of open space and implementation of land use policies that encourage development away from wetlands, dunes, and other naturally protective features.

Coastal management programs and reserves can work with local communities participating in FEMA's Community Rating System to identify opportunities to align and leverage coastal land use planning and policy efforts with floodplain management activities. Coastal management programs and research reserves can also help increase awareness of the Community Rating System in their communities.

#### **Key FEMA Resources**

- Community Rating System – [fema.gov/community-rating-system](https://www.fema.gov/community-rating-system)
- National Flood Insurance Program – [fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program](https://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program)

#### **Key NOAA Resource**

- How to Map Open Space for Community Rating System Credit – [coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/crs](https://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/crs)

**FEMA Contacts:** To learn more, contact the **FEMA Community Rating System coordinator** for your region. This coordinator is a part of the regional FEMA Floodplain Management and Insurance branch, which manages the National Flood Insurance Program.

**State Contacts:** To talk about open space and natural infrastructure floodplain management activities, contact the **state National Flood Insurance Program coordinator**, a position that is sometimes referred to as the state floodplain manager. The coordinator is housed within the designated National Flood Insurance Program state coordinating agency responsible for acting as the link between federal, state, and local government floodplain management activities. This coordinating agency may be a natural or water resources agency, community development agency, or emergency management office. Contact information for each state's state floodplain manager can be found at the Association of State Floodplain Managers' website: [floods.org/stcoor](https://floods.org/stcoor)

**NOAA Contacts:** To learn about NOAA data, tools, training, and other resources that support the Community Rating System, contact the **regional director for NOAA's Office for Coastal Management**.



## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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FEMA works with communities to reduce flood risk. FEMA's outreach efforts engage many but not all of the audiences reached by the coastal management programs and reserves. As FEMA's approach expands to support more communities, there are greater opportunities for coordination at the local level.

### **Opportunity: Risk MAP**

FEMA's Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning (Risk MAP) program helps communities develop comprehensive flood risk information. Through the program, FEMA provides flood mapping products and information, risk assessment tools, and planning and outreach support. Communities can use the Risk MAP process and resources to support mitigation and other community resilience efforts. Each Risk MAP project is tailored to specific community needs but also includes common steps, including meetings with communities to explore how FEMA's risk products can support risk assessment and planning efforts.

The Risk MAP program provides opportunities for coastal programs and reserves to leverage stakeholder engagement, data and resources, and planning processes. Together, state and federal agencies can communicate flood risk and resilience, provide valuable sea level rise maps and products on evolving risks, and share consistent messages with coastal communities about multi-hazard preparedness.

### **Key FEMA Resource**

- Risk MAP program – [fema.gov/risk-mapping-assessment-and-planning-risk-map](https://fema.gov/risk-mapping-assessment-and-planning-risk-map)

### **FEMA Contacts**

Connect with FEMA regional staff members to learn more about opportunities to collaborate and coordinate. To explore the potential for joint engagement of local communities, start by contacting the **Risk Analysis branch chief** and the **Floodplain Management and Insurance branch chief**, who collaborate on Risk MAP engagement opportunities. Let them know you are interested in more collaboration.

### **State Contacts**

To talk about engaging communities on coastal resilience, consider connecting with both the **National Flood Insurance Program coordinator** and the **state hazard mitigation officer** to collaboratively address flood risk reduction and other related goals. In addition, some states have **Risk MAP coordinators**.

### **NOAA Contacts**

To learn how NOAA can support state and local communities by engaging in Risk MAP, including local resilience meetings and development of flood products, contact the **regional director for NOAA's Office for Coastal Management**.



## TRAINING

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NOAA and FEMA deliver regularly scheduled and tailored training courses related to resilience, adaptation planning, and hazard mitigation.

### **Opportunity: FEMA Trainings**

The **National Disaster Preparedness Training Center** offers FEMA-certified courses on disaster preparedness, response, and recovery, with a focus on natural hazards and coastal communities. Training courses include Community Resilience as well as Climate Adaptation Planning for Emergency Management. The center is based in Hawaii and delivers trainings around the country by request at no cost.

FEMA's **Emergency Management Institute** offers training at its campus in Emmitsburg, Maryland, at the Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, Alabama, and via independent study programs. The trainings are targeted for emergency management officials at all levels of government and focus on preparing for, responding to, recovering from, and mitigating disasters. Coastal hazard-related courses include topics on hurricanes and coastal storms, the Coastal Barrier Resources Act, coastal construction, and regulatory and design standards.

Each FEMA region and some state emergency management offices also offer training opportunities, such as workshops on FEMA's Community Rating System and the hazard planning process.

#### **Key FEMA Resources**

- National Disaster Preparedness Training Center – [ndptc.hawaii.edu](http://ndptc.hawaii.edu)
- Emergency Management Institute – [training.fema.gov/emi.aspx](http://training.fema.gov/emi.aspx)

### **Opportunity: NOAA Trainings**

NOAA's Office for Coastal Management offers training courses that are available online or can be brought to the user's location at no cost. Trainings include Adaptation Planning for Coastal Communities and Introduction to Green Infrastructure for Coastal Resilience. NOAA's National Hurricane Center and FEMA jointly offer an Introduction to Hurricane Preparedness course for local and state personnel responsible for hurricane mitigation and response.

The National Estuarine Research Reserve System is also a resource for learning and engagement opportunities. Each reserve has a coastal training program that determines training topics through periodic audience assessments and strategy development efforts. Reserve staff members can be valuable assets in collaborative partnerships.

#### **Key NOAA Resources**

- NOAA Office for Coastal Management training – [coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training](http://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training)
- National Hurricane Center and FEMA hurricane preparedness course – [www.nhc.noaa.gov/outreach/femacourse.php](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/outreach/femacourse.php)
- National Estuarine Research Reserve System training – [coast.noaa.gov/nerrs/training](http://coast.noaa.gov/nerrs/training)

### **FEMA Contacts**

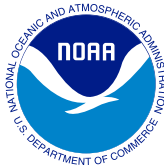
To connect with FEMA's National Disaster Preparedness Training Center, submit the contact form or identify staff at the contact webpage, [ndptc.hawaii.edu/contacts](http://ndptc.hawaii.edu/contacts). For FAQs and email addresses to receive specific information about FEMA's Emergency Management Institute programs, visit the contact page at [training.fema.gov/contactus](http://training.fema.gov/contactus). Find out more about training opportunities offered by reaching out to the regional FEMA office and by subscribing to FEMA mitigation email notifications.

### **State Contacts**

To pursue hazard-related training offered by state programs, connect with your **state emergency offices** and the **coastal training coordinator** at the nearest national estuarine research reserve.

### **NOAA Contacts**

Learn more about, or request delivery of, NOAA training by contacting the **Office for Coastal Management's regional director**.



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