

MitigateNY
A Guide for Local Hazard Mitigation Planning
Introduction

The MitigateNY Guide for Local Hazard Mitigation Planning (MitigateNY Guide) is a resource for local planners and planning partners. Its methodical planning phases and tasks promote collaboration, use of best available data, and the efficient use of resources.

The MitigateNY Guide will enhance NYSDHSES planning support to counties before, during and after formal plan updates. It will be provided to planning teams and supplemented with direct support from NYDHSES hazard mitigation planning staff at various stages from grant application development through the HMP update planning process and as the plan is implemented and maintained.

The MitigateNY Guide provides a detailed, plain language road map for planning partners to prepare, coordinate, implement, track, and evaluate the HMP update in various stages of progress. This is an introduction to that Guide.

Planning Phases and Tasks

The MitigateNY Guide establishes eight planning phases. Each planning phase contains distinct planning tasks designed to promote a process that is thorough and specific to each participating community while meeting and exceeding state and federal regulations.

Please note, tasks do not need to be started or completed in the order in which they appear; planning is not entirely a linear process. Some tasks that come later in the MitigateNY Guide may be started or completed sooner than, or concurrently with, other tasks included in “earlier” planning phases. Tasks will be engaged by each planning team dependent upon their preferences, needs and resources.

MitigateNY – Planning Phases	
1	Organize the Planning Effort
2	Profile the Community & Existing Conditions
3	Select, Profile and Evaluate Impacts of Hazards of Concern
4	Assess Capabilities and Integrate Resources
5	Develop the Mitigation Strategy
6	Establish the Plan Maintenance Process
7	Draft and Submit the Plan
8	Adopt the Plan

Phase 1: Organize the Planning Effort	
1.1	Confirm jurisdictional participation in hazard mitigation planning process
1.2	Establish and mobilize planning teams, including the Core Planning Group (Plan Managers), Steering Committee, Jurisdictional Teams and Stakeholders
1.3	Review feedback from FEMA and NYSDHSES for previous approved HMP (Review Tool)
1.4	Distribute federal and state hazard mitigation planning guidelines and resources to appropriate Planning Team partners
1.5	Develop an outreach strategy to include a meeting schedule, meeting objectives, and desired participants/roles/responsibilities
1.6	Establish methods and schedule for soliciting and documenting input from public, stakeholders and neighboring jurisdictions at various stages of the planning process
1.7	Identify technical data needs, request, and collect data from local, state, and federal planning partners
1.8	Request, collect and inventory existing resources (plans, studies, ordinances, policies, programs, local media accounts, etc.) from local, state, and federal planning partners
1.9	Update status of actions included in previous HMP

Planning Phase 1 establishes the overall foundation for the entire hazard mitigation planning (HMP) process. An essential purpose of the HMP process is to facilitate activities from concept to implementation that create safer, more disaster-resilient communities. The HMP update will include opportunities for convenings, collaboration and input throughout the planning process to ensure that all stakeholders are provided ample and meaningful opportunity to engage with and effect the development of the plan update and the subsequent implementation of mitigation actions and risk-reduction measures.

The HMP update managers, hereafter referred to as the Core Planning Team, will begin organizing the planning effort by reaching out to federal, state, and local planning partners to establish planning teams, each with the unique opportunity to influence and provide the expertise and authority needed to update the plan. This should include those involved in hazard mitigation activities, emergency preparedness and response, and those with the authority to regulate development and enforce local ordinances (elected officials, local executives, clerks, code enforcement officers, public works and transportation department personnel, environmental agency representatives, engineers, planners, etc.).

The Core Planning Team will create an inclusive and engaging outreach strategy to solicit meaningful input from stakeholders and the public throughout the planning process. Outreach methods should include presentational meetings, interactive interviews for data collection and information sharing, workshops, publicly available surveys, and engagement on social media platforms, municipal websites, via email, etc.

Planning Phase 1 also includes the initial identification and gathering of the diverse data and resources necessary to complete tasks in subsequent Phases. The data collection effort should have a clear timeline outlining when and how data will be requested and submitted from various planning partners. This is also the time to review and update the status of mitigation actions proposed by each participating Jurisdiction in the last HMP. An early evaluation of these actions provides valuable information about how specific vulnerabilities may have changed and whether actions that were not implemented are still relevant.

Phase 2: Profile the Community & Existing Conditions	
2.1	Profile the Social Environment. Evaluate and document: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demographic data - relevant governmental operations and structure - at-risk populations - the local economy
2.2	Profile the Built Environment. Evaluate and document: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - land-use and zoning - development since the last plan - anticipated future development - transportation networks and services
2.3	Profile Critical Infrastructure. Evaluate and document: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - critical facilities - critical infrastructure - critical community assets - sheltering and evacuation procedures
2.4	Profile the Natural Environment. Evaluate and document: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - waterbodies - coastal and/or wetland areas - restricted and/or protected areas - protected species
2.5	Evaluate and document other elements of the social, built and/or natural environment, as applicable
2.6	Solicit and document input from the public, stakeholders and neighboring jurisdictions related to this Planning Phase, as applicable

Planning Phase 2 documents and reviews the community profile and the existing conditions for each participating community. This provides greater context of the planning area. Details and analysis about each jurisdiction’s demographic characteristics (including at-risk vulnerable populations), the built environment (including land use), critical infrastructure and facilities, the natural environment, and the local economy should be presented and evaluated as different, yet interrelated, topics for understanding risk and resilience in each participating jurisdiction.

This profile of the community and its existing conditions will be the foundation by which hazard risk will be assessed, with particular emphasis on how risk has changed since the last plan was completed. Risk, for the purpose of hazard mitigation planning, is the potential for damage, loss or other impacts created by the interaction of natural hazards with community assets. The exposure of people, property and other community assets to natural hazards can result in disasters, depending on the impacts.

Phase 3: Select, Profile, and Evaluate Impacts of Hazards of Concern	
3.1	Review all hazards included in the last plan, review NYSHMP hazards and consider alignment, and select/confirm hazards of concern for update (and document justification for selection)
3.2	Profile Hazards of Concern. For each hazard of concern: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update location, or confirm previous - Update hazard characteristics, or confirm previous - Update potential extent (magnitude), or confirm previous - Update significant hazard events since last plan using best available data AND community input - Update future probability estimate, or confirm previous - Document cascading impacts - Document impact of climate change to hazard
3.3	For each jurisdiction, assess and document the impacts of each hazard of concern to the social, built and natural environment, and to critical infrastructure evaluated and documented in Phase 2. If no risk exists, state this clearly
3.4	Solicit and document input from the public, stakeholders and neighboring jurisdictions related to this Planning Phase, as applicable

Planning Phase 3 identifies and assesses hazards of concern for each participating jurisdiction. The collection and review of both technical data and the qualitative input of planning participants is essential to select, profile and evaluate each community’s hazards of concern.

NYDHSES recommends that the HMP update leverages both the previous plan’s hazard profiles *and* the NYSHMP for foundational hazard profile information. It is critical that the HMP update focuses on local hazard characteristics, risks, and impacts.

The Core Planning Group will facilitate a series of meetings with all jurisdictional teams to discuss the hazards that present risk to the community environment that was identified in Phase 2. The existing conditions, past hazard events, and known current and future hazard risks should be documented, discussed, and evaluated to identify the vulnerabilities and potential impacts on the social, built, and natural environments. Community input is critical during this phase to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the risks and experiential knowledge that may not always be reflected in quantifiable data. This should not just be a collection of data or presentation of high-level hazard information, but more specific descriptions of how the community is impacted by hazard events. The results of this effort will guide next steps to identify meaningful strategies to reduce risk to natural hazards.

Phase 4: Assess Capabilities and Integrate Resources	
4.1	Review existing resources collected and documented in Planning Phase 1
4.2	Assess existing resources to evaluate resources available to accomplish implementation hazard mitigation strategies and actions
4.3	Identify opportunities to integrate functionality of existing resources into this HMP
4.4	Identify opportunities by which local governments can integrate the data, assessments, and strategies from this HMP into other planning mechanisms and day-to-day operations
4.5	Describe ability to expand capabilities, including floodplain management (identify specific steps to be taken)
4.6	Assess and document NFIP data and local floodplain management activities
4.7	Describe commitment to maintaining NFIP compliance
4.8	Document comprehensive list of strategic funding sources for implementation
4.9	Solicit and document input from the public, stakeholders and neighboring jurisdictions related to this Planning Phase, as applicable

Planning Phase 4 includes an assessment of capabilities and the integration of resources. Each community has a unique set of capabilities, including authorities, policies, programs, staff, funding, and other resources available to accomplish hazard mitigation and reduce long term vulnerability. The capability assessment by each jurisdictional team and local planning partners should focus on those that can contribute to the development and implementation of mitigation strategies that are realistic, feasible, and within that jurisdiction’s authority. This assessment may result in the identification of specific actions that expand jurisdictional capabilities to accomplish the hazard mitigation goals and objectives.

This Planning Phase also offers an opportunity to coordinate the objectives and resources of existing local planning mechanisms that can support the implementation of the hazard mitigation plan. Planning mechanisms and resources should be mutually reinforcing. If they conflict, an integration action should be proposed to bring the existing planning resources or mechanisms into alignment.

Planning Phase 4 also includes an assessment of each jurisdiction’s participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Each community that participates in the NFIP must describe its floodplain management program and how it will continue to comply with NFIP requirements. By design, participation in the NFIP should indicate some floodplain management and flood mitigation capabilities. Often, this assessment also highlights an opportunity to expand these capabilities.

Phase 5: Develop the Mitigation Strategy	
5.1	Consider new priorities and describe any shifts in priorities since last HMP. If none, state this clearly
5.2	Confirm and/or update goals consistent with findings of previous planning phases and describe strategies for achieving goals (objectives)
5.3	Based on Planning Phases 2, 3, 4 summarize risks and vulnerabilities as problem statements
5.4	For each problem statement identify a range of solutions and/or actions
5.5	Establish action prioritization criteria
5.6	Select, describe, and prioritize actions to mitigate risks and vulnerabilities identified in problem statements
5.7	For each action, identify lead department, timeframe, and potential funding sources for implementation of each action
5.8	Complete DHSES mitigation action worksheets and DHSES mitigation action table for a minimum of two (2) unique mitigation actions per jurisdiction
5.9	Solicit and document input from the public, stakeholders and neighboring jurisdictions related to this Planning Phase, as applicable

Planning Phase 5 will result in the five-year blueprint for reducing the risk to and impacts of hazards in each jurisdiction. The mitigation strategy should reflect the priorities and capabilities of each participating community and address both current and future threats, such as anticipated risks due to climate change or planned development in natural hazard areas. Generally, the mitigation strategy consists of three main components:

- Mitigation goals and objectives
- Mitigation actions
- An action plan for implementation

Mitigation goals are general guidelines that explain what the planning community wants to achieve with the plan. Goals are broad statements that are long term and represent visions for reducing or avoiding losses from the identified hazards. Mitigation objectives are broader than specific actions, but are measurable, unlike goals. Objectives connect goals with implementable mitigation actions.

Mitigation actions are specific projects, activities, or processes to be implemented to reduce or eliminate long term risk to people and property from hazards and their impacts. Actions help achieve the goals. An action plan for implementation will describe how the mitigation actions will be implemented, including how those actions will be prioritized, administered, and incorporated into the community’s existing planning mechanisms.

Strong hazard mitigation goals, objectives and actions align and integrate with other community objectives and activities, leveraging existing planning and governance mechanisms and resources to implement mitigation strategies.

Phase 6: Establish the Plan Maintenance Process	
6.1	Describe the method and schedule for continuing public engagement throughout the five-year lifecycle of the plan
6.2	Describe the method and schedule for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the five-year lifecycle of the plan
6.3	Schedule and document the first plan maintenance meeting
6.4	Identify activities to be completed at each stage of maintenance
6.5	Describe method and schedule for updating the mitigation plan before it expires
6.6	Solicit and document input from the public, stakeholders and neighboring jurisdictions related to this Planning Phase, as applicable

Planning Phase 6 establishes the plan maintenance process, including:

- **Monitoring:** tracking the implementation of the plan, status of mitigation actions and new information about risks.
- **Evaluating:** assessing the effectiveness of the plan at achieving its stated purpose and goals and the implications of any new information.
- **Updating:** reviewing and revising the plan at least once every 5 years. An update is required at least every five years for jurisdictions to remain eligible for FEMA mitigation funds. NYSDHSES and FEMA must approve plan updates.

The HMP is a living document that guides action over time. During the five-year life of a plan, major revisions to the plan are not likely to be needed, but new risk information may become available and warrant changes to the plan. The risk assessment could be amended, new mitigation actions may be added, or current mitigation actions may be revised. Keeping the plan current also keeps the focus on implementation. Progress reports can be shared with the public to encourage their continuing involvement.

If the plan has been well maintained and kept current, the formal update of the plan will be easier. Additionally, grants are more likely to be awarded to communities that demonstrate they have actively engaged with and implemented their plan and can demonstrate plan integration in their communities.

Phase 7: Draft and Submit the Plan	
7.1	Write and assemble draft HMP update
7.2	Publish and distribute draft HMP and solicit review and comments by planning teams and the public
7.3	Document comments in HMP and revise plan, as applicable
7.4	Complete the 'Location in Plan' section of FEMA's Local Mitigation Plan Review Tool
7.5	Submit plan to NYSDHSES for review
7.6	Document NYSDHSES comments and revise plan, if applicable
7.7	Submit final plan to NYSDHSES for review and submittal to FEMA

Writing the plan can begin at any time and should be happening throughout each Planning Phase. Plan writing and assembly subtasks are included in Planning Phase 7 because each preceding Phase will contribute information required to finalize the plan update.

All planning partners, stakeholders and the public must be provided the opportunity to review, revise and give feedback on all written sections of the plan. To receive and incorporate additional comments and feedback, a presentation of the draft plan will occur before the plan is finalized and submitted to NYSDHSES and FEMA for review and approval. Any additional feedback and input provided by planning partners, stakeholders and the public must be reviewed and incorporated into the plan.

Prior to submitting the plan to NYSDHSES, the Core Planning Team will validate that the HMP meets all requirements of Title 44 Code of Regulations (CFR) 201.6 using FEMA's Local Mitigation Plan Review Tool.

Phase 8: Adopt the Plan	
8.1	Publicize HMP approval and adoptions. Include in the HMP a certified adoption resolution from each participating jurisdiction

To demonstrate the jurisdiction's commitment to fulfilling the hazard mitigation goals outlined in the plan, and to authorize responsible agencies to execute their responsibilities, each jurisdiction that is included in the plan must have its governing body adopt the plan within one year of FEMA's designation of Approvable Pending Adoption. Each jurisdiction submits evidence of adoption to FEMA, which in turn approves the plan for the adopting jurisdiction.

The Core Planning Team will support each Jurisdiction's adoption process, including the submission of adoption documentation to NYSDHSES, which is responsible for forwarding this on to FEMA Regional II.