

# Building Regional Disaster Resilience in California

## U.S. EPA and FEMA Technical Assistance Opportunity

### Overview

The Office of Sustainable Communities in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Policy, in partnership with FEMA Region IX (FEMA), is seeking proposals from regional partners in California that need assistance to build regional-scale resilience to natural disasters. Regional partners are considered multiple jurisdictions that are working together, as well as entities that operate at a multi-state, multi-county, or multi-city/town scale.

EPA and FEMA have a [Memorandum of Agreement](#) that:

- Sets up coordination of activities between EPA's sustainable communities assistance programs and FEMA's disaster recovery planning and hazard mitigation programs.
- Seeks to provide lessons learned for EPA, FEMA, and other federal agencies that can be used to build a stronger federal framework for mitigation planning as well as pre- and post-disaster recovery planning and operations.
- Seeks to provide a collaborative framework for policy work related to both hazard mitigation planning and creating more resilient communities.

For more information on EPA and FEMA's work together, see our [Smart Growth Strategies for Disaster Resilience and Recovery](#) web page.

The goal of this assistance is to help California regions create a clear, actionable plan for building resilience to natural disasters. Through the process of this assistance and the creation of an action plan, EPA and FEMA expect that participating government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community stakeholders will build capacity to continue working together to increase disaster resilience. This assistance is meant both for regional partners that are just beginning to plan for regional resilience as well as for those that have done past resilience planning and are ready to move from planning to action.

In 2015 and 2016, EPA and FEMA worked with regional partners in the San Francisco Bay Area on a successful resilience-building project. Together, EPA, FEMA, and the Association of Bay Area Governments have developed materials that can help other regions, including four-step process, where each step includes a set of guidance documents:



EPA will fund a team of experts to visit selected regions up to two times to use these materials to support a regional process. These site visits can help your region establish a regional project team, assess disaster risks, select resilience strategies, create an action plan, and ultimately measure progress towards building regional resilience. Your region may need help getting started with early steps like Engaging Partners, or you may be ready to focus on the Action and Implementation phase. EPA and FEMA are interested in working with regional partners at any stage in the process.

A consultant team along with EPA, FEMA, the Association of Bay Area Governments, and other federal and state partners may all be part of the assistance team, depending on the needs of your region and the desire for outside partners.

EPA will provide assistance to successful applicants as described below. **Proposals are due on June 30, 2017.**

#### Assistance Opportunity

This place-based assistance will help two selected regions build resilience to natural disasters, while also supporting other community goals such as environmental sustainability, maintaining or enhancing quality of life, and improving the local economy. EPA will provide this assistance through an Agency contract vehicle, **not a grant**. EPA will use the contract to hire consultants who are experts in community engagement, meeting facilitation, disaster resilience, smart growth, and policy issues relevant to land use, housing, transportation, and economic development.

We hope that the assistance will help your region strengthen partnerships and create a clear action plan to build regional disaster resilience. The EPA-FEMA team will provide facilitation support, but as the applicant you are expected to create your own action plan. The team will help your region consolidate and comply with federal and state planning requirements, as well as provide resources and help establish lasting partnerships with state and federal agencies to support your regional action plan.

EPA and FEMA are also interested in learning lessons from this assistance that will help us improve the Regional Resilience Framework, so that it may be used in other regions and other states around the nation. Lastly, EPA and FEMA are interested in learning about ways that federal agencies can be more supportive of regional resilience actions.

## PROPOSAL PROCESS

EPA and FEMA will work with partners in California to identify possible regional organizations interested in receiving assistance and will invite interested regions to submit a simple proposal. Based on these proposals and follow-up conversations, EPA and FEMA will make final selections by summer 2017.

Eligible entities include multiple jurisdictions that are working together, as well regional organizations that operate at a multi-state, multi-county, or multi-city/town scale. The application can come from state, tribal, regional, and local governments, as well as nonprofit organizations that have a demonstrated partnership with a governmental entity. Only one proposal should be submitted on behalf of the regional partnership. Interagency and intergovernmental coordination will be an important part of the process of implementing the action plan developed through this project.

### Preparing the Proposal

The review team will evaluate proposals based on the criteria listed below. Proposals should be no more than 4 pages. Supplemental materials such as maps and site plans can also be submitted, but are not to exceed 4 pages. The total application should be no more than 8 pages.

Proposals must include the following:

**1. Project Contact.** List name, title, phone, email, and address of the person who will be the main project contact. This person will be responsible for working with EPA staff throughout the project and should have a comprehensive understanding of the work that would be done as part of the assistance.

**2. Regional Geography and Partnership.** Define the geographic bounds of your regional partnership. Please describe who your key partners are and the history of the partnership, if any. Describe how you will work across departments, scales of government, and with other organizations in your region. If there is a clear lead for your partnership, please explain how this leadership role came about.

**3. Description of the Disaster Risk and Upcoming Efforts.** Applicants need to articulate the disaster risks facing the region and the likely actions needed to address those risks. Disaster types will likely include earthquakes, sea level rise, wildfire, drought, and flooding.

In particular, EPA and FEMA are interested in working with a region that is recovering from a recent disaster or preparing to update a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan update. Please include information about one or both of the following, including how this process would align with and support these other efforts:

- A recent natural disaster and ongoing recovery efforts.
- Planned updates to your Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

**4. Stage of Resilience Planning.** Please describe which of the four steps (listed above) of resilience planning your region is currently in, and how this assistance will help you either get

started or improve upon an existing process. Proposals should specify why you need help with a certain stage in the process.

**5. Leveraging Other Investments.** If your region (including local governments, nonprofits, or other partner organizations) has received recent grants or technical assistance projects from either the State of California or federal agencies, which relate to disaster recovery or hazard mitigation, please describe how this project aligns with and relates to past or ongoing grants or projects.

**6. Support from Elected Officials and the Public.** Applicants need to identify persons and/or organizations that support the project and will work toward its implementation. Please include a list of references for each of the following (formal letters of support are not necessary):

- Local Elected Officials Support: can include mayors, city council members, and representatives from other decision making bodies with appropriate local, regional, or state governments.
- Public or Community Support: can include neighborhood coalitions, community development groups, local business organizations, and community-based organizations from underrepresented communities.

In addition, include information about how the project can engage overburdened, underserved, and/or historically underrepresented communities. What are the key challenges facing residents in hazardous areas? How might different government agencies and organizations work to address these challenges?

Proposals must be submitted via email to Abby Hall at [hall.abby@epa.gov](mailto:hall.abby@epa.gov) no later than June 30, 2017 by 11:59 p.m. Pacific time. If you have questions about this solicitation, please contact Abby Hall via email or at 415-972-3384.