



Why This Matters

Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended, authorizes the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to implement measures designed to reduce the loss of life and property. 44 Code of Federal Regulations 201.6(a)(1) requires a local jurisdiction to have an approved mitigation plan before receiving Hazard Mitigation Grant Program grants.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) invests in local planning preparedness by funding planning grants to develop and renew local hazard mitigation plans.

DHS Response

FEMA concurred with our findings and recommendation.



For Further Information:

Contact our Office of Public Affairs at (202)254-4100, or email us at DHS-OIG.OfficePublicAffairs@dhs.gov

Mitigation Planning Shortfalls Precluded FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grants to Fund Residential Safe Room Construction During the Disaster Recovery Phase

What We Determined

Residential safe rooms that FEMA funded after previous disasters provided effective protection against the 2013 Oklahoma tornadoes and helped to reduce the number of deaths. However, several local jurisdictions did not have FEMA-approved mitigation plans in place at the time of the disaster. As a result, FEMA could not provide immediate funding to these jurisdictions to implement additional mitigation measures against future disasters, such as the construction of residential safe rooms.

Federal regulations and FEMA guidelines do not require local jurisdictions to develop FEMA-approved mitigation plans in advance of disasters or to maintain FEMA-approved mitigation plans beyond its initial 5-year life cycle. However, FEMA encourages these plans by requiring them as a condition of providing mitigation funds.

FEMA moved quickly to present Oklahoma with several options to accelerate the review and approval of the local mitigation plans and renewals. However, the local mitigation planning process should be proactive, not reactive.

What We Recommend

We recommend that the FEMA Associate Administrator, Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration, work proactively with grantees to develop a strategy to enhance the development and maintenance of local mitigation plans.

