

# Spotlight

Department of Homeland Security



## Office of Inspector General

September 2014 OIG-14-150-D

### Why This Matters

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) obligated \$1.35 billion out of \$2.16 billion to Louisiana for disasters through Hurricane Katrina (August 2005) and Tropical Storm Lee (October 2011) for mitigation projects such as home elevations and drainage projects. Delays in funding remaining projects represents missed or delayed opportunities to protect lives and property from future disasters.

### DHS Response

FEMA generally agreed with our findings and recommendations. FEMA's written response is due within 90 days.

## FEMA and the State of Louisiana Need to Accelerate the Funding of \$812 Million in Hazard Mitigation Program Funds and Develop a Plan to Close Approved Projects

### What We Determined

In over 8 years since Hurricane Katrina, FEMA has not obligated approximately \$812 million of the \$2.16 billion in authorized Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds. Funding delays occurred, in part, because (1) Louisiana's local governments had not submitted hazard mitigation plans that FEMA must review and approve to allow applicants to receive HMGP funds; (2) FEMA did not require Louisiana to submit project applications within the deadlines required by Federal regulations and FEMA policy guidance; and (3) FEMA allowed Louisiana to submit incomplete "placeholder" project applications, despite FEMA policy that requires states to submit complete applications. Additionally, FEMA and Louisiana need to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to complete and close all approved HMGP projects.

### What We Recommend

We recommend that the Regional Administrator, FEMA Region VI: (1) establish a reasonable timeframe for Louisiana to provide remaining data for projects previously submitted in order for FEMA to make funding determinations; (2) ensure that Louisiana develops and implements a comprehensive strategy to meet FEMA's timeframe for submitting remaining project data for all incomplete HMGP applications; (3) de-allocate all remaining unobligated funds (approximately \$812 million as of March 2014) after making funding determinations; and (4) ensure that Louisiana develops and implements a comprehensive strategy to close all HMGP projects.

### For Further Information:

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