

\$69 Million Available Through Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

February 26, 2024



At least [\\$69 million](#) is available through [FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program](#), managed by Vermont Emergency Management, to support natural hazard mitigation in Vermont after the July 2023 flooding. **Funding is for projects and planning to reduce the future risk of flooding, landslides, or other natural hazards.** Projects do not need to be directly connected to damages incurred from 2023 disaster events.

Governor Phil Scott has directed the State Flood Recovery Office to simplify the application process and provide technical assistance to eligible applicants to expedite the distribution of mitigation funds to communities impacted by the July 2023 storms, flooding, and landslides. These events left behind more than \$1 billion in response, recovery, and social support costs. Most repairs to that damage and other costs will be paid for through the Public Assistance disaster declaration from the federal government following the storm. However, even with federal assistance, the local share from municipalities and the State is still in the millions of dollars. With the realization that Vermont could face this level of damage every 10

years, building back better is no longer an option: it is a must.

What Does This Program Fund?

Mitigation projects reduce loss of life and property by minimizing the impact of disasters.

Typical mitigation projects include:

- Flood-vulnerable property buyouts, especially properties at risk from flooding and landslides, and structural elevations
- Natural resource projects such as floodplain restorations or dam removals
- Infrastructure projects such as upsizing bridges or culverts and mitigation for water and wastewater infrastructure
- Floodproofing of municipal or commercial buildings
- Road relocation, road elevations, or soil stabilization
- Local Hazard Mitigation Plan development
- Other planning and project scoping activities
- Management Costs: 5% of total project costs may be available for awarded projects to manage the grant award

Management costs are 100% federally funded. The remainder of project costs are shared 75% federal and 25% local non-federal. The local match can be cash and/or in-kind services by the municipality or other entities. The State is covering the 25% local match for property buyouts.

How Does My Community Apply?

More information, including the full notice of funding and Pre-Application Form, is available at: vem.vermont.gov/funding/mitigation.

- **Property Owners Seeking Buyout or Elevations – Priority Deadline: March 29, 2024** – Residential or commercial property owners wishing to sell their flood-prone property or elevate should discuss this with their municipal offices. Municipal officials should reach out to: dps.hazardmitigation@vermont.gov.

- **Communities with Flood/Infrastructure/Planning Projects – Deadline: June 21, 2024** – Fill out the [Pre-Application Form](#). Early applications are strongly encouraged so the State can provide support on application development.

Applicants and projects, including buyouts, do not need to have damages from 2023 flooding. Projects can be bundled if there is a reasonable argument for doing so.

What Will Make Our Application Competitive?

Municipalities must have a FEMA-approved and locally adopted Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) and a Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) prior to receiving a project award. Applications can be submitted without these plans, but awarded funds will not be released until the plans are in place.

Communities must be in good standing with the National Flood Insurance Program if a special flood hazard area (SFHA) has been identified in the community and if the proposed project is located within the SFHA.

Landslide buyouts must have a letter from the State Geologist (imminent risk).

A [FEMA Benefit-Cost Analysis](#) (BCA) is required, except for most property buyouts and elevations. Some assistance is available for completing a BCA. Submit the Pre-Application Form as soon as possible to receive assistance. With a few exceptions, projects must demonstrate \$1 in past or future damages for every \$1 in project cost.

Bank stabilization projects are most competitive when the cost is low or the benefit is to critical infrastructure such as roads or water/wastewater or for multiple structures.

How Can My Community Learn More?

To learn more, please visit [Vermont's Disaster Based Funding](#) page. You also can reach out directly to dps.hazardmitigation@vermont.gov with any questions.