Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Property Owner Guidance

What is Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation? And Why is it Required?

Federal law requires that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) confirm that each recovery or mitigation project receiving federal funding complies with all applicable environmental laws, regulations, executive orders and DHS or FEMA directives related to Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP). Therefore, all residential mitigation applications under the Elevate Florida program, which is FEMA-funded, must be reviewed for compliance.

Projects that potentially impact the environment, including construction, modification, or renovation of buildings, must complete the FEMA EHP review process. This involves submitting a detailed project description and supporting documentation to determine potential impacts on environmental resources (e.g., endangered species or historic properties), evaluating project impacts, and identifying any necessary mitigation measures. The EHP review includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA);
- National Historic Preservation Action (NHPA);
- Endangered Species Act (ESA);
- Executive Order (EO) 11988 on *Floodplain Management;*
- EO 11990 on *Protection of Wetlands;* and
- Other relevant EHP considerations.

Are Property Owners Responsible for the EHP Reviews?

Participating Property Owners are not directly responsible for completion of the EHP reviews. FEMA has the responsibility to make sure that all federally funded recovery and mitigation projects comply with federal laws, regulations and executive orders, which includes coordination with other federal and state agencies and potentially with tribal governments. FEMA will document completion of the review prior to awarding funding.

What is the EHP Review Process?

As the Elevate Florida program develops project applications for FEMA review, our team is actively gathering pertinent property details and EHP documentation to support the proposed scope of work and budget. Supporting documentation, we may request from you includes various maps identifying project location details, identification of potential ground disturbance, latitude and longitude coordinates, proximity to the FEMA identified floodplains and wetlands, photographs of structures, building age and any relevant surveys, studies, or consultation records. FEMA uses this information to document the review process.

During the EHP review, FEMA may request additional information. The Elevate Florida program team will gather and prepare requested property data on behalf of participating Property Owners. Our team may also ask for further information or conduct additional review activities as needed to support the processing of your application. A lack of information or responsiveness may pause completion of the review, prevent FEMA's awarding of funding and delay project implementation.

Once the EHP review is complete, FEMA will identify any property specific conditions, permits, or necessary requirements for project implementation. Those "conditions" will be included with FEMA's project approval.

Non-compliance with EHP laws, regulations, or policies may disqualify projects from funding.

How does FEMA's EHP Review factor into the overall timeline and FEMA review process?

Once Elevate Florida submits your application to FEMA for funding, FEMA conducts concurrent reviews for eligibility, technical feasibility, cost-effectiveness, and EHP compliance. The EHP review is one of several required reviews that must be completed by FEMA before project funding is approved. Although each review is separate and distinct, all are required for approval.

The EHP review (within the larger FEMA review) can take anywhere from several days for simple projects to several months for complex situations. Note, the EHP review may not commence immediately as FEMA coordinates thousands of reviews a year, both during and before or after disasters. Reviewer availability can impact review timelines. Elevate Florida has gathered all anticipated documentation and will coordinate with FEMA on expected timelines and provide updates as reviews are completed.

Can I start Work?

No. Commencing work related to the scope of work before the EHP review is complete, and before FEMA approval will jeopardize funding and program eligibility. If you have a specific property related maintenance or repair concern related to the acquisition and demolition, elevation or reconstruction of your residential structure, please reach out to your Case Manager for additional guidance.

Contact Us

For questions, technical support, or application assistance, submit inquiries through the "Contact Us" page on the Elevate Florida application portal or email info@elevatefl.org.

You can also call the contact center Monday – Friday from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET at 877-353-8835 (877-ELEV8FL). TTY services are available by dialing 711.