

# Notice of Funding Opportunity for Fiscal Year 2023 Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Program

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FEMA provides federal funds for the Building Resilient Infrastructures and Communities (BRIC) grant program to states, local communities, tribes, and territories for hazard mitigation activities. BRIC is a FEMA annual hazard mitigation program. For fiscal year (FY) 2023, FEMA will distribute up to \$1 billion for the BRIC program. Section 203 of the [Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act \(Stafford Act\)](#) authorizes this program.

The BRIC program priorities are to:

- Incentivize natural hazard risk reduction activities that mitigate risk to public infrastructure
- Incorporate nature-based solutions including those designed to reduce carbon emissions
- Enhance climate resilience and adaptation
- Promote equity and prioritize disadvantaged communities as referenced in Executive Order (EO) 14008
- Increase funding to applicants that facilitate the adoption and enforcement of the latest published editions of building codes

The FY 2023 BRIC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) can be accessed at [. Before applying for the grant, FEMA encourages potential applicants and subapplicants to review the detailed program information and other grant application and administration requirements.](#)

Note: Awards made under this NOFO may be funded, in whole or in part, with funds appropriated by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, also more commonly known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

## Programmatic Changes:

FEMA made the following changes to the FY 2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity to increase access to funding and reduce complexity:

### Building Code Plus-Up

- To further demonstrate the importance of building codes, new this year, FEMA is setting aside an additional amount of funding dedicated to building codes we are referring to as a plus-up. We are making available \$112 million for states and territories and \$25 million for tribal nations to use as the building code plus-up.



# FEMA

- The maximum allocation for a state or territory under this category is \$2 million and the maximum total allocation for tribal under this category is \$25 million to carry out eligible building code adoption and enforcement activities such as:
  - Evaluate adoption and or implementation of codes that reduce risk.
  - Enhance existing, adopted codes to incorporate more current requirements or higher standards.
  - Develop professional workforce capabilities related to building codes through technical assistance and training.
- Building code plus-up funds may only be applied to eligible building code activities and may not be used for other BRIC eligible projects or activities. Funds not allocated to eligible building codes activities will result in loss of funds.

### Community Disaster Resilience Zone

- Hazard mitigation projects performed within and/or that primarily benefit a designated Community Disaster Resilience Zone, as defined in [Community Disaster Resilience Zones | FEMA.gov](https://www.fema.gov/community-disaster-resilience-zones), are eligible for an increase in BRIC cost share up to 90% federal/10% non-federal with the goal to lessen the financial burden on communities performing resilience-related activities.
- Under the State/Territory Allocation, a minimum of \$400,000 must be used on any combination of capability- and capacity-building activities and projects primarily benefitting Community Disaster Resilience Zones.

### Evaluation Criteria Rescoring

#### *Technical Evaluation Criteria for the National Competition*

- For BRIC scoring in the National Competition, there are three criteria for Building Code Adoption and Enforcement with a maximum of 20 points for building code criterion. Note, this is reduced from 40 pts in the FY2022 funding cycle.

#### ***Building Code Adoption:***

- The subapplication will receive 5 points if the community where the project will be developed has locally adopted building codes based on both the International Building Code (IBC) and the International Residential Code (IRC) model codes published by the International Code Council (ICC). To obtain these points, both codes have to be 2018 or 2021. **[5 points]**
- The subapplication will receive an additional 5 points if the locally adopted building codes by the community are based on the applicant's mandatory state-, tribal-, territory-wide adoption of building codes based on both the International Building Code (IBC) and the International Residential Code (IRC) model codes published by the International Code Council (ICC). To obtain these points, both codes have to be the 2018 or 2021 edition. **[5 points]**

#### ***Building Code Enforcement:***

- Subapplicant has Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS) Rating of 1 to 5. **[10 points]**

**Alternative Higher Standard:**

- Any subapplicant that has not received points under Sub-criterion 3.1 could receive 5 points by providing a narrative demonstrating that they hold higher standards for the primary hazard they have identified in their subapplication. **[5 points]**

***Technical and Qualitative Evaluation Criteria for the National Competition***

- **Technical Evaluation Criteria Re-scoring:** The total point value for Technical Evaluation Criteria was re-scored to equal 100 points, a reduction from 115 points in FY22.
- **Qualitative Evaluation Criteria Re-scoring:** The total point value for Qualitative Evaluation Criteria was re-scored to equal 100 points, a reduction from 115 points in FY=22.

**Equity Data Measures**

- The Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) is a geospatial mapping tool that identifies areas across the nation where communities are faced with significant burdens. These burdens are organized into eight categories: climate change, energy, health, housing, legacy pollution, transportation, water and wastewater, and workforce development.
- Agencies will shift to using the CEJST as the methodology for geographically identifying disadvantaged communities, consistent with Presidential Memo [M-23-09](#) - Addendum to the Interim Implementation Guidance for the Justice40 Initiative.

**Benefitting Area Mapping**

- Subapplicants should submit a map and associated geospatial file(s). The map and associated geospatial file(s) will be used by FEMA to determine if a project benefits or primarily benefits Justice40 communities, Community Disaster Resilience Zones, and or Economically Disadvantaged Rural Communities and therefore qualifies for prioritization and eligible cost-share.

**Revised streamlined cost-effectiveness determination methods**

- FEMA has established streamlined cost-effectiveness determination methods for some hazard mitigation projects and project types. Using one of these methods fulfills the cost-effectiveness requirement if the project meets applicable criteria.
  - For projects with a total cost of less than \$1 million, the subapplicant may provide a narrative that includes qualitative and quantitative data demonstrating the benefits and cost-effectiveness of the project. Total project costs include all project costs, not just the federal share. Instructions for completing a cost-effectiveness narrative may be found on the FEMA Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) website. FEMA will validate the cost effectiveness and estimate a benefit cost ratio (BCR) of the proposed project during its review.

- Pre-calculated benefits are available for some project types, including acquisitions, elevations, wind retrofits, tornado safe rooms, hospital generators, and post-wildfire mitigation. Further details, including application submission requirements, may be found in the Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Policy and Program Guide and on the FEMA BCA website.

### BCA assistance

- FEMA will not require a Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) as a condition to apply for an Economically Disadvantaged Rural Community, federally recognized tribal government, or a subapplicant with a hazard mitigation project within or primarily benefiting a Community Disaster Resilience Zone. FEMA will review the hazard mitigation project subapplications that are competitive and otherwise eligible for selection and may assist such communities with developing a BCA. Projects with a total cost of less than \$1 million that qualify for BCA Assistance under this provision are not required to submit a cost-effectiveness narrative. FEMA has additional guidance for this approach for selected subapplications that may qualify for this consideration. For more information see the FEMA BCA website.

### BCA Discount Rate Change

- If a streamlined cost-effectiveness determination method does not apply, a BCA is required to validate cost-effectiveness. FEMA has established a set discount rate of 3% to be used in a BCA for hazard mitigation projects for the FY23 BRIC and FMA cycles. FEMA's BCA Toolkit is available on the FEMA website at <https://www.fema.gov/grants/tools/benefit-cost-analysis> Version 6.0 or newer are the only versions FEMA will accept as documentation for demonstrating cost-effectiveness. FEMA encourages the use of the BCA Toolkit to calculate the project benefit/cost ratio; however, applicants and subapplicants may also use a non-FEMA BCA methodology if pre-approved by FEMA in writing.
  - All projects not using a streamlined cost-effectiveness determination must demonstrate a BCR of 1.0 or greater to be eligible for funding.
  - Even if a streamlined cost-effectiveness determination method applies, applicants and subapplicants may use a BCA to show cost-effectiveness of a project.

### Available Funding

- FEMA will distribute up to \$1 billion through the BRIC grant program in the following manner:
  - **State/Territory Allocation:** \$112 million (up to \$2 million per applicant). All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories may apply under the State/Territory Allocation.
  - **Building Codes Plus Up:** \$112 million (up to \$2 million per state/territory) and up to \$25 million for tribes.
  - **Tribal Set-Aside:** \$50 million. All federally recognized tribal governments may apply under the Tribal Set-Aside. The combined cost of the applicant's capability- and capacity building activities under the this

must not exceed \$2 million. Up to \$1 million of the Tribal Set-Aside may be used for hazard mitigation planning and planning-related activities per applicant.

- **National Competition for Hazard Mitigation Projects:** \$701 million (estimated). Any funds that are not awarded from the State/Territory Allocation or the Tribal Set-Aside will be re-allocated.

## BRIC Direct Technical Assistance (BRIC DTA)

- FEMA will provide wide-ranging, non-financial support to Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Direct Technical Assistance (DTA) communities, including climate risk assessments, community engagement, partnership building, and mitigation and climate adaptation planning throughout the grant lifecycle. Support for BRIC DTA communities will be given from pre-application activities to grant closeout.
- Any community can request BRIC DTA. There is no requirement *that* they have a hazard mitigation plan and/or a history of applying for or receiving BRIC funding for consideration for BRIC DTA.
- As a prerequisite to eligibility, FEMA requires that technical assistance recipients identify at least two potential community partners (as described in the letter of interest instructions) to generate deeper community engagement, including a disadvantaged community or communities identified by the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST). Community partner organizations may be from within or outside the government and may include other departments with the same government agency, nonprofits, and community-based organizations, labor unions, advocacy groups, chambers of commerce, major employers or anchor institutions, and philanthropic organizations.
- FEMA will select at least 80 new communities to participate in the non-financial direct technical assistance initiative to help them apply for BRIC funding. This is nearly twice the number of communities selected last year.
- FEMA anticipates opening the submission period no later than Oct. 16, 2023. Communities interested in submitting a request for assistance can do so through Feb. 29, 2024. FEMA is also publishing a new form to streamline and simplify the submission process.

Total Available BRIC FUNDING - \$1 Billion					
Uses of Assistance	\$112M State/Territory Allocations	\$50M Tribal Set-Aside	\$112M State/Territory Building Code Plus-up	\$25M Tribal Building Code Plus-up	\$701M National Competition for Mitigation Projects
Management Costs	✓	✓			✓
Capability and Capacity Building Activities	✓	✓			
Hazard Mitigation Projects	✓	✓			✓
Building Code Adoption and Enforcement	✓	✓	✓	✓	

## Application Deadlines

- To apply for funding made available, applicants must adhere to the application and funding deadlines. The application period opens on **Oct.16, 2023**.
- Eligible applicants must apply for funding using the FEMA Grants Outcomes (FEMA GO) management system. Applications must be received in the FEMA GO Portal by **Feb. 29, 2024 (3 p.m. ET)**. Applications received by FEMA GO after this date will not be considered for funding.
- The application deadlines are for the applicants only and subapplicants should consult with their state, tribal or territorial agency to confirm deadlines to submit subapplications for their consideration.
- Applicants experiencing technical problems outside of their control must notify FEMA by **3 p.m. ET on Feb. 27, 2024**. No new system-related issues will be addressed after this deadline.

## Application Assistance

- FEMA GO Help Desk: [femago@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:femago@fema.dhs.gov). FEMA GO technical support for error messages or forgotten password: **877-585-3242**. Hazard Mitigation Assistance programmatic support for questions regarding things like eligibility: **866-222-3580**.
- For any subapplications submitted for the fiscal year 2023 cycle that met all programmatic requirements and did not get selected for BRIC and FMA funding, there are two options:
  - Applicants can consider repurposing their subapplications to the current eligibility criteria and applying for the next grant cycle.
  - Applicants can consider applying for other FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant programs, such as the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Safeguarding Tomorrow Revolving Loan Fund program, etc.

## Additional Resources

- General questions about the BRIC program can be directed to the appropriate [State Hazard Mitigation Officer \(SHMO\)](#) or [FEMA Regional Office](#) on [FEMA.gov](#). The HMA Helpline is available by telephone at (866) 222-3580.
- The FEMA [Mitigation Action Portfolio](#) includes examples of innovative hazard mitigation projects that address many types of natural hazards and emphasize the importance of collaboration between governments, private-sector entities, and non-governmental organizations in order to achieve effective hazard mitigation and disaster resilience.
- The following program support materials are specific to the BRIC application cycle for FY 2023:
  - Project Subapplication Tips
  - Building Code Activities
  - Partnership Activities
  - Project Scoping Activities
  - Hazard Mitigation Planning Activities
  - Technical Evaluation Criteria

- Qualitative Evaluation Criteria
- Tribal Information
- Direct Technical Assistance
- Phased Projects
- System-Based Mitigation
- BRIC and FMA Benefitting Area
- BRIC and FMA Cost-Effectiveness and Benefit-Cost Analysis Technical Assistance for Communities
- BRIC and FMA Cybersecurity Activities

For more information about BRIC please visit <https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/building-resilient-infrastructure-communities>