

Mitigation Framework Leadership Group 2021 Year in Review



The Mitigation Framework Leadership Group (MitFLG) provides a coordinating structure for mitigation across the federal government and with partners in mitigation nationally. The MitFLG operates according to the [National Mitigation Framework](#) (NMF) and its mission is to strengthen the nation's disaster resilience by expanding mitigation awareness, coordination, and action. FEMA, in coordination with other federal agencies, established and leads the MitFLG which is composed of federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial public-sector representatives.

The MitFLG integrates federal efforts to deliver the mitigation core capabilities in the NMF, assesses the effectiveness of these capabilities across the United States, catalyzes risk reduction measures across the country by gathering interagency perspectives on mitigation policy, and increases coordination in support of federal agency priorities. This summary outlines MitFLG activities during Fiscal Year 2021.

FY 2021 Focus Areas: Climate Change and Equity

Each year, the MitFLG identifies key areas and challenges to focus its resources on, then assigns resources or stands up working groups as needed to address these challenges.

At the beginning of FY 2021, the MitFLG focus was solely around overseeing the first full year of the [National Mitigation Investment Strategy](#) (Investment Strategy) Implementation. Early in the Biden Administration, Executive Orders [14008 on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad](#) and [13985 on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#) influenced an emphasis on coordination and collaboration on climate change and equity.

While prioritized by the current Administration, climate change and equity have been of concern to the MitFLG for years. The scope of the Investment Strategy includes changing conditions and vulnerable populations as guiding principles. All recommendations within the Investment Strategy were intended to support mitigation investment decision-making that takes changing conditions and vulnerable populations into consideration.

These guiding principles were at the forefront of our FY 2021 work with the [Wasatch Front Unreinforced Masonry Risk Reduction Strategy](#) (URM Strategy) which emphasizes ensuring our most vulnerable populations at the highest risk are prioritized for mitigation action; and the Mitigation Resource Portal which aims to decrease the complexity of locating federal funding sources for low-capacity communities.



FEMA

Implementation Team Initiatives

The Investment Strategy is a product the MitFLG developed and subsequently published in 2019. The goal of the Investment Strategy is to identify, prioritize and guide investments in pre- and post-disaster resilience and hazard mitigation-related activities. The Implementation Team serves as a catalyst to identify and promote investments in mitigation that are effective in achieving the Investment Strategy goals. The Implementation Team served as the MitFLG's sole working group in 2021, collaborating across multiple levels of government to drive mitigation action through initiatives that align to Investment Strategy recommendations and incorporate climate change and equity as enablers to increasing whole community resilience.

PARTNERSHIP WITH UTAH TO REDUCE EARTHQUAKE RISK

The Implementation Team's inaugural pilot project supported the State of Utah and community partners in their development of a strategy to address unreinforced masonry risk along the Wasatch Front. With assistance from the Implementation Team, FEMA and the State of Utah published the Unreinforced Masonry (URM) Strategy in March 2021.

To ensure this capability building could be shared with other communities, the Implementation Team developed a companion document that illustrates the benefits of cross-jurisdictional partnerships to increase community resilience through identifying best practices from, and replicability of, the Wasatch Front Pilot Project for other communities; and by developing recommendations for local and state agencies for pursuing a URM strategy.

The URM Strategy Best Practice and Transferability Report can be utilized by other entities who want to significantly reduce the risks caused by unreinforced masonry buildings or replicate mitigation best practices more broadly. These documented lessons learned will also be used to identify selection criteria for the MitFLG's identification of a future pilot project.

IDENTIFICATION OF FEDERAL ALIGNMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Implementation Team performed a gap analysis of climate resilience and equity-related federal interagency programs and initiatives and identified four federal alignment opportunities for potential MitFLG action.

- Build Climate Resilience Capacity in Minority and Underserved Communities: Minority and underserved communities do not have equitable access to federal climate resilience resources. Federal policies and assistance programs must address these inequities in a coordinated way, simplifying requirements and reducing other barriers to access.
- Federal Assistance for Climate Resilience: Lack of coordination among federal assistance programs creates barriers to whole community investment in resilience against climate change and other hazards. Alignment should be inclusive of community climate resilience plans and infrastructure resilience against climate change, and should address all communities, including underserved communities.

- **Benefit Cost Guidance and Rescoping Costs and Benefits to be More Inclusive of Co-Benefits:** Current benefit cost analyses are not fully inclusive of true community and regional costs and benefits and excludes many social, economic, environmental, cultural, regional, and collaborative infrastructure and lifeline considerations. Co-benefits, residual risk, and cumulative impacts associated with mitigation projects should be assessed at local and regional scales.
- **Incentives to Program Requirements:** Explore how federal policies and assistance can better incentivize hazard mitigation action at the local level and catalyze non-federal (state, local, tribal, and territorial and private) investment in these actions.

These four alignment opportunities will inform FY22 initiatives such as leveraging federal assessments to identify actions for interagency collaboration, increasing flexibility and consistency in how costs and benefits are quantified and qualified across federal programs, and continuing to solicit feedback from state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) and non-governmental organizations on improvements to our programs.

INVESTMENT STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION MEASUREMENT

The Implementation Team identified potential metrics for tracking Investment Strategy recommendations by researching potential sources for data collection and clarifying target measurement goals and baselines. These sources and targets were presented to the MitFLG for their approval. This initiative is a first step to clarifying metrics for the Investment Strategy so MitFLG and Implementation Team progress, and the impact of their initiatives, can be tracked against clear baselines.

PARTNERSHIP WITH CENSUS TO INCREASE DATA SHARING

The Implementation Team supported the creation of a Census Research Data Center project, the Mitigation Investment Data Lab (MIDL), that promotes natural disaster research by leveraging Census Bureau data and the Data Linkage infrastructure. The initiative also supports new projects that build evidence to help federal and SLTT governments develop disaster plans and allocate scarce resources. Census approved the creation of the MIDL in September 2020 and approved initial projects in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service and FEMA in April 2021. Current research topics include impacts on families after hurricanes and risk in the wildland-urban interface.

MITIGATION RESOURCE PORTAL PROPOSAL

The Implementation Team developed a proposal for a portal that would provide decision-makers with mitigation funding and resource options, project inspiration, and possible partnerships by collaborating with the [National Institute of Building Sciences](#) to understand stakeholder perspectives and collecting data about their preferences for a portal through a survey.

Mitigation funding resources and mitigation project success stories were also collected to inform the vision of a mitigation portal. By consolidating mitigation resources and project examples, the portal aims to help SLTT partners effectively increase community resilience. Until the mitigation resource portal can become reality, this collection of resources and project success stories will be shared with SLTT partners as an interim phase of the project.

Strategic Outlook for Fiscal Year 2022

During the FY 2021 third quarter MitFLG Meeting, the MitFLG established opportunities for collaboration and alignment and identified a need to collectively share resources to further MitFLG initiatives. Additionally, the MitFLG came to consensus on Implementation Team initiatives showing alignment with priorities and future actions.

The final meeting of FY 2021 highlighted that the executive orders on equity and climate change continue to influence the strategic direction of Implementation Team initiatives and MitFLG priorities. In addition, the MitFLG suggested the Implementation Team's interpretation of mitigation and efforts to mitigate should incorporate a broad definition of the term to represent diverse stakeholders.

In FY 2022, the MitFLG will continue to provide support and strategic direction for the Implementation Team activities and will coordinate around current Executive Orders on equity and climate change. Among other key activities, the MitFLG will work to socialize its role and history with new White House and interagency working groups and task forces and work together to identify activities the MitFLG can support to advance the Administration's priorities.

Resources

[National Mitigation Framework](#)

[National Mitigation Investment Strategy](#)

[14008 on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad](#)

[13985 on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#)

[Wasatch Front Unreinforced Masonry Risk Reduction Strategy](#)

[National Institute of Building Sciences Turbo Grants Survey Report](#)