

Task 2 – Build the Planning Team

A second critical task at the beginning of the planning process is to assemble a planning team of representatives from each jurisdiction and partner organization. These planning partners have the expertise to develop the plan, and their organizations have the authority to implement the mitigation strategy developed through the planning process. This is the core group of people responsible for developing and reviewing drafts of the plan, creating the mitigation strategy, and submitting the final plan for local adoption. Task 2 describes how to identify potential planning team members, communicate the importance of their participation, and kick off the planning process.

Identify Planning Team Members

When building the planning team, start with existing community organizations or committees if possible. For mitigation plan updates, reconvene the team from the previous planning process along with any additional individuals or organizations. A committee that oversees the comprehensive plan or addresses issues related to land use, transportation, or public facilities can be a good foundation for your mitigation planning team. You may consider how threats and hazards impact economic development, housing, health and social services, infrastructure, or natural and cultural resources to determine what agencies and offices to include. You could also build on your community's existing [Local Emergency Planning Committee \(LEPC\)](#).¹ This group deals with hazardous materials safety and may also address other threats and natural hazards issues. In small communities, LEPCs may be comprised of the same people and organizations that are needed for the mitigation planning team.



Representatives from agencies involved in hazard mitigation activities, agencies with the authority to regulate development, and offices responsible for enforcing local ordinances are important members of the planning team. These agencies are likely to be assigned responsibility and have the expertise for implementing mitigation actions. Examples of partner agencies are listed in the sidebar. Appendix A also includes a checklist of potential agencies and organizations to consider when you are building the planning team (see Worksheet 2.1).

It is important to distinguish between those who should serve as members of the planning team and other stakeholders. Stakeholders are individuals or groups that are affected by a mitigation action or policy and include businesses, private organizations, and citizens. Unlike planning team members, stakeholders may not be involved in all stages of the planning process, but they inform the planning team on a specific topic or provide input from different points of view in the community. *Task 3 – Create an Outreach Strategy* provides ideas about how and when to involve stakeholders in the planning process.

Partners Involved in Hazard Mitigation Activities

- Building Code Enforcement
- Emergency Management
- Fire Department/Districts
- Floodplain Administration
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- Parks and Recreation
- Planning/Community Development
- Public Information Office
- Public Works
- Stormwater Management
- Transportation (Roads/Bridges)
- State Emergency Management Office
- Regional Planning Agency

Partners with Authority to Regulate Development

- City Council/Board of Commissioners
- Planning Commission
- Planning/Community Development
- Regional/Metropolitan Planning
- Special Districts

¹ For more information on LEPCs, visit the Environmental Protection Agency's Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) Local Emergency Planning Requirements: http://www.epa.gov/oem/content/epcra/epcra_plan.htm.

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Certain stakeholders must be given the opportunity to be on the planning team or otherwise involved in the planning process, including:

- Local and regional agencies involved in hazard mitigation activities.
- Agencies that have the authority to regulate development.
- Neighboring jurisdictions.
- Businesses, academia, and other private and nonprofit interests.

Engage Local Leadership

Local elected officials and staff must provide strong leadership throughout the planning process. Leadership from elected officials with an interest in improving safety and disaster resiliency ensures the planning process has visibility and encourages stakeholder participation.

Equally important is the role of a strong advocate or local champion for mitigation on the planning team, who helps enlist the support and participation of local officials and community leaders and leads the hazard mitigation planning effort. If one has not already been established, the planning team may select a leader, or chairperson, to oversee and help manage the planning process. This person does not need to be a professional planner or expert in hazard mitigation, but must be able to communicate the purpose and importance of the mitigation plan, convene the planning team, and facilitate the completion of tasks required for the mitigation plan to be finished on schedule.

Promote Participation and Buy-In

Identifying potential planning team members may be fairly straightforward; however, persuading individuals with competing priorities to invest time and energy in the mitigation planning process can be challenging.

It is important to determine what planning team members are expected to contribute, as well as how they will be invited to participate. While updating a plan, you should consider what worked well or did not during the previous planning process. The following are approaches for recruiting potential team members that have worked for communities in the past:

- After sending an email or letter invitation, follow it up with a phone call to emphasize why participation is needed and to answer any questions.
- Send a formal invitation signed by the mayor, elected official, or department head.
- Plan the initial meeting at a convenient time and location for everyone.
- Provide beverages or food at meetings to bolster attendance and attention spans.

The people invited to participate want to know what is expected of their participation and why their presence is important. The purpose and importance of various contributors includes the following:

- **Local community planners** can help the planning team understand past, current, and future community development trends, the policies or activities that affect development, and the relationship between hazards and development.
- **Emergency managers** are first responders to disasters, have information on past occurrences and existing preparedness measures, and have a direct line of communication with the State emergency management agency.



Element A2

The planning process shall include an opportunity for neighboring communities, local and regional agencies involved in hazard mitigation activities, and agencies that have the authority to regulate development, as well as businesses, academia and other private and non-profit interests to be involved in the planning process.

44 CFR §201.6(b)(2)

- **GIS specialists** can analyze and map data to support the planning process and communicate complex information, such as the locations of assets at risk in threat- or hazard-prone areas and estimates of damage for a particular disaster scenario.
- **Public works/engineering staff** can help identify current or projected problems for the community’s infrastructure that can be addressed through capital improvements supported by the mitigation plan.
- **Elected and executive officials** are mindful of the community as a whole and communicate how the mitigation plan can support other social, economic, or environmental goals for the community.
- **Floodplain administrators** provide information on your community’s flood hazard maps, floodplain ordinance, repetitive loss properties, and actions to continue compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program and reduce flood losses.
- **State and Federal partners** provide available data, understand how to identify and leverage resources across agencies, and can identify state and Federal programs with complementary missions.

Planning efforts can be more successful if the team is designated with some official authority to develop the mitigation plan. Therefore, the planning team can obtain official recognition in the form of a council resolution or a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). This demonstrates community support, increases commitment to the process, and improves the likelihood that mitigation actions identified in the plan will be implemented successfully. An example MOA for a multi-jurisdictional planning team is included in Appendix A (see Worksheet 1.2).

Multi-Jurisdictional Planning Team

If you are developing a multi-jurisdictional plan, creating a planning team structure that allows for coordination and accountability among and within the jurisdictions is important (see Figure 2.1). Each jurisdiction will have at least one representative on the planning team. This representative will need to report back to their community on a regular basis, as well as gather feedback and input for the plan. Another planning team model may include a core group of individuals from each jurisdiction participating on the planning team. The method of representation should be based on each community’s size and the level of effort required to assess unique risks and develop specific mitigation actions.

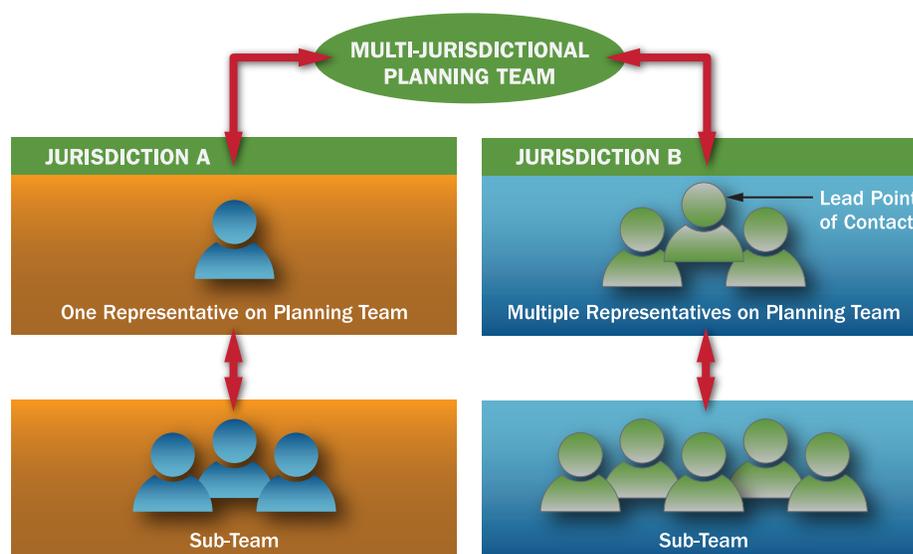


Figure 2.1: Multi-jurisdictional planning team

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Multi-Jurisdiction Planning Team

The Multi-jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan for Monmouth County, New Jersey included 53 municipalities that required an organizational structure to facilitate inter- and intra-governmental coordination. The overall Planning Committee was divided into one Core Planning Group and 53 separate Jurisdictional Assessment Teams—one for each participating jurisdiction.

Core Planning Group

The Core Planning Group (CPG) was made up of County Steering Committee members and leaders from each Jurisdictional Assessment Team. CPG members were typically representatives of their local emergency management, engineering, planning, GIS, administration, public works, building, or highway departments. The CPG managed the overall plan activities and directly contributed to the decision making process.

Jurisdictional Assessment Teams

The Jurisdictional Assessment Teams (JAT) were headed by a Team Leader who served and represented their interests on the CPG. JATs included broader representation from within the individual jurisdictions, and many chose to align their JAT with an existing Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). The JATs were responsible for local community involvement and were required to:

- Coordinate and facilitate local efforts.
- Attend meetings.
- Provide information and feedback.
- Involve the public and community stakeholders in the planning process.
- Assess mitigation alternatives.
- Select a course of action to be followed for their communities.
- Adopt the plan.
- Implement the plan and monitor its progress.

This organizational structure was successfully implemented for the County's initial plan development and is maintained for plan updates.

Initial Steps for the Planning Team

The mitigation planning process generally includes a series of meetings or work sessions. For example, the first meeting of the planning team, or the plan kickoff meeting, may focus on introducing team members, describing the overall purpose of the plan, defining the team's responsibilities, validating the project scope and schedule, and brainstorming who else should be involved in the planning process. Some suggested outcomes of a planning team kickoff meeting are the following:

1. Confirm plan purpose

The planning team may start by agreeing on the overall purpose of the planning process and the outcome that the community seeks to accomplish as the plan is implemented. Some communities develop a mission statement that drives the process and describes in a short, simple statement the intended outcome. This helps unite the planning team around a common purpose and provides a foundation for the rest of the planning process. This also helps



Mission Statements

Create a disaster resilient Marion County (Marion County, Oregon Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan).

Through partnerships and careful planning, identify and reduce the vulnerability to natural hazards in order to protect the health, safety, quality of life, environment, and economy of the communities within Somerset County (Somerset County, New Jersey All Hazards Mitigation Plan).

to communicate the reason for the plan to stakeholders, elected officials, and the public. If you received a mitigation planning grant from FEMA, the grant may include language regarding the overall purpose of the plan that could be incorporated. The plan's scope of work often includes more information on the background and objectives of the planning project, as well.

2. Review the current mitigation plan

If updating your mitigation plan, a general review of your community's previously approved plan can provide a good starting point for identifying ideas for improvement and areas that may require more time and resources. This can impact the plan's scope and schedule.



3. Refine plan scope and schedule

The kickoff meeting is a good time for the planning team to agree upon the overall scope of work and schedule for developing or updating the mitigation plan and review the requirements of a hazard mitigation plan for FEMA approval. If you received a grant to develop the plan, the scope of work and schedule may already be developed, or the grant may serve as the starting point for a more detailed work plan. It is important that everyone walks away from the kickoff meeting with an understanding of the overall project purpose, schedule, and tasks, as well as the agendas and goals for future planning team meetings. The remaining tasks in this *Handbook* can help you to establish a schedule and agenda items for future meetings. A sample schedule is also available in Appendix A (see Worksheet 2.2).

4. Establish responsibilities

The planning team can establish roles and responsibilities at the beginning of the planning process. The planning team members should have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, as well as how much time they may need to dedicate to the project. This can help you to identify any potential gaps or shortfalls in resources needed to complete the mitigation plan early in the planning process.

5. Develop an outreach strategy

One critical task of the planning team is determining who else needs to be involved in the mitigation planning process and how. An outreach strategy identifies the stakeholder groups that are important to involve in the process and how to engage them. The planning team also develops ideas for how to involve the general public in the planning process. *Task 3 – Create an Outreach Strategy* describes how to develop a comprehensive approach to engaging stakeholders and the public in the mitigation planning process.



Planning Team Responsibilities

Wilson County, Kansas Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (2008)

- Provide facilities for meetings
- Attend meetings
- Collect data
- Manage administrative details
- Make decisions on plan process and content
- Submit mitigation action implementation worksheets
- Review drafts
- Coordinate and assist with public involvement and plan adoptions

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Documentation of the Planning Process – Planning Team

The plan document is the written record of the planning process and must describe how the plan was prepared for each jurisdiction including the schedule and activities that made up the plan's development, as well as who was involved in the process. The plan can also document how the planning team members were selected and what each team member contributed to the planning effort.

Multi-jurisdictional plans must identify who represented each jurisdiction, including the person's position or title and agency, at a minimum. Since the plan is intended to provide a resource for the community, the planning process provides enough detail to allow those updating the plan to identify and coordinate with those agencies that were involved in the process.

Plan updates must include documentation of the current planning process undertaken to update the plan.

Conclusion

Task 2 describes how to identify and engage a planning team, including planning teams that represent multiple jurisdictions. The planning process is as important as the plan itself, and the planning team helps shape and guide that process. Task 3 describes how the planning team can involve other stakeholders and the public.



Element A1

The plan shall document the planning process used to develop the plan, including how it was prepared, who was involved in the process, and how the public was involved.

44 CFR §201.6(c)(1)



Mitigation Planning Team Worksheet

Use this worksheet to identify partner organizations to invite to participate on the planning team. Some organizations do not need to be involved in every decision of the planning process but are stakeholders that require outreach and involvement during the planning process. Revise the list of general partners below to reflect the organizations in your community. Mark which organizations will be invited to participate on the planning team and which will be involved through stakeholder outreach activities.

Planning Team – The core group responsible for making decisions, guiding the planning process, and agreeing upon the final contents of the plan

Stakeholders – Individuals or groups that affect or can be affected by a mitigation action or policy

Partner Organization	Planning Team	Stakeholder	Notes
Local Agencies			
Building Code Enforcement			
City Management/County Administration			
Emergency Management			
Fire Department/District			
Floodplain Administration			
Geographic Information Systems			
Parks and Recreation			
Planning/Community Development			
Public Works			
Stormwater Management			
Transportation (Roads and Bridges)			
City Council/Board of Commissioners			
Planning Commission			
Planning/Community Development			
Regional/Metropolitan Planning Organization(s)			
City/County Attorney's Office			
Economic Development Agency			
Local Emergency Planning Committee			
Police/Sheriff's Department			
Sanitation Department			
Tax Assessor's Office			
Special Districts and Authorities			
Airport, Seaport Authorities			
Fire Control District			
Flood Control District			
School District(s)			
Transit Authority			
Utility Districts			

Worksheet 2.1

Mitigation Planning Team Worksheet

Partner Organization	Planning Team	Stakeholder	Notes
Non-Governmental Organizations			
American Red Cross			
Chamber of Commerce			
Community/Faith-Based Organizations			
Environmental Organizations			
Homeowners Associations			
Neighborhood/Community Organizations			
Utility Companies			
State Agencies			
State Emergency Management Agency			
State Dam Safety			
State Department of Transportation			
State Fire and Forestry Agency			
State Geological Survey			
State Water Resources Agency			
State National Flood Insurance Program Coordinator			
State Planning Office			
Federal Agencies			
Federal Emergency Management Agency			
Land Management Agencies (USFS/NPS/BLM)			
National Weather Service			
US Army Corps of Engineers			
US Department of Housing and Urban Development			
US Department of Transportation			
US Environmental Protection Agency			
US Geological Survey			
Other			
Tribal Officials			
Colleges/Universities			
Land Developers and Real Estate Agencies			
Major Employers and Businesses			
Professional Associations			
Neighboring Jurisdictions			

Note: Multi-jurisdictional planning teams require at least one representative for each participating jurisdiction. This worksheet can be used by each jurisdiction to identify their local sub-team.