

Fort Bend County Elevation and Buyout Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) Program Design Summary

Following the April and May 2016 Flooding events, Fort Bend County (County) began to plan for the submission of applications for grant funding to buyout properties in the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) floodway and to elevate or buyout properties in the SFHA floodplain to mitigate and reduce the risk of flooding in Fort Bend County.

Program Funding

The County intends on supplying the necessary support to prepare and submit the grant applications. The FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) provides 75% Federal funding for the total project cost. The County currently intends to seek Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding and/or qualified in-kind services to help offset the required 25% local match for qualified applicants. If these funds do not become available the property owners will be responsible for providing the local match requirements in part, or in whole. In this case the property owner's match typically comes from a reduction in their proceeds from the acquisition of their property.

Municipality Participation

Municipalities within Fort Bend County may choose to participate in the County's HMGP grant program. Should they choose to participate, the County will conduct outreach to the Municipalities' property owners. In order to participate in the County's HMGP grant program a Municipality must accept the approach identified in this Project Design Summary.

Municipalities will be expected to make some contribution towards the program. The contribution can either be financial or in-kind and can be negotiated upon the County's receipt of grant award. The nature of the contribution will be memorialized in an interlocal agreement between the County and the Municipality.

If a Municipality wishes to participate in the program, it will need to supply the County with a list of the properties that were identified as being damaged during the 2016 floods and the level of damage it received. If the property was determined to be substantially damaged, a copy of the Substantial Damage Estimation notification letter will also need to be provided. For properties that utilize buyout as a mitigation option, the resulting vacant lot becomes the property of the Municipality or County and cannot be built on again and any required maintenance will be their responsibility. The property must be deed-restricted in perpetuity to open space uses to restore and/or conserve the natural floodplain functions. A discussion on eligible and ineligible uses of acquired land can be found in section A.6 Supplemental Guidance of FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance Guidance Addendum. Agreements from neighbors, homeowner associations, conservation agencies may be considered to help with the maintenance of these properties.

Property Owner Responsibilities

This program is entirely voluntary. Property owners will be given opportunity to be included in the application and will have the ability to decide if they would like to continue to move forward with the mitigation of their property once a grant award is received by the County.

All property owners interested in being included in the County's grant applications will be required to submit a Voluntary Interest Notification Letter. This form is required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and is an acknowledgement by each property owner that they have been told the grant program is entirely voluntary. The form asks for the property address, mailing address, property owners name, telephone number, e-mail address and information on the property's flood insurance policy if it was insured at the time of the flood.

Each property owner will also be required to submit a photograph of each side of their property (view from the north, south, east and west).

If the County or a Municipality is unable to secure funding for the local match requirements, the property owner will be responsible for their project's portion of the required local match.

Property Owner Outreach and Intake

The County will reach out to any property owner that was identified as receiving damage from the 2016 flood. This outreach will begin by sending a letter to each property owners mailing address as identified by the Fort Bend Central Appraisal District and to the property's physical address.

Property owners will be able to submit their required documentation via the USPS mail, e-mail, fax, or by dropping the documentation at the County's Flood Recovery Program Information Center. The Information Center will be on the 1st floor of the Historic Courthouse and will be open starting September 15, 2016 on Monday, Thursday and the first two Saturdays of October from 2-7PM, or by appointment.

Priority Ranking System

HMGP is a statewide competitive program and the County anticipates that there will be a need to prioritize the properties that are submitted for grant funding consideration.

- 1) Properties in the Floodway that were estimated to be Substantially Damaged
- 2) Properties in the Floodway that were damaged
- 3) Properties in the Floodplain that were estimated to be Substantially Damaged
- 4) Properties in the Floodplain that were damaged

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In each of these priorities, the earlier a property owner submits their required documents the higher they will be ranked.

HMGP Programmatic Requirements

Even if a property owner submits the all required documentation, the property will also have to meet the Federal eligibility requirements. Of these requirements, it will be important for the property to meet FEMA's benefit cost analysis criteria. If any of the following criteria are met for properties in the 100-year floodplain then the property will already be considered to meet this requirement:

1. The property was deemed to be substantially damaged from the flood
2. The total project cost of an property elevation is less than \$175,000
3. The total project cost of an property buyout is less than \$276,000

If a property does not meet these criteria an analysis will need to be conducted to show a favorable benefit cost analysis that documents that the proposed mitigation measures will substantially reduce the risk from future disasters.

Program Timeline

August 30, 2016 - Decision on each Municipality's participation and list of damage properties with level of damage due to Fort Bend County Emergency Management.

September 6, 2016 - Program proposal will be presented to the County Commissioners for approval.

October 8, 2016 - Documents required from property owners must be hand delivered or postmarked.

October 31, 2016 - Deadline for the first grant application opportunity. Prepared applications must be submitted to the State of Texas.

January 17, 2017 - Deadline for the second know grant application opportunity. Prepared applications must be submitted to the State of Texas.

January 2017 and April 2017 - Anticipated timeframe of award notifications.