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# Pathways to Equity through Hazard Mitigation

**Planning - Performance Measurement - Prioritization - Program Optimization**

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WHY NOW?

## A Confluence of Opportunity

Catastrophic storms and wildfires in 2017 contributed to the passage of the 2018 Disaster Recovery Reform Action in 2018. The impact of COVID and other disasters on vulnerable and marginalized communities and Biden Administration priorities has put the spotlight on disaster inequity.

**\$2.3 Billion** in 2022 **Building Resilient Infrastructure in Communities**.

Before BRIC, lack of sustained, predictable funding was a **#1 impediment to annual mitigation grant applications**.

**122+** wildfire, weather, and flooding disasters each costing more than **\$1 billion** since 2016.

2022 added 1 wildfire, 1 drought, 14 severe storms, and 1 flood. According to NOAA, total costs of these disasters is more than **\$165 billion**.

### Justice40 and CDRZ

make equity a top priority for climate and environmental justice resilience investments.

BRIC is a **covered program** designated to direct 40% of benefits to disadvantaged communities; CDRZ is designed to increase investment in the most vulnerable places.

**\$3.46 billion** in **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program** funds available from COVID-19 disaster declarations in all 50 states

**15-20% of each state disaster total goes to HMGP**. HMGP can be prioritized to focus on vulnerable communities.

**Up to 10%** in funding from FEMA hazard grant **management costs** including planning, project identification, and application development.

Sub-recipients can receive **additional 5%** to cover grant **admin costs**.



## Key Challenges

- **Communities lack experience** in finding great mitigation projects that benefit the most vulnerable.
- BCA, EHP review, and **application development costs** limit under-resourced community participation.
- Funding for applications and **local match** put projects out of reach for those who need them most.
- Mitigation is approached as **disconnected projects** instead of a cohesive, comprehensive program.
- A successful mitigation **project does not equate to a sustainable mitigation program.**
- **Rushing in recovery is incentivized**, including by the new, higher small project threshold

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## Key Opportunities

- **BRIC and the Community Disaster Resilience Zones Act** offer permission structures to establish clear priorities to invest in vulnerable communities.
- **Plan to project pipelines are effective.** The most successful BRIC states actively employ them.
- **Section 406 and 428 – Post-Disaster Mitigation and Alternative Procedures** offer communities the chance to build for the future.
- **Justice40 and FEMA Resilience Leadership Intent** emphasize ‘accountable equity.’

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## Equity Priorities

### BRIC Qualitative Criteria

“While the intensity of a hazard is important, of equal or greater importance is the identification of the population impacted, many of whose demographic or socioeconomic characteristics may place its members at greater risk of harm before, during, and after a disaster.

- (1) community-wide benefits,
- (2) the proportion of the population that will be impacted, including a description of the disadvantaged communities as referenced in EO 14008,
- (3) how the project was selected and designed to maximize positive impacts and minimize negative impacts to any disadvantaged populations as referenced in EO 14008, and
- (4) how the proposed project clearly benefits a disadvantaged community.

### CDRZ

- This act requires the President to continue to maintain a natural hazard assessment program...showing the risk of natural hazards and include ratings and data for loss exposure, **social vulnerability**, community resilience...
- ...community disaster resilience zones (CDRZs), shall be (1) **the 50 census tracts assigned the highest individual hazard risk ratings**; and (2) **in each state, not less than 1% of census tracts that are assigned a high individual risk rating**, taking into consideration specified geographic balance.
- The President may provide financial, technical, or other assistance to an eligible entity (a state, Indian tribal government, or local government) that plans to perform a resilience or mitigation project within, or that primarily benefits, a CDRZ.

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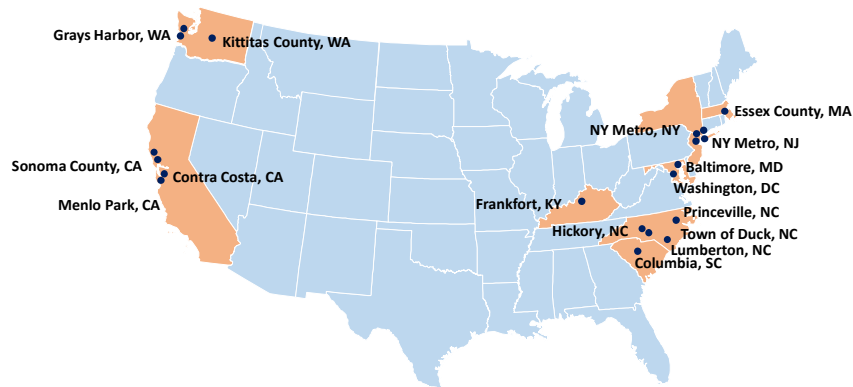
## Navigating a Plan to Project Pipeline



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## BRIC 2020/2021 Recipients

Almost all recipients from the inaugural year of BRIC come from communities with advanced technical assistance and project pipelines.



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## 406 & 428 – Equitable Mitigation in Recovery

### Section 428

#### Alternative Procedures

- Capped “block grant”-style disaster recovery
- Build back what you need rather than what was there before.
- Equitable recovery includes building for the future, not the past

### Section 406

#### Post-Disaster Mitigation

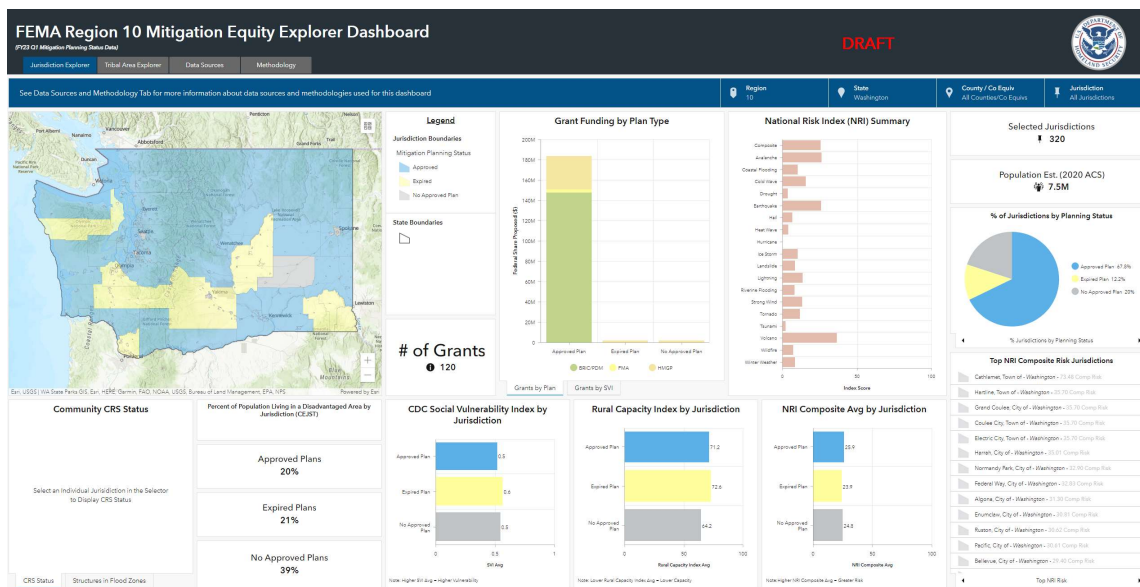
- Based on current funding patterns, most mitigation and climate adaptation will occur during recovery.
- Resilient recovery is going to be a primary path to resilience
- Retreat is not the primary option

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## Justice40 and Performance Measurement

- Justice40 focuses on delivering a greater share (at least 40%) of benefits to communities that are or have been historically marginalized or underserved.
- This is the investment side of the Environmental Justice coin, focused more on benefits than on burdens.
- Justice40 depends on **effective measurement** – the ability to assess:
  - **What** a project will impact
  - **Where** it will impact
  - **Who** it will impact

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"It is critical that equity be centered in humanity rather than performative transactions. Checking the box **causes more harm than good.**"

*– Chauncia Willis, CEO, Institute for Diversity and Inclusion in Emergency Management, March 2021*