Date: June 1, 2018

To: Eligible Applicants, Regional Councils, and Project Management Firms

From: Cody Schulz,
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	ND Department of Emergency Services

RE: Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program (PDM) and Flood Mitigation Assistance Program (FMA) Application Process

The ND Department of Emergency Services (NDDES), acting as the grantee for all Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Programs, will be providing technical assistance to eligible applicants interested in applying for projects under the Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) programs. Eligible applicants include state, local, tribal, and territorial governments that currently have, or have participated in the creation of, a FEMA approved Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (MHMP). If a governmental unit does not have a current FEMA approved MHMP, they can apply to create or update an MHMP, but are ineligible to apply for any other eligible activities. State Agencies fall under the State of North Dakota MHMP and are eligible to apply for funding.

This document will outline the application process for both the PDM and FMA Programs which consist of the following steps: Completing a Notice of Interest (NOI); Requesting Access to the Federal eGrants System; Completing an Electronic Application; and Submitting the Application for NDDES review.

**Notice of Interest (NOI)**

Interested and eligible applicants must request access to the NDDES Grant Management website: [https://grants.des.nd.gov](https://grants.des.nd.gov). A system administrator will approve each access request so applicants can access the site and complete a Notice of Interest (NOI) for each project they would like to apply for. An NOI provides a general scope of work and cost estimate to determine if a project may be potentially eligible for approval under the PDM or FMA programs based on the rules and regulations documented within the Unified Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Guidance.

Once a user account is active and access to [https://grants.des.nd.gov](https://grants.des.nd.gov) has been granted, the user will only have access to the jurisdiction or organization they represent. All applicants are separated to ensure privacy and prevent fraud. After logging into the website, the name of the user’s jurisdiction or organization will be along the right hand side of the screen under “Applicant You Represent.” Under the applicant name will be a link that says “Apply for Grant.”

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Click the “Apply for Grant” link and a new window will open that allows the user to choose which HMA Grant Program and Project Type is being applied for. For the Grant Program, users must choose either the 2017 PDM Program or 2017 FMA Program. For Project Type, choose Regular Projects (R) for any project that will consist of construction or installation activities, and choose Planning Projects (P) for all Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan projects. Once a Grant and Project Type have been chosen, click the “Create” button and an NOI will be opened for the applicant to complete.

Fill out as much information as possible within the NOI form, but at a minimum the boxes outlined in red must be completed or the NOI cannot be submitted for State review. Once the NOI is filled out, click the “Submit” button near the top left of the NOI form. If the project is potentially eligible, the NOI will be approved and the applicant can then request access to the federal eGrants system to complete an application that will be submitted to NDDES for initial review. If the project is ineligible, the NOI will be denied and the applicant will be informed that the project cannot be funded under the PDM or FMA programs.

**Requesting Access to the Federal eGrants System**

After a project’s NOI has been approved, eligible applicants will need to request access to the federal eGrants system in order to complete the electronic PDM and FMA applications. If an applicant has requested access in the past, and still remembers their User ID and password, skip to the section “Completing the Electronic Application.” If an applicant is new to eGrants, or has simply forgotten their User ID and Password, they will need to request access into eGrants by completing the following steps:

1. Go to [https://portal.fema.gov/](https://portal.fema.gov/)
2. Click on the “New User?” button
3. New users will be taken to a security page with a distorted random word. Follow the instructions, type the random word into the answer area, and click the “Submit” button to proceed.
4. Enter the applicable registration information: Name, address, organization, contact phone number, and email. On this page, new users will also choose their User ID which is needed to access eGrants. A User ID can only be a combination of lowercase letters and numbers, with a minimum of seven (7) and maximum of ten (10) characters. Special characters (e.g. #, $, %) cannot be used. When finished, click the “Submit” button to proceed.
5. Choose a password. Passwords should be as strong as possible to prevent unauthorized access. In order to proceed, your password must be considered at least “Medium” strength according to the FEMA portal site. Try to combine upper case letters, lower case letters, and numbers to create your password. Some special characters cannot be used, such as apostrophes, spaces, commas, quotation marks, or pound symbols. One acceptable example is Qaz77Wsx which is considered a “Medium” strength password that will allow users to continue. Make sure to write down the User ID and password for future use, and then click the “Submit” button to proceed.
6. If everything has been completed correctly, the next page will say Congratulations, your account is registered. At this point, new users have access into the general [https://portal.fema.gov](https://portal.fema.gov) website, but still need to request access for Mitigation eGrants in order to access the PDM and FMA applications. To request access, click on the button which says “Click here to request new privileges.”
7. The next page alphabetically lists all the different programs that can be used in the FEMA Portal. Locate the program labeled “Mitigation eGrants” and click on its corresponding button which says “Request Access.”
8. The next page asks the user to enter a valid access ID in order to obtain access privileges to the system. If the user represents a City, County, or state agency, use the access code S38. If the user represents a tribe, then use the code S38IT. In these codes, S stands for Sub-Grantee, the number 38 is the state’s code, and the IT used for tribes means Indian Tribe. Enter the correct code and hit the “Submit” button.

9. After this request is submitted, the FEMA portal will notify the user that their request is being processed and that they will be notified by email when the request has been approved. The State Hazard Mitigation Officer will then enter eGrants to grant the user access. Once the State Mitigation Officer approves the request, a user can enter into Mitigation eGrants anytime in the future to create project applications.

**Mitigation eGrants Applications**

After gaining access into the eGrants system, the next step will be completing and submitting a subgrant application to NDDES for initial review.

Begin by logging into eGrants at [https://portal.fema.gov](https://portal.fema.gov) using the User ID and Password created during the eGrants access request process. After logging in, eGrants may ask the user if they would like to update their profile. If needed, the user can review and update their profile, or simply continue forward to the eGrants home screen without performing any updates.

**New Applications**

On the eGrants home screen, there are numerous options to create and work on submitted or unsubmitted applications. To begin a new project application for PDM or FMA, click on “Create New Subgrant Application.” The user will then need to name their application. Use a title which includes the jurisdiction’s name and the proposed activity (e.g. Burleigh County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, Valley City Acquisition, etc). Users will also need to choose an application type. For projects that include installation or construction activities, choose Project Application. For all Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Projects, choose Planning Application. Once the page is completed, click on “Save and Continue.”

At this point, eGrants gives users the ability to copy information from an existing application that was submitted during past PDM and FMA grant periods, and use it in their new applications. If you have completed any applications in the past few years, you can choose to copy the entire application, or only certain sections, to make the new application process a little faster. If you do not have any recent applications, or do not wish to copy from any, then simply click the “Start a New Application” button to open a new and blank application.

**Completing the Electronic Application**

Electronic applications within eGrants are broken into numerous sections, such as Subgrantee (the section identifying the jurisdiction applying for the project), Contacts (the section identifying the primary and alternate contacts), Scope of Work (the section identifying the scope of the project), etc.

When first accessing a new application, the application status will show that all sections of the application are considered incomplete except for “Comments and Attachments.” In order to submit an application to NDDES for initial review, the applicant needs to open each section of the application that is labeled incomplete, fill in the required information per section, and save their changes. After a section is completed and the changes are saved, the application status will be updated to show that particular section is now complete. Once all sections of the application are listed as complete, the applicant will have the option to submit the project application by entering in their password and hitting “Submit.”
In addition to entering information into the electronic application, applicants will also need to upload backup documentation. Documentation can be uploaded into its corresponding section (e.g. Contractor Estimates/Quotes can be uploaded into the Cost Estimate section), or it can be uploaded into the Comments and Attachments section. Documentation requirements vary dependent on the project type, but are required for review and approval. The documentation requirements are as follows:

- For construction projects, applicants will need to provide backup documentation to support all project costs, environmental scoping and response letters from all applicable environmental agencies, a local match letter (templates available), a maintenance letter a city/county map with the project location clearly identified, a floodplain map with the project location clearly identified (if applicable), photos of the project site, signed homeowner documents for acquisitions (if applicable), and a complete Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA). A BCA provides an in depth analysis of past hazard related damages in order to determine the amount of benefits (in dollars) that are associated with completing a mitigation project. As long as the benefits are higher than the costs, the project will be considered cost effective. Construction projects must remain cost effective to remain eligible for funding under all HMA programs.

- For planning projects, applicants will need to provide backup documentation to support all project costs, an in-kind breakdown (if applicable), a local match letter, and letters of intent to participate from each jurisdiction including the tribe/county that is applying for the project. Letters of intent to participate are needed to show FEMA which jurisdictions will participate in the creation or update of the final MHMP, and will adopt the plan after receiving a plan approval from FEMA. Additionally, if the project is to update an MHMP, a copy of the previous plan’s crosswalk, as completed by FEMA, will also be required.

**Submitting the Electronic Application**

When the electronic application is complete, and all necessary backup documentation has been uploaded, the applicant can submit the application to NDDES for review. To submit the application, applicants must navigate to the bottom of the Application Status page, enter their password where indicated, and click on the “Submit” button. The application will then be submitted to NDDES.

NDDES will complete an eligibility and completeness review of the application, and if any required documentation is missing, the application will be sent back with a revision request. After all required documentation has been provided to NDDES, and the application is as complete as possible, NDDES will forward the application to FEMA for their formal review and selection process before the PDM and FMA application deadlines. The NDDES will monitor the status of the applications and provide applicants with any news and updates as they are made available by FEMA.

For assistance beyond what is provided in this guide, the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) has put together an independent study (IS) presentation that instructs applicants on how to navigate within the eGrants website, as well as complete each section of the subgrant application. Please visit the Independent Study (IS) course IS-30.A: Mitigation eGrants for the Subgrant Applicant at the following website: https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-30.a. Open the course documentation by clicking on the “Interactive Web Based Course” link, and review the course materials to answer any additional questions.
If you have questions on any of the above information or for assistance in obtaining access to the [https://grants.des.nd.gov](https://grants.des.nd.gov) website, NOI creation, application completion, and answering any general programmatic questions, please contact Justin Messner, State Mitigation Officer, at 701-328-8107 or jmessner@nd.gov; or Hazard Mitigation Specialist Gary Simmons at 701-328-8255 or gsimmons@nd.gov.