



TEXAS COMMUNITY SAFE ROOM PROGRAM FACT SHEET



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- The Texas Community Safe Room program is a normally 25% local / 75% federal reimbursable match grant for producing new community tornado and coastal hurricane safe rooms.
- Project locations below 24 ft. MSL or inside the 500 year floodplain are ineligible for funding.
- Local Government entities are normally eligible applicants, but in some cases, private non-profits agencies may apply.

PROGRAM FUNDING

-Community Tornado and Hurricane safe rooms are funded with FEMA supplied mitigation grants; the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM). Both of these grant programs are limited and competitive, not all applications can be selected and funded.

-HMGP is funded only in the event of a federally declared disaster; the state will publish application period opening and deadline in letters to the senior elected representative in each jurisdiction. Although HMGP is available statewide, the state normally prioritizes funding to those jurisdictions most heavily impacted by the event.

-PDM is a grant opportunity funded by FEMA annually.

-Mitigation grant funding is only available to jurisdictions that have a FEMA approved Mitigation Action Plan and which are at the Basic level of preparedness on their Emergency Management Plan.

-FEMA does not provide funding for sheltering the general population. Community safe room projects are designed and funded to provide protection for specifically identified residents of the community for a pre-defined timeframe.

FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

-Only structures that meet the design criteria in FEMA P-361, Third Edition (March 2015) are eligible for FEMA funding (200 mph or 250 mph design wind).

-Building components not directly attributable to the population sheltering function of the building (parking, kitchen, showers, security systems etc.) are not reimbursable.

- The maximum size of Tornado safe rooms will be limited to an area sufficient to protect the population that could reasonably reach the building within typical warning times (normally 5 minutes/1/2 mile radius) and allowing 5 square feet per person.

- In most cases, this effectively limits the maximum shelter size to 6200 sf in dense urban areas and less than half of this in other locations.
- Due to the concentrated daytime population, safe rooms on school grounds most often offer the potential for a positive benefit /cost ratio and project eligibility.
- An Operations & Maintenance Plan for the safe room approved by the State and FEMA is required to complete the project.

STATE REQUIREMENTS

-The resulting structure may have an alternate use where some other activity takes place in all or part of the safe room when it is not in use as a windstorm shelter. However, not less than 80% of the interior space has to be available to shelter evacuees at the time of need. Space occupied by desks and partitions or bookshelves/lockers may not be counted as part of the 80%.

-Alternate use construction and improvements for community safe room projects are ineligible for FEMA funding and do not qualify as local matching funds for the project.

-Full plans & specs with a raised engineer seal must be sent to the State for an engineer peer review and approval by the State prior to starting construction,

-Ventilation and standby (emergency) power criteria are driven by the 2015 Edition of IBC and ICC-500 Chapter 7.

-The State requires a deed restriction on the project property to ensure uninterrupted operation as a community safe room for the duration of the project life, 30 years effective completion of the project.

-The state will re-inspect federally funded shelters approximately every three years to ensure the 80% usable space requirement is being maintained..

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

If you have questions or would like to request complete administration policies and guidelines in the *Texas Community Safe Room Handbook*, please contact the State Mitigation Section at (512) 424-5489, TDEM-mitigation@dps.texas.gov