



# 2023 Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant Round: Building Resilient Infrastructure & Communities (BRIC)

Washington State Military Department

Emergency Management Division

Camp Murray, WA 98430

## Announcement and Guidance: FEMA's 2023 BRIC Grant Round

The purpose of this announcement is to share key information regarding the release of FEMA's Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the FY2023 BRIC grant round, and to provide guidance to potential BRIC sub-applicants about Washington Emergency Management Division's (EMD) required grant application process.

### FY2023 BRIC Grant Application Timeline

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced the opening of their application period for the FY2023 Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program. EMD is designated to administer and oversee these programs for the State, including the application process for all eligible entities with the State (Federally recognized Tribes may apply directly to FEMA).

EMD has established a two-step process for BRIC sub-applicants that starts with a pre-application followed by a full application. EMD's process and timeline is designed to ensure we meet FEMA's Feb. 29, 2024 deadline for the State, as *applicant*, to submit its complete package of *sub-applications*. All entities seeking grant consideration must follow the State's submission process and deadlines, which are described below.

### STEP ONE: Pre-application and Eligibility Review

- **No later than Wednesday, July 26, 2023:** EMD's Mitigation Section will accept pre-application forms, which are available on our [website](#) and submitted to EMD via email to [hma@mil.wa.gov](mailto:hma@mil.wa.gov). EMD will review the pre-applications for eligibility and contact potential sub-applicants to discuss their proposals.
- EMD will invite eligible sub-applicants to submit full sub-applications in FEMA GO **only after** their pre-application has been submitted and EMD has contacted them to discuss the proposal's eligibility. **Sub-applicants who do not submit a pre-application form by July 26, 2023, will not be eligible to submit full applications.**

### STEP TWO (by invitation only): Development and Submission of a full FEMA GO Sub-Application

- For sub-applicants who complete step one (pre-application) and who are invited to submit full applications, the deadline to submit a complete FEMA GO sub-application for EMD review will be Friday November 3rd. Sub-applications submitted after this date will not be reviewed or submitted to FEMA for consideration<sup>1</sup>.
- EMD will review sub-applications for eligibility, completeness, and cost effectiveness. We will request additional information if required and will work with sub-applicants to make selected applications as competitive and complete as possible. Sub-applications deemed mostly or substantially incomplete and/or lacking key required information may be omitted from further consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> For additional information on FEMA's sub-application Considerations and Scoping (including sub-application development) view pages 41-51 of the Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program and Policy Guide: <https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/hazard-mitigation-assistance-guidance>

- WA State EMD will complete its sub-application review and selection process and will submit its final state application package to FEMA for the FY2023 BRIC program no later than **Feb. 29, 2024** (FEMA’s established State submission deadline).

FEMA is forecasted to announce its selections for FY2023 BRIC grants in Summer 2024. After selections, FEMA will conduct more in-depth reviews of the proposals (especially regarding environmental and historic preservation considerations) before issuing final awards. Grant award dates will vary, depending upon project complexity and FEMA’s internal review process for specific mitigation activities.

### **FY2023 Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)**

The BRIC program makes federal funds available to states, U.S territories, tribes, and local communities for pre-disaster mitigation activities. It is a cost-shared grant, 75 percent federal funds and 25 percent local (non-federal) matching funds, which is distributed through the reimbursement of eligible expenses over a 3-year period of performance. Detailed program information is available at <https://www.fema.gov/bric>.

Eligible Sub-Applicants: Local governments, including cities, townships, counties, special district governments, and tribes (including federally recognized tribes who choose to apply as sub-applicants) are eligible for grant consideration. All sub-applicants must have a FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan by the grant application deadline and at the time of award, in accordance with Title 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 201.

For this grant cycle \$1 billion is available to the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program.

FEMA will distribute up to \$1 billion through the BRIC grant program in the following manner:

- State/Territory Allocation: \$112 million (up to \$2 million per applicant). All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories may apply under the State/Territory Allocation.
- Building Codes Plus Up: \$112 million (up to \$2 million per state/territory) and up to \$25 million for tribes.
- Tribal Set-Aside: \$50 million. All federally recognized tribal governments may apply under the Tribal Set-Aside. The combined cost of the applicant’s capability- and capacity building activities under the this

The following funding details apply to all sub-applications, regardless of category:

- Up to 10 percent of any single sub-application can be used for information dissemination activities, including public awareness and education (brochures, workshops, videos, etc.) related to a proposed C&CB activity or mitigation project.
- Up to 5 percent of any single sub-application can be used for eligible and reasonable indirect costs, direct administrative costs, and other administrative expenses associated with the specific mitigation measure or project. Unlike all other sub-application budget categories, these *Management Costs* funds are not subject to the local cost share requirement; they are 100% federal and do not require local matching funds.

For general, programmatic guidance on mitigation grant eligibility categories and requirements, see the 2023 Hazard Mitigation Assistance Guide (<https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/hazard-mitigation-assistance-guidance>).

FEMA’s FY2023 NOFO provides their specific evaluation criteria, which includes a Technical Evaluation Criteria table and a Qualitative Evaluation Criteria Table. The scores resulting from FEMA’s criteria will be used to determine the competitive outcomes for all sub-applications that pass their initial Eligibility and Completeness reviews.

Washington State EMD will further assess and prioritize its own project sub-applications based on the qualitative criteria described in Table 1 below.

*Table 1. Sample WA EMD Project Evaluation Criteria and scoring scale for FY2023 BRIC*

<b>Mitigation Project Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
The proposed project anticipates impacts on disadvantaged and/or underserved communities , especially regarding the <a href="#">Justice40 Initiative<sup>2</sup></a> , equitable risk-reduction outcomes and whole-community approaches to disaster resilience.					
The proposed project addresses community lifelines and critical infrastructure vulnerability.					
The proposed project has multiple benefits beyond hazard risk reduction, including climate change resilience, sustainable development, and environmental restoration.					
The proposed project is collaborative and promotes shared responsibility, partnerships, and is supported by multiple jurisdictions or agencies.					
The proposed project has a clear and direct link to a local, FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plan.					
<b>Total Score</b>					

In addition, EMD encourages mitigation proposals for the following project types and methods (all project applications must meet FEMA’s BCA criteria and other programmatic criteria):

Critical Infrastructure and Facilities: projects that correct or eliminate seismic structural deficiency, severe wildfire vulnerability, or repetitive flooding for community lifeline infrastructure such as water, wastewater, powerlines, roadways, public safety facilities (fire, police, hospitals, 911, etc.), and schools.

Coastal Erosion: projects that address root causes of coastal erosion, incorporate green infrastructure methods to reduce or eliminate vulnerability to erosive events, and inhibit development in high-risk coastal areas (especially V Zones).

<sup>2</sup> The Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) is a geospatial mapping tool designed to identify disadvantaged communities that are marginalized and overburdened by pollution and underinvestment. The CEJST is updated annually and can be found at: <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5>

Tsunami Inundation: projects within mapped tsunami inundation zones that develop, design and/or construct tsunami vertical evacuation structures or evacuation routes, as well as projects designed to improve evacuation efficiency and access to vertical evacuation structures post-earthquake (e.g., landslide mitigation along evacuation routes).

Extreme Heat: projects that improve community resilience to extreme heat through measures such as proactive planning, green infrastructure and urban design, structural retrofits, and cooling shelters.

Flood Mitigation: projects that address root causes of hydrologic flow problems and expand drainage/storage capacity, such as improving stream/river connectivity with floodplains, reducing channelization, reducing impervious surfaces, and removing hydrologic barriers.

A Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) is required for all project sub-applications, with the exception of two project types, which fall under FEMA's "Pre-Calculated Benefits" waiver: property acquisitions located within the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) that cost \$323,000 or less, or home elevations within the SFHA that cost \$205,000 or less<sup>3</sup>. FEMA considers these to be cost effective and requires no further BCA work. FEMA allows sub-applicants to apply locality multipliers to these amounts where appropriate. Additionally, acquisition projects of RL and SRL properties *outside* the SFHA with a project cost of \$323,000 or less are also considered cost effective; no BCA is required. More detailed information is available on [FEMA's BCA website](#).

### **Additional Sub-Application Information**

- State contributions to the non-federal cost share requirements are subject to Legislature approval and cannot be guaranteed at the time of this Announcement. See the [2023 Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program and Policy Guide](#) for more information.
- To be eligible for the grant award, sub-applicants must have a FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plan by the sub-application deadline AND when funds are awarded. If a plan is still under FEMA review in January 2024, then EMD will coordinate with FEMA regarding the approval timeline.
- Private non-profit organizations are not eligible to directly apply for assistance from the BRIC program. Another eligible applicant (e.g., local government or state agency) can, however, act as Applicant Agent and apply on the organization's behalf. The Applicant Agent is responsible for meeting award terms and conditions.
- All sub-applications for BRIC must be made to the State through [FEMA's online FEMA GO system](#)<sup>4</sup>. FEMA GO access information will be provided to sub-applicants when they are invited to apply.
- FEMA will notify applicants (states) whose sub-applications are **identified for further review**. We anticipate that these notifications will be sent out no earlier than Spring of 2024. However, this notification and the applicant's compliance with FEMA-requested pre-award activities **are not considered notification or guarantee of an award**.
- Sub-applicants may be reimbursed for eligible pre-award costs incurred prior to the date of grant award for non-construction activities directly related to developing the project proposal. Activities may include, but are not limited to, development of the application, benefit-cost analysis, environmental/historic preservation data, project documentation, and design/engineering. These costs can only be reimbursed after award with proper documentation, and in accordance with the approved cost share terms, if they are included in the proposed budget.

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<sup>3</sup> FEMA allows sub-applicants to apply locality multipliers to these amounts.

<sup>4</sup> FEMA Go Startup Guide can be found at: <https://www.fema.gov/grants/guidance-tools/fema-go>

- Except for the above-noted pre-award costs, BRIC grant funds are only available for work performed after FEMA issues an award. For this reason, BRIC grants are suitable for projects with extended implementation schedules rather than short-term, time-sensitive projects. WA EMD staff will review timelines with potential sub-applicants and discuss these considerations during pre-application reviews.
- A sub-application cannot be submitted for both FMA and BRIC programs. If a proposal is eligible for FMA then it will not be considered for BRIC.
- All project sub-applications must determine cost effectiveness using [FEMA's benefit-cost analysis \(BCA\) software](#), Version 6.0, except for proposals covered under the Pre-calculated Benefits waiver and Community & Capacity-Building proposals<sup>5</sup>. The BCA software is available for free on the linked FEMA site. WA EMD staff cannot provide technical assistance for BCA software download issues, so please contact the [BCA helpline](#) with any issues<sup>6</sup>.
- The FY2023 BRIC grant round is nationally competitive and WA EMD cannot guarantee grant awards to any sub-applicant.

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<sup>5</sup> For additional resources (e.g., pre-calculated benefits, BCA Guidance, ecosystem services, and other supporting documents) visit: <https://www.fema.gov/grants/tools/benefit-cost-analysis#resources>

<sup>6</sup> For training on conducting a BCA visit: <https://www.fema.gov/grants/guidance-tools/benefit-cost-analysis/training>