

Date: June 23, 2020; 2PM-3:30PM
Presenter: Sherry Risk, CDBG-MIT Program Manager, WVCAD
Attendees: 23 attendees
Comments: 6 comments provided by public

Hearing Overview

WVCAD held its first public hearing prior to the release of its CDBG-MIT Action Plan to inform the public of the HUD funding allocations, the planning process, and garner input regarding potential mitigation priorities. The hearing was advertised publicly via newspaper ad, WVCAD CDBG-MIT website at <https://wvfloodrecovery.com/mitigation/>, and social media. Additionally, WVCAD issued a notification to its 500+ member stakeholder list to solicit maximum participation. To ensure public safety, the hearing was held virtually via GoToWebinar. A recording of the hearing was created and posted on the WVCAD CDBG-MIT website. A detailed list of attendees is attached for reference.

Presentation

WVCAD provided a PowerPoint presentation containing the following information regarding the CDBG-MIT allocation and Action Plan process.

- Introductions
- Goals and Objectives
- Disaster Overview and Impacted Counties
- What is Community Development Block Grant-Mitigation (CDBG-MIT)?
- What are the Main Requirements of CDBG-MIT?
- What is an Action Plan?
- Action Plan Timelines and Stakeholder Engagement
- How to Stay Involved
- Q&A

Discussion and Public Comment

Terrel Ellis: Could you please cover more detail around eligible activities? What constitutes economic revitalization for CDBG-MIT?

Answer: Evaluating the local economic impacts and creating programs which will assist in the resiliency of the economy. Examples: Infrastructure Improvements to businesses to enable operation in changing climate. Resiliency assessments for small business and grants to provide funding to implement measure which would improve business resiliency.

Francis Holton: The state may be using old mitigation plans. For example, region II did an update to its mitigation plan; will that be incorporated to use the most recent information?

Answer: Yes – we are reaching out to communities. We will follow up to ensure we are using the most recent plan data for the Mitigation Needs Assessment.

Lisa Berger: From the International Code Council; West Virginia Rep; International Code Council provides model building and safety codes. State fire commission adopted 2015 building code and 2009 energy code. Only 8 counties in the state have adopted the code; including impacted counties of Greenbrier and Fayette. Remaining 10 of 12 have not adopted the building code. Suggesting and encouraging the State take into consideration to encourage adoption and enforcement of the state building code. This activity is listed under federal register notice that both HUD and FEMA encourage. FEMA loss avoidance studies show that proper staff and training provides a loss reduction value between 15-25%. Additionally, FEMA national building study shows every 1 dollar invested equals \$12 back in flood and wind resiliency. Reduces energy costs and keeps people safer during the winter. FEMA requires minimum standards including using the most recent international codes be used for its projects. Listed under state hazard mitigation plan as something that will provide communities with a set of life and safety standards, provides flood protections and lowers NFIP premiums. In spirit of maximizing how far the dollars can go and aligning with other programs this is encouraged. Application priority may be given for code adoption, for example. She offers support for an initiative to include the codes. While it is expensive to standup new departments; current telework conditions may just cost one staff person and software for code compliance. Code officials are also good well-paid jobs and codes help local revenue by bringing in permitting dollars.

Answer: We encourage the submission of study data through the CDBG MIT email to be considered in the mitigation needs assessment. This can be incorporated into program design. Code development is an eligible planning activity and code enforcement also eligible under the HUD CDBG MIT notice.

Brian Farkas: Once you submit the plan and receive funding, is match an eligible activity? We are a conservation agency dealing with flooding of streams and impact to streams. How can we include natural hazard mitigation, development of wetlands, detention lakes, and pressure relief for flooding into the plan? Natural-side of flooding is a priority - supporting green infrastructure.

Answer: Local Match for federal grants is an eligible activity. Please submit information to the CDBG Mitigation email address and this will be reviewed for incorporation into the mitigation needs assessment which is used to make programmatic decisions.

Francis Holton: Can these funds be used to buyout homes in the floodplain?

Answer: FEMA funds were used for this activity; we did not find data supporting the need for additional buyout and acquisition homes.

Follow up: What information is needed to make sure this can be included?

Answer: Provide WVCAD via CDBG MIT email information regarding what you consider an unmet buyout need in your region and we will consider this data in our Mitigation Needs Assessment.

Terrel Ellis: Will you consider conservation easements as an eligible activity? Looking at purchasing property along floodplains; Clay county is a good option and may have some projects. Easements would provide protection of water quality, watersheds, stream banks flowing into the Elk.

Answer: Easements can be considered as long as the potential disaster reduction risk can be quantified. Please submit additional information to CDBGMIT email for consideration.

Brian Farkas: When did you say you were going to reach out to various state and government agencies to input?

Answer: We offered a survey until the 19th of June; public hearing today and Thursday; July 14, 16 consultation hearings with stakeholders.

Follow up: Will you reach out to me? Executive Director of West Virginia Conservation Agency.

Answer: The following entities will be recipients of direct outreach: Cities and Counties; Federal and State Agencies; Regional Planning and Development Councils; State Hazard Mitigation Officers. If you are with one of those entities you would be invited to those meetings.