

Program Overview – January 2023

(A) Available Funding:

- \$14,750,000 is available from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for projects under the Flood Resilient Communities Fund in fiscal year 2023, as allocated by the Vermont Legislature.
- ARPA funding is required to be obligated by December 31, 2024 and expended by December 31, 2026.

(B) Program Purpose:

- This fund was established by the Vermont Legislature under Act 74 with the intent of improving landscape and community resilience and reducing the future public safety and water quality impacts of climate-related flood hazards in Vermont, focusing on buyouts of flood-vulnerable properties and floodplain restoration.
- This program will prioritize projects in communities and/or for homeowners with greatest economic need and projects that mitigate repetitive loss among low-income and marginalized portions of the population.

(C) Eligibility Requirements:

- Due to the requirements of the ARPA funding, in addition to reducing future flood risk, projects must have the co-benefit of improving water quality. Projects that will improve water quality over time are those that:
 - i. result in greater floodplain storage capacity to reduce flood flows,
 - ii. allow space for future natural river channel changes in ways that don't threaten property,
 - iii. re-establish floodplain and riparian vegetation and functions to naturally strengthen riverbanks, reduce stream temperatures, and
 - iv. improve filtration of flood waters.
- Where feasible, funding under FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant programs should be utilized first. This funding will predominately be for projects that are not eligible under existing HMA programs and should be used to leverage other funding sources or fill funding gaps to make projects viable.

(D) Eligible Project Types:

- Flood-vulnerable structure and buyout projects, to include:
 - i. Buyouts of developed properties that are outside of the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) but with identified flood or fluvial erosion risk and the potential to create additional off-site water quality impacts.
 - ii. Purchasing vacant, at-risk parcels to prevent potential future development that would cause or increase future flood or fluvial erosion risk.
 - iii. Purchasing vacant, developable parcels that conserve existing headwater storage potential and prevent uncertain future downstream flooding.
 - iv. Structural elevation projects or structural relocation projects with identified flood risk that positively impact water quality.





**Flood Resilient
Communities Fund**
Building watershed resilience in the face of climate change

- Natural resource projects, to include:
 - i. Restoring natural floodplain access to improve ecological floodplain function.
 - ii. Dam removal projects that have the benefit of reducing flood risk.
 - iii. Natural infrastructure and nature-based solutions for flood storage or improved floodplain and river functions.
 - iv. Green infrastructure and low-impact development to manage stormwater and reduce future flooding ineligible from alternate funding sources.
- Community Flood Risk Reduction Assessment: this project type will be available to communities within the [Lake Champlain Basin](#). The Department of Environment Conservation will manage the funding for this work and hire an engineering firm to work with communities and develop an assessment of their flood risk as well as projects to reduce their flood risk.
- Project scoping to develop applications for future rounds of FEMA's HMA grant programs, with a focus on project development for the annual Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program, or for consideration under other flood risk reduction grant programs.
- Planning or education and outreach initiatives that improve understanding of flood risk.
- Other innovative applications that contribute to reduced future flood risk will be considered.
- Non-federal match for FEMA project applications under the HMA programs, based on need, funded through an \$8 million one-time General Fund allocation from the Vermont Legislature.
- Funding to manage awarded projects.

(E) Application Process:

- If you are interested in pursuing this funding, the first step is to submit an application to DPS.HazardMitigation@vermont.gov with the subject: Application – Flood Resilient Communities Fund.
- Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis through 2023, as funding allows.
- The State Hazard Mitigation Project Review Committee (SHMPRC) will review applications following each round and identify projects for funding based on the eligibility criteria above.
- Applications to cover the non-federal match under HMA programs will be considered on a rolling basis.

For more information on this program as well as the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Building Resilience Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC), and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) programs, visit: vem.vermont.gov/funding/mitigation, and reach out to dps.hazardmitigation@vermont.gov.

