

More on the Interim Criteria for the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund 6/25/2014

Flood Ready Vermont, www.floodready.vermont.gov, has been established to provide support to communities taking steps to become flood resilient. Several important flood mitigation actions also qualify communities for incentives such as under the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund.

The [Community Reports](#) at Flood Ready Vermont compile information directly from the primary agencies that record what the community has already done.

This document describes the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF) and some of the interim criteria that may allow a community to be recognized for one or more of the mitigation actions.

ERAF

In 2010 Act 110 directed the state to offer incentives through existing grants and pass-through funding to encourage municipal adoption and implementation of bylaws that protect river corridors and buffers. In 2012 Act 138 required the Secretary of Administration to establish a Flood Resilient Communities Program to provide increasing financial incentives to those municipalities that have taken greater steps to protect river corridors and floodplains and mitigate other flood and fluvial erosion hazards.

The [Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund \(ERAF\)](#) is a fund established by the State of Vermont that supplements Federal Public Assistance after a disaster. The intent of the fund is to make state assistance more predictable, consistent and available, as well as to encourage hazard mitigation strategies by municipalities and individuals to reduce potential future damages from natural disasters. For a disaster after October 23, 2014 the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund will provide more post-disaster support to communities that have taken specific mitigation measures including the protection of river corridors. [Here is the full text of the ERAF rule.](#)

In most basic terms, after a federally-declared disaster all qualified municipal expenses will be eligible for reimbursement at 75% from Federal Public Assistance. Of the non-federal portion of the qualified expenses the State of Vermont will contribute at least an additional 7.5%. For communities that take four additional mitigation measures they will qualify for a 12.5% reimbursement rate. For communities that additionally take a fifth action to protect river corridors they will qualify for a state share of 17.5% after the disaster.

ERAF Criteria

12.5% - eligible communities have adopted four mitigation measures:

1. **National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)** (participate or have applied);
2. **Town Road and Bridge Standards** – (adopt standards that meet or exceed the 2013 standards in the *2014-2016 VTrans Orange Book: Handbook for Local Officials*);
3. **Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP)** (update annually after town meeting and before May 1);
4. **Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP)** – Have adopted a FEMA- approved plan (not more than five years old) or, a draft plan is at FEMA Region 1 in review.

17.5% - eligible communities also:

5. **Protect River Corridors** from new encroachment; or, protect their flood hazard areas from new encroachments and participate in the FEMA Community Rating System.

Primary Agencies

The ERAF Program is managed by the Recovery and Mitigation Section of DEMHS in conjunction with the management of Public Assistance. DEMHS relies on the records of the primary agencies. At the time of a disaster DEMHS will confirm the eligibility of a community from the records of the primary agencies.

National Flood Insurance Program – FEMA Community Status Book

Town Road and Bridge Standards – VTrans

Local Emergency Operations Plan – DEMHS

Local Hazard Mitigation Plan – DEMHS and FEMA Region 1

Protect River Corridors – Agency of Natural Resources (ANR)

CRS Program and Protect Flood Hazard Areas – FEMA and ANR

Vermont Flood Ready Data Updates

[Vermont Flood Ready](#) compiles the data from the primary agencies to help communities and agencies work together. As of June 2014 the data is updated on a periodic basis from data sets provided by the primary agencies. The most recent full update was 6/23/2014. There will be quarterly updates of the data. In the next few months systematic updates will happen more frequently: 8/15/2014 and

10/17/2014. In the fall of 2014 we will be establishing a system for instantaneous updates by the primary agencies.

Additional Qualifying Criteria for ERAF

In some circumstances the community may have already acted to the best of its ability. To acknowledge this situation the primary agencies have established these additional criteria under ERAF.

1. **National Flood Insurance Program** participate OR have applied;
2. **Town Road and Bridge Standards** – adopt standards that meet or exceed the 2013 standards OR have no direct responsibility for Town Highway Mileage (typically this happens when the town is responsible for roads but not the village);
3. **Local Emergency Operations Plan** - updated annually after town meeting and before May 1; OR be explicitly covered in the LEOP of another community (e.g. town covering village);
4. **Local Hazard Mitigation Plan** - The LHMP is not more five years from the date of FEMA Final Approval, OR a draft plan is at FEMA Region 1 for review, OR the community is explicitly covered by another community (e.g. town or Multi-Jurisdictional Plan);

17.5% - eligible communities also:

5. **Protect River Corridors** from new encroachment; OR, protect their flood hazard areas from new encroachments and participate in the FEMA Community Rating System; OR qualify for Interim River Corridor Protection such that the community acted before October 23, 2014 to protect River Corridors using the best available data (that is protecting a Fluvial Erosion Hazard Area, protecting Special Flood Hazard Areas, or demonstrating protection equivalent to the extent of river corridors). This Interim Status for River Corridor Protection acknowledges early community action to protect River Corridors and will be valid to October 23, 2016.

Current Status of Community Flood Hazard Mitigation Actions for ERAF can be found at:

www.floodready.vermont.gov

[Community Reports](#) – Flood Ready Vermont

[More on ERAF](#)