



FEMA

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# Fact Sheet

## **HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM EXCEPTION: HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND ARCHAEOLOGY GUIDELINES**

### **Background of the HMGP Exception and How it Relates to Historic Preservation**

FEMA's HMGP Exception enables property owners and communities in Louisiana, who proactively engaged in hazard mitigation activities after hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, to be eligible for grant consideration even though their projects have not undergone Federal environmental and historic preservation review before commencing work. Hazard mitigation activities may include structural elevation of historic buildings, mitigation reconstruction that may include demolition in some cases, retrofitting buildings to provide for hazard protection and demolition for prospective open space acquisition or reconstruction.

These mitigation measures will have various impacts throughout communities in Louisiana, including lasting impacts on its historic communities and neighborhoods. FEMA is sensitive to the historic integrity of these Gulf Coast communities and has developed this fact sheet to illustrate FEMA's regulatory responsibilities and to provide initial guidance to property owners as they balance an interest in preservation with their rebuilding efforts.

### **How FEMA Applies Its Regulatory Responsibilities to the HMGP Exception**

FEMA has carried out consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) with Native American tribal governments, the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation to identify a mutually agreeable way for the HMGP program to assist owners of storm-damaged historic properties. Because of the scale of the hurricane Katrina and hurricane Rita disasters, the enormous number of anticipated projects, and the vital necessity to provide support to property owners without further delay, FEMA will conduct modified Section 106 reviews for projects funded under the HMGP Exception. FEMA will also comply to the fullest extent possible with NHPA and will not provide assistance to property owners who intentionally adversely affect historic properties.

### **FEMA and Archaeological Sites Potentially Affected by HMGP Projects**

HMGP projects might affect archeological resources. Not all property owners may be aware that their property is located near or "on top of" such historic properties. As a part of its Federal historic preservation regulatory responsibilities, FEMA must review whether or not there are archaeological sites present that might be impacted by HMGP projects. Projects that are "ground disturbing," or in other words, that include construction of any kind that will be below-ground and might physically impact archaeological sites, will be reviewed by qualified archaeologists to ensure that these important resources are protected whenever possible.

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Archaeological reviews must be undertaken by trained archaeologists. FEMA and its preservation partners, including the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office and participating Native American tribal governments, will work together to ensure that HMGP projects do not harm significant archaeological sites or sites of cultural or religious interest to Native Americans whenever possible. FEMA will consult with the applicant whenever archeological sites are involved with a HMGP project.

### **Federal Historic Preservation Guidelines and Your HMGP Project**

Historic preservation professionals and many owners of historic buildings in the United States use federal standards and guidelines that provide technical advice about historic preservation activities and methods. These standards are called the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, also known as "The Standards." While these Standards are not mandatory, they are useful in minimizing or avoiding actions that may alter the physical qualities and character-defining features that make a property historic. The Standards provide advice and direction for repairing and rehabilitating historic properties, and can be found at: <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide>.

### **Available Historic Preservation Guidance**

Further additional historic preservation guidance and recommendations will be forthcoming. If you own a historic property and are seeking funding through FEMA's HMGP, the following organizations in Louisiana are available to provide historic preservation advice:

- FEMA – [www.fema.gov/gcro](http://www.fema.gov/gcro)
- Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office - [www.crt.state.la.us](http://www.crt.state.la.us)
- Louisiana Speaks - [www.louisianaspeaks.org](http://www.louisianaspeaks.org)
- NPS National Center for Preservation Technology and Training - [www.ncptt.nps.gov](http://www.ncptt.nps.gov)
- Local Historic District Regulatory Agencies
- Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans - [www.prcno.org](http://www.prcno.org)
- National Trust for Historic Preservation - [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org)
- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation – [www.achp.gov](http://www.achp.gov)

Editors: For more information on Louisiana disaster recovery, visit [\*\*www.fema.gov/gcro\*\*](http://www.fema.gov/gcro)

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