



LOCUS Guide to Equity Action Plans: Federal Emergency Management Agency

In April 2022, the Biden Administration released the federal government's first ever Equity Actions Plans for over 90 federal agencies. These strategies delineate department-specific long range goals and operational priorities that aim to improve the delivery of equitable outcomes for all Americans through systemic reforms and investments in historically underserved communities. The actions proposed in these plans will have broad impacts on land use, infrastructure investment, housing and regional planning, which are summarized succinctly in these LOCUS guides.

Equity Priorities:

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is undergoing structural, operational, and strategic change by working to integrate equity into all facets of the agency. The agency's Equity Action Plan recognizes that historically marginalized communities are disproportionately impacted by disasters and climate events, including low-income communities and groups that are underserved or under-resourced. FEMA's Equity Action Plan puts forth a strategy to center equity in post-disaster support as well as in long-term hazard mitigation planning work to make communities more prepared for potential disruptive events. The plan sets out strategies for the agency to analyze environmental and disaster impacts on historically marginalized communities, better partner with communities in planning and decision-making and improve accessibility of post-disaster and long-term hazard mitigation planning resources. Resources will also be allocated to impact assessment, measuring outcomes from program initiatives, and seeking to reduce and eliminate disparities.



Image: Jocelyn Augustino



Key Equity Actions:

- Support historically marginalized vulnerable communities to better prepare for and anticipate natural disasters through technical assistance and capacity-building programs, aligning with Justice40 initiatives;
- Identify strategies to better engage non-profits including through the Non-profit Security Grant program, identifying barriers to participation and diversifying the applicant pool;
- Form a strong civil rights program through recruiting DEI and subject matter experts from the Office of Equal Rights (OER) to ensure FEMA's external and internal procedures and policies advance social justice and civil rights;
- Identify strategies to make FEMA assistance more accessible to small businesses, increasing outreach and public engagement and better communicating procurement requirements;
- Improve the agency's Individual Assistance (IA) program for disaster survivors by broadening financial assistance opportunities, streamlining the case processing for at-risk communities, and minimizing administrative hurdles.

Land Use or Real Estate Highlights:

- Reduce the flood insurance financial gap through direct flood insurance assistance capacity-building efforts and robust external outreach programs; FEMA's actions will analyze data to determine strategies to advance equity and introduce means-tested programs within the National Flood Insurance Program;
- Expand pathways for home ownership and housing stability, especially for disaster survivors.

Measuring Impact:

Each of the priorities includes proposed strategies to track progress and impact, related to the specific actions proposed. Some notable metrics include:

- Estimation of progress in eliminating the financial flood insurance gap between households;
- The home ownership and retention rates of disaster survivors over time.

Read FEMA's Equity Action Plan [here](#).