



Community Tornado Safe Room Fact Sheet

What is a Community Tornado Safe Room? A safe room is a hardened structure designed to meet Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 361 criteria to provide "near-absolute protection" in extreme weather events, including tornadoes. Near-absolute protection means that, based on our current knowledge of tornadoes, the occupants of a safe room built in accordance with FEMA guidance will have a very high probability of being protected from injury or death. Safe rooms are for the purpose of immediate life safety resulting from structural and building envelope protection against extreme wind hazards for a limited at-risk population that requires shelter for up to two hours.

In areas subject to extreme-wind events, building owners, schools, hospitals, and others responsible for public safety should consider building a community safe room. This type of project includes retrofits of existing facilities or new safe room construction projects, and applies to both single and multi-use facilities.

Eligible Applicants:

- State and Local governments*
- Certain private non-profits organizations and institutions,
- Native American tribes and authorized tribal organizations

*In some instances local governments can partner with private individuals (campground or mobile home park owner), if the safe room will be utilized by any resident in the jurisdiction.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Project type must be included in your local All-Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Benefit Cost Ratio must be >1.0

Funding: The *Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)* is a FEMA cost-share program (75% federal & 25% local). The key purpose of the HMGP is to reduce the loss of life and property from the effects of natural hazards. Safe rooms are just one of the 15+ eligible mitigation project types.

Application Process: HSEM is currently accepting *Notice of Interest* from eligible applicants. The one-page Notice of Interest can be downloaded from the HSEM website. After HSEM receives an NOI, staff will review the information and provide eligible applicants with a complete application. Applications will be reviewed by HSEM staff on the merits of eligibility, completeness, cost-effectiveness, engineering feasibility and effectiveness and for Environmental and Historic Preservation compliance. Applicants that do not pass a state review will not be forwarded on to FEMA. FEMA will also perform a review.

Additional Resources:

- HSEM website <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/hsem/hazard-mitigation/Pages/current-grant-opportunities.aspx>
- FEMA-HMGP <http://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-grant-program>
- FEMA P-361, *Design and Construction Guidance for Community Safe Rooms* (FEMA, second edition, 2008b) at <http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=1657>

For more information contact Hazard.Mitigation@state.mn.us