

Section 5: Identifying and Implementing Projects Within Your Program

Learning Objectives: Learn to identify projects that are appropriate for their community and level of organizational development.

You can jumpstart your community mitigation program by selecting the right projects. The “right” projects are going to depend largely on your group’s capacity, understanding, and skill set. In addition, the “right” project will address an identified risk for your area and help further long-term mitigation goals identified by local emergency managers. Starting small is often the best way to ensure success when engaging in community-based pre-disaster mitigation.

Brainstorm mitigation projects that CBO/FBO volunteers can assist with. Refer to *Small Steps to Big Success*.



Small Steps to Big Success

- Involve as many people as possible in the project selection process to assure commitment and buy-in.
- Gather initial project ideas by consulting with FEMA, voluntary disaster organizations, and emergency managers, and by reviewing the case studies provided in Section 8. Even better, invite representatives from these groups to meet with you during project selection.
- Select small projects that can be accomplished simply and rapidly. Brainstorm ways to break any project down into manageable steps/tasks.
- Choose a project that CBOs/FBOs can help accomplish. It should be readily achievable from a resource and skills standpoint. This will help gather momentum and quickly show your group tangible results.
- Duplicate or build upon previous successes of your own or others. For example, if you have successfully completed one daycare center seismic retrofit, try another one. Or, select a well-documented project done successfully in another community. Contact the community to get advice on what worked and what they wish they’d done differently.
- Recognize every aspect of the project that is successful, even if the entire project doesn’t come off as planned. Celebrate every achievement, no matter how small.
- Use lessons learned to plan for future successes.

(Continued)

Small Steps to Big Success (Continued)

- Organize skill training that will leave participants with lasting benefits.
- Take appropriate steps to assure the safety of your group.
 - Share information on liability and safety from FEMA, your emergency management group, and other organizations. Provide information on Good Samaritan laws, insurance coverage, etc.
 - Assign appropriate individuals to appropriate tasks, and assure that individuals are appropriately skilled and trained for their roles.
 - Clearly differentiate between tasks that should be completed by professionals versus volunteers.
 - Organize skills training if needed.
 - Appoint a safety officer to assess project safety issues, develop and implement a safety plan, and organize the availability of appropriate safety equipment.

Resource Guide: Refer to the Resource Guide for safety and liability information, additional project ideas or “lessons learned.”

