Alternate and Improved projects

PURPOSE OF THIS PUBLICATION
To inform Subrecipients (Applicants) using Federal disaster recovery funds, of options to build back smarter when developing their projects.

INTENDED AUDIENCE
This publication is intended for those applying for and/or receiving recovery funding grants through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance (PA) program, which includes local and State government agencies, Federally recognized Tribal governments and eligible private nonprofit (PNP) organizations.
After a disaster, our focus is to return our **lives**, **businesses** and **communities** to what they were pre-disaster or pre-event. FEMA and the Governor’s Office Of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) help Subrecipients (Applicants) respond to and recover from major disasters declared by the President through PA grants.

Do you want to rebuild smarter – better, different, stronger? You have options.

**IF YOU ANSWERED “YES” TO THE ABOVE QUESTION . . .**

**THERE IS GOOD NEWS!**

The FEMA PA program allows you to use grant funding from disaster damages in ways that better meet your community’s recovery needs.

You have **two** (2) options that may help you **better** utilize your project funding . . . an **Alternate** or an **Improved** project. [44 CFR 206.203(d) and PA Guide FEMA 322]

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**WHAT ARE A/I PROJECTS?**

An **ALTERNATE** project is the use of your obligated grant funding for use on **other community needs or priorities**, such as:

[44 CFR 206.203(d)(2)]

- **Constructing** new public facilities.
- **Repairing** or expanding **other** public facilities.
- **Purchasing** capital equipment **over** $5,000 (e.g. buses, backhoes, ambulances, police cars, fire trucks, etc.).
- **Funding mitigation measures** on **non-damaged** elements.

An **IMPROVED** project **restores** pre-disaster function and capacity of a damaged facility and further **enhances** the facility. [44 CFR 206.203(d)(1)]

Some examples include:

- **Laying asphalt** on a gravel road.
- **Expanding** a facility such as two (2) bays to three (3) bays on a damaged fire house.
- **Adding a heliport** to a repaired hospital.
- **Upgrading** capital equipment such as replacing a 10 year-old bus with a new bus.

NOTE: **Incremental costs** – cost beyond returning a disaster–damaged eligible facility to its pre-disaster function and capacity – are funded by the Subrecipient (Applicant).

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Do **not** begin work on an **Alternate** or **Improved** Project **until** approval is received from the State and/or FEMA.
To be eligible for the Alternate/Improved (A/I) funding option, your Project Worksheet (PW) must be for permanent work.

When reviewing your recovery needs, consider the following to decide which option [Alternate Project or Improved Project] may work best for you.

**PERMANENT WORK CATEGORIES**

- Roads + Bridges
- Water Control Facilities
- Buildings + Equipment
- Utilities
- Parks + Recreational + Other

**ALTERNATE PROJECT**

You should request an **Alternate Project** if:

- Your **damaged facility** is no longer needed by the community and you want to use the funding for a **different facility**.
  EXAMPLE: Tearing down an administrative building to create a much needed water treatment plant.

- Your **damaged equipment** is no longer needed but the community needs **other equipment**.
  EXAMPLE: Buy new ambulances instead of replacing damaged fire trucks.

- You want to **use funding** from damaged facilities or equipment to **restore** an existing facility, **build a new** or different facility, **purchase new** equipment or any combination.
  EXAMPLE: Purchasing buses instead of rebuilding a facility.

**IMPROVED PROJECT**

You should request an **Improved Project** if:

- You want to **increase** the **size of the facility**.
  EXAMPLE: Adding a cafeteria or additional classrooms to a damaged school.

- You want to **move** a school or fire station due to **demographic changes**.
  EXAMPLE: Move a fire station across town to better support an increased population.

- You want to **restore** or **rebuild** a damaged facility plus add **enhanced features** or materials.
  EXAMPLE: Adding solar panels to a restored facility; adding asphalt to a gravel road; rebuilding a damaged timber bridge with a concrete structure.
# Things you must know that will impact your AVI project selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternate</th>
<th>Improved</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Authorized Funding</strong>&lt;br&gt;For governmental entities, the amount of dollars available for your Alternate Project is equal to <strong>90%</strong> of the original obligated PW.&lt;br&gt;For PNPs, the amount of dollars available for your Alternate Project is equal to <strong>75%</strong> of the original obligated PW.&lt;br&gt;Insurance: You are not required to apply funds received from insurance on the original facility towards the Alternate Project.</td>
<td>All Subrecipients (Applicants) that request an Improved Project are limited to the obligated dollars stated in your PW.&lt;br&gt;Funding for such projects is <strong>limited</strong> to the Federal share of the costs that would be associated with repairing or replacing the damaged facility to its pre-disaster design, or to the actual costs of completing the Improved Project, whichever is less.&lt;br&gt;Insurance: You are required to apply funds received from insurance on the original facility towards the Improved Project.</td>
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<td><strong>406 Hazard Mitigation (HM)</strong>&lt;br&gt;If your original project contains funding for 406 HM, those funds will not be transferred to the Alternate Project.</td>
<td>If your original facility was eligible for repair, FEMA may provide <strong>406 HM funds</strong> which transfer to the Improved Project.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Replacement</strong> and <strong>relocated</strong> facilities are not eligible for 406 HM funds.</td>
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<td><strong>Funding Usage</strong>&lt;br&gt;Funds for an Alternate Project may not be used for operating costs.&lt;br&gt;If you decide to build a new facility or repair a different facility, you must make the original facility safe and secure, or sell or demolish the facility.&lt;br&gt;Funds for an Alternate Project can be combined with a grant from another Federal agency.&lt;br&gt;Alternate Project funding cannot be used to meet the FEMA PA non-Federal cost share.</td>
<td>Funds for an Improved Project must be used to restore the facility to pre-disaster function and, at a minimum, pre-disaster capacity.&lt;br&gt;Funds for an Improved Project can be combined with a grant from another Federal agency.</td>
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<td><strong>Approvals</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>PRIOR</strong> to beginning any construction on either an Alternate or Improved project, you must have FEMA’s Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) review completed.</td>
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So, what’s next?

- Review your Project Worksheets (PWs).
- Determine if you want to rebuild or restore in kind or consider something different.
- If considering Alternate or Improved projects, identify what you want to do.
- Talk to your GOHSEP State Applicant Liaison (SAL) to formulate an Alternate/Improved (A/I) project request and complete the Special Projects Checklist.
- Submit a letter to the State Coordinating Officer (SCO) along with the Special Projects Checklist. Your letter should include:
  - Which original projects you want to include.
  - Any supporting documentation for your proposed A/I project. Include drawings, sketches, maps and any other available details of your project plans.
### ACRONYMS

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<td>State Applicant Liaison</td>
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<td>SCO</td>
<td>State Coordinating Officer</td>
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### REFERENCES

- 44 CFR
  - [http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=e1deb7aaa23bd920bbd362fe325adcf26mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title44/44cfrv1_02.tpl#0](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=e1deb7aaa23bd920bbd362fe325adcf26mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title44/44cfrv1_02.tpl#0)
- DAP 9525.13 - Alternate Projects
- FEMA 322 Public Assistance Guide
- FEMA P-323 Public Assistance Applicant Handbook
  - [fema.gov/pdf/government/grant/pa/fema323_app_handbk.pdf](https://fema.gov/pdf/government/grant/pa/fema323_app_handbk.pdf)

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For more information or help with your A/I questions, contact GOHSEP at 225.925.7500

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# Alternate/Improved (A/I) project checklist

## ITEMS IN THE PACKAGE SHOULD FOLLOW THE ORDER OF THE CHECKLIST.

### PROJECT TYPE
- [ ] Alternate Project
- [ ] Improved Project

### DISASTER
- [ ] DR # ______________________

### PROJECT/CONSTRUCTION DATA
- [ ] Applicant Name _______________________________________________________________________________________
- [ ] FIPS # ________________________________________________________________________________________________
- [ ] Proposed Project Address _______________________________________________________________________________
- [ ] Four (4) Corner Coordinates of the Proposed Project ________________________________________________________
- [ ] Applicant Request Letter to GOHSEP
- [ ] List of donor Project Worksheet (PW) Number(s) ____________________________________________________________
- [ ] Vicinity map showing proposed location, disturbed areas, waterways and wetlands
- [ ] Map or drawing showing existing footprint and proposed footprint
- [ ] New Special Consideration Form (9 Questions) for A/I Project Request
- [ ] New Scope of Work (SOW) for Proposed Project, including any available costs, plans, specifications, contracts, functional area square footage comparisons between damaged and proposed facilities, and additional information as requested by GOHSEP/FEMA
- [ ] Explanation of all ground disturbing activities including maximum depth, if applicable (digging, excavation, structure removal, soil replacement, site work, access roads, staging areas)
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- Copies of all Federal and State environmental and regulatory permits and approvals and/or other relevant documentation (e.g., environmental site assessments or Phase I environmental baseline surveys or other environmental reports) (if applicable and available)*

- Documentation of consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and/or other relevant State and local agencies by Subrecipient (Applicant), State or FEMA personnel (if applicable and available)*

- Projected construction project schedule (timeline) from approval to completion (if applicable)*

- Copies of Project Worksheets (PWs) and applicable photos (clear pictures or digital format)

- Copies of insurance settlement documents (particularly Statements of Loss), including adjuster estimate of damages

*Information not required for equipment or contents projects

CONTACT (NAME/PHONE)

- State Applicant Liaison (SAL)

- FEMA PA Coordinator (PAC)