



Communicating Existing Plans

Setting the Stage

Each local government is tasked with creating a Hazard Mitigation Plan, and may have also developed an Emergency Preparedness or Resilience plan. These plans are updated regularly, and a crucial part of these local plans is outreach. Each plan is developed with public input, and staff need help from the public to get the word out once the plan has been put in place.



Hazard Mitigation Planning Meeting. Photo Credit: FEMA

Overview

In this sub-unit, students will learn more about their community's plans for hazard mitigation, emergency preparedness, and/or resilience. Students will then choose a specific topic to focus on, learn more about existing plans through individual research, and develop a product to communicate the plan to their peers and/or their community.

Lessons to include in this sub-unit are:

- *Colorado Resiliency Framework StoryMap Lessons (50 minutes)*
 - [Flood Resilience in Colorado StoryMap](#)
 - [Wildfire Resilience in Colorado StoryMap](#)
- [Exploring Local Hazard Mitigation Plans Lesson \(50 minutes\)](#)

The following sections provide guidance for planning:

- Finding Local Plans
- Finding Community Experts
- Choosing a Topic
- Student Presentations





Sub-Unit Overview	
Grade Level	Middle/High School
Instructional Time	1 week
Standards Alignment	NGSS: MS-ESS3-2 , HS-ESS3-1 CDE: MS3.ESS.GLE9 , HS3.ESS.GLE9
Anchoring Phenomenon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Local governments undergo planning processes to understand the community's vulnerability to natural hazards and minimize the impacts of those hazards.
Driving Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none">How can you increase your community's ability to bounce back from natural hazards (wildfire, flood or drought)?
Learning Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students will understand the vulnerability of their community to (wildfire, flooding, drought).Students will be able to communicate the mitigation actions being taken in their County to address (wildfire, flooding, drought) to their peers/community.
Vocabulary	<p><u>Preparedness</u> is to have plans in place for communities to respond when a disaster or emergency happens in order to protect lives and community assets (coresiliency.com; i.e., ready to respond).</p> <p><u>Mitigation</u> uses planning tools and strategies to reduce a community's risk to natural and man-made hazards (coresiliency.com; i.e., reduce risk).</p> <p><u>Resilience</u> is the capacity of community members and organizations, such as schools, businesses, or hospitals, to maintain essential functions before, during, and after a hazard event (i.e., the ability for a community to bounce back).</p>



Finding Local Plans

In order to be eligible for pre- and post-disaster grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), each county must undergo a hazard mitigation planning process every five years. The purpose of the planning process is to reduce the impact of natural hazards to people, property and infrastructure. Each Hazard Mitigation Plan must include several elements, including a summary of the planning process, a risk assessment, and hazard mitigation strategies. Find your county's hazard mitigation plan at:

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/mars/approved-plans>. Use the [Exploring Local Hazard Mitigation Plans Lesson](#) to introduce students to the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Additionally, your county may have an Emergency Preparedness plan or a Resilience Plan. Visit your County or City Planning Department website to find out. You can adapt the [Exploring Local Hazard Mitigation Plans Lesson](#) graphic organizer for additional plans.

Finding Community Experts

Planning documents can be very technical and difficult to digest. If possible, reach out to a local expert to visit your classroom and give an overview of plans, and/or be an expert for students to interview to get more information. Experts you could reach out to include:

- County Planning and Development Office Staff
- County Planning Commission Members
- City Planning Department Staff
- City or County Office of Emergency Management Staff
- Public Lands (USFS, BLM, etc.) Staff

See the [Community Resilience Expo Overview](#) for an email template to use to reach out. Phone calls are often the most effective way of reaching out, use the email as a guide for the conversation.

Choosing a Topic

Encourage students to choose a particular topic to focus on communicating in their presentation. Each Hazard Mitigation Plan should outline Goals and Objectives for Hazard Mitigation. Students can choose an objective from this list to research and present, or choose one of the sectors from the Colorado Resiliency Framework to focus on (see the Colorado Resiliency Framework StoryMap Lessons).





Student Presentations

Students have several options to present their ideas at the Expo. Give students options for their final product that fit best with the chosen format of your Community Resilience Expo. Use the questions below to guide their presentation:

- What is the mitigation goal or objective?
- What steps are being taken to reach the objective? Who is responsible for leading the effort?
- Why is this objective important?
- What challenges might planners encounter in reaching this objective?
- How can community members help?

Guidelines for presentation formats:

- Oral Presentation: Give a 3-5 minute presentation. Use visual aids (e.g. slideshow) as needed, and make sure that all members of your group contribute equally to the presentation.
- Poster: Create a poster using a tri-fold board, or an academic poster (32" x 46", ~\$10 printing cost at a blueprint printing store) to illustrate your ideas. Prepare a short presentation (2-5 minutes) to explain your idea using the visuals on your poster.
- Video: Create a 3-5 minute video to pitch your idea. Use engaging visuals, interviews, and/or skits to convince your audience to adopt your idea.
- Website/Media: Create a website to show and tell people why your idea should be adopted in the community. Use engaging visuals, and create a resource for community members to learn more about resilience in their community.

Write a Letter to the Editor to pitch your idea to the public, and explain why building community resilience is important.

Create a podcast or radio spot to highlight the importance of your idea. Include interviews with local experts if possible.

- Oral History: Collect oral history residents who have been in your community a long time, and have experienced some sort of hazard. Develop a podcast or a short pamphlet to highlight their personal stories and create a resource for community members to learn how to respond to the hazard in the future.

