

ROADMAP TO DISASTER RISK & RESILIENCE

NCSL State Resilience Policies & Practices Cohort

The challenge

As the frequency and severity of natural disasters continue to grow, all levels of government are confronted with a multitude of challenges including staggering economic losses, damage to natural and built infrastructure and social impacts.

California Assembly Bill 2238 (2022) directs the development of a statewide extreme heat ranking system.

Oklahoma House Bill 2293 (2023) creates the Oklahoma Flood and Drought Management Task Force.

Washington House Bill 1728 (2023) was enacted to create a statewide resiliency program to coordinate stakeholders and recommend mitigation projects.

Florida House Bill 7053 (2022) establishes the Statewide Office of Resilience and requires a report on flood resilience and mitigation efforts.

What's new

Return on investment: Jurisdictions at every level are executing large scale investments to reinforce infrastructure and protect human life, but often struggle with how to calculate a return on investment. Data collected over the past 25 years shows that public sector investments in mitigation by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the U.S. Economic Development Administration and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) have saved \$6 per \$1 spent.

Funding: Unprecedented investments are being made in everything from transportation infrastructure to grid hardening to drought resilience with support from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act. Funds from several federal agencies, including HUD and the Department of Defense can be used as matching funds for other federal funding sources.

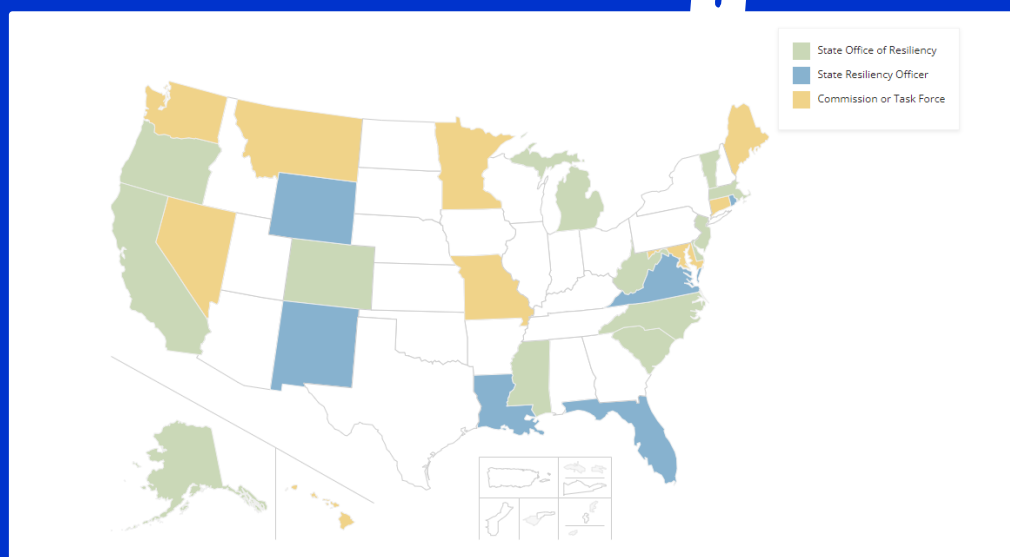
Streamlined planning: States are increasingly looking to streamline and centralize disaster mitigation and climate resilience functions under one person or office. This can be helpful given the number of federal agencies involved in disaster management, the complexity of various funding mechanisms and the challenge of understanding needs at the local level.

State policy landscape

Many states are changing their approach to disaster management through policies emphasizing mitigation, infrastructure resilience and resource conservation. Mitigation measures in particular—such as building code improvements, natural barriers, land use and development practices—are proven tools to reduce disaster damage costs in communities, amounting to many times the initial investment.

New York Senate Bill 7582 (2022) requires assessment of current building codes and recommendations for future updates in relation to mitigating flood damage.

Colorado House Bill 1011 (2022) establishes a state grant program to provide funding to local governments that dedicate resources to wildfire mitigation efforts.



To date, at least 28 states and the District of Columbia have created a position, office or task force to streamline planning and project oversight for disaster mitigation and climate resilience projects. For many states, the position is known as a chief resilience officer, or CRO.

Financing & federal support

The federal government offers funding to support state efforts to build and maintain critical infrastructure to help communities become more resilient. By leveraging federal funding, states can strengthen the resilience of vulnerable communities and build infrastructure to better withstand recurring disasters, ultimately reducing costs and creating safer, more sustainable communities.

Federal mitigation resources and grants are offered by many agencies including FEMA, the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Forest Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Opportunities include funds for water management and wetland programs, coastal zone protection, wildfire mitigation and more. Federal funding can also be leveraged, layered and used simultaneously with non-federal funds to maximize impact.

North Carolina's Department of Environmental Quality previously used Community Development Block Grant Mitigation funding to conduct resilience planning and reduce future losses from disasters. The funding supported North Carolina's Resilient Coastal Communities Program and the development of the Division of Mitigation Services Natural Infrastructure Flood Mitigation Program.