

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2021 update to the Wyoming County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) was prepared in accordance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000). DMA 2000 requires state and local governments to prepare HMPs to remain eligible to receive pre-disaster mitigation grant funds available in the wake of federally declared disasters. **To restate, municipalities that do not participate in this process and do not adopt the resulting HMP will not be eligible to receive future pre-disaster mitigation grant funding (Section 404 grant funds).** Importantly, pre-disaster mitigation grant funds are separate and distinct from federal and state funds available for direct post-disaster relief (i.e., Public Assistance [PA] and Individual Assistance [IA]). Availability of those funds remains unchanged; if a federally declared disaster occurs in Wyoming County, affected municipalities may still receive immediate recovery assistance regardless of their participation in this HMP. However, DMA 2000 improves the disaster planning process by (1) increasing requirements for hazard mitigation planning, and (2) necessitating that participating municipalities document their hazard mitigation planning process and identify hazards; potential losses; and mitigation needs, goals, and strategies.

*Hazard Mitigation* is any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk and effects that can result from specific hazards.

FEMA defines a *Hazard Mitigation Plan* as documentation of a state or local government's evaluation of natural hazards, and strategies to mitigate such hazards.

## WYOMING COUNTY MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL PLANNING PROCESS

Wyoming County developed and adopted the Wyoming County HMP in 2014. DMA 2000 regulations require that local plans be formally updated and adopted every 5 years, reassessing risk and updating local strategies to manage and mitigate those risks. Extensive outreach efforts by Wyoming County Office of Emergency Services resulted in full participation from 21 of 24 municipalities. Upon completion and approval of the HMP, participating jurisdictions will continue to address and implement the findings and recommendations of this HMP.

Table ES-1 lists local governments that actively participated in the HMP update process to achieve or maintain their compliance with DMA 2000 requirements.

**Table ES-1. Participating Jurisdictions in the 2021 Wyoming County HMP Update**

Jurisdictions				
Wyoming County	Castile (T)	Gainesville (V)	Perry (T)	Warsaw (V)
Arcade (T)	Castile (V)	Genesee Falls (T)	Pike (T)	Wyoming (V)
Arcade (V)	Covington (T)	Java (T)	Sheldon (T)	
Attica (V)	Eagle (T)	Middlebury (T)	Silver Springs (V)	
Bennington (T)	Gainesville (T)	Orangeville (T)	Warsaw (T)	

During this HMP update process, Wyoming County and the participating jurisdictions accomplished the following goals:

- Developed a Steering Committee and Planning Partnership
- Reviewed and updated the hazards of concern
- Profiled and prioritized these hazards
- Estimated inventory at risk and potential losses associated with these hazards
- Reviewed and updated hazard mitigation goals and objectives

- Reviewed and updated county and local mitigation strategies to address identified risks and vulnerabilities
- Updated and developed maintenance procedures to be executed upon approval of the HMP

As required by DMA 2000, participating jurisdictions and Wyoming County have informed the public about HMP update efforts and have provided opportunities for public comment and input regarding the update process. In addition, numerous agencies and stakeholders have participated as core or support members to provide input and expertise to the planning process. This HMP documents the process and outcomes of the jurisdictions' mitigation planning efforts.

Wyoming County and the participating jurisdictions incorporate mitigation planning as an integral component of daily government operations through existing processes and programs. Announcements regarding the planning process were publicized via public notice and on the Wyoming County HMP website (<https://www.wyomingcountyhmp.com>). The website also offered the general public and stakeholder groups an opportunity to provide input through a community survey. Updates to the HMP will be similarly announced after annual plan reviews and 5-year updates. The questionnaire asked quantifiable questions about citizen perception of risk, knowledge of mitigation, and support of community programs. The County HMP Coordinator at the Wyoming County Office of Emergency Services as well as local planning partnership representatives will be responsible for receiving, tracking, and filing public comments regarding this HMP.

## WYOMING COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN ADOPTION

Once the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) formally approves this HMP update, Wyoming County and all participating jurisdictions will be required to formally adopt the updated HMP. A sample copy of an adoption resolution is included in Appendix A.

## WYOMING COUNTY PROFILE

Development increases population and structures, and therefore can increase the impacts of hazards on a community. For example, heavy development planned for a flood-prone area would likely increase the impact of a flood event on the community in that area.

According to 2018 U.S. Census data American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimate (U.S. Census Bureau 2019), Wyoming County had an estimated population of 40,565. Wyoming County is located in the Allegheny Plateau and Catskill Mountains in western New York. The County Seat is located in the Village of Warsaw.

The HMP provides a general overview of current and anticipated population and land use within the county. This information provides a basis for decisions about types of mitigation approaches to consider, and the locations to which these approaches should be applied. Anticipated population and land use information can also be used to support decisions regarding future development in vulnerable areas. The county and jurisdictions can plan ahead to mitigate increases in vulnerabilities early in the development process, or shift development to areas of lower risk. The Steering Committee will revisit the HMP regularly to (1) ensure that mitigation actions support sustainability and minimize increased risk, and (2) support implementation and targeting of specific mitigation actions to address potential impacts of development over time.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

A key component of an effective HMP is accurate identification of risks posed by hazards and corresponding impacts on the community. The process of identifying hazards of concern, profiling hazard events, and conducting a vulnerability assessment is known as a risk assessment. The risk assessment portion of the mitigation planning process included the steps shown on Figure ES-1. Each step is summarized below.

*Step 1:* Identify hazards of concern. Wyoming County considered the full range of natural and non-natural hazards that could impact the county, and identified and ranked the hazards of greatest concern. The following 10 hazards of concern were selected for further evaluation in the HMP:

- Earthquake
- Epidemic
- Fire
- Flood
- Hazardous Materials
- Severe Storm
- Severe Winter Storm
- Transportation Accident
- Utility Interruption
- Water Supply Contamination

*Step 2:* Prepare a profile for each hazard of concern. These profiles assist communities in evaluating and comparing hazards that can impact their areas. Each type of hazard has unique characteristics that vary from event to event. That is, impacts associated with a specific hazard can vary depending on the magnitude and location of each event (a hazard event is a specific, uninterrupted occurrence of a particular type of hazard). Further, probability of occurrence of a hazard at a given location affects the priority assigned to that hazard. Finally, each hazard impacts different communities in different ways, depending on geography, local development, population distribution, age of buildings, and mitigation measures already implemented.

*Steps 3 and 4:* Evaluate community assets and identify assets exposed or vulnerable to the identified hazards of concern. Hazard profile information combined with data regarding population, demographics, general building stock, and critical facilities at risk prepares the community to develop risk scenarios and estimate potential damages and losses from each hazard.

Overall vulnerability of Wyoming County to the hazards of concern cannot be overestimated. Frequent severe storms result in wind damage and flooding that can affect residents, businesses, and government services. National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) statistics for Wyoming County, as of May 2020, identify approximately 101 NFIP policies in force and paid claims of \$99,925 since 1978.

**Figure ES-1. Mitigation Planning Process Steps**



## WYOMING COUNTY MITIGATION STRATEGY

Outcomes of the risk assessment, supplemented by community input, provided the basis for reviewing past mitigation actions, future goals, and appropriate local mitigation actions.

### Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives

The 2014 HMP specified five overarching mitigation goals that summarized hazard reduction outcome goals for Wyoming County and participating jurisdictions. The Steering Committee reviewed the 2014 mitigation goals and elected to edit them to the following four mitigation goals for the 2021 update:

- (1) Protect life, property, and critical infrastructure from hazard impacts.
- (2) Reduce the risk of hazards on life, property, and the environment.

- (3) Educate the public, officials, and other stakeholders about the hazards they face and action that can be taken to mitigate hazard impacts.
- (4) Integrate public and private stakeholders into hazard mitigation programs across the county.

After review of the 2014 plan, the Planning Partnership developed a set of 14 objectives to include in the 2021 update that align closely with the four updated goals.

The mitigation strategy portion of the HMP includes:

- A summary of past and current mitigation efforts
- Local hazard mitigation goals and objectives
- Identification and analysis of mitigation measures and projects under consideration
- Multi-jurisdictional mitigation strategy (goals and objectives)
- Mitigation action plan (summary of specific actions)

### Capability Assessment

Capability assessments were prepared for Wyoming County and each participating jurisdiction. A capability assessment is an inventory of a community’s missions, programs, and policies and an analysis of its capacity to implement them. This assessment is an integral part of the planning process. The capability assessment process includes identification, review, and analysis of current local and state programs, policies, regulations, funding, and practices that may either facilitate or hinder mitigation.

### Identification, Prioritization, Analysis, and Implementation of Mitigation Actions

As part of the planning process for this HMP update, all participating jurisdictions evaluated their risks and known or anticipated losses to the hazards of concern, assessed their capabilities to manage hazard risk, reviewed progress on past mitigation efforts, and identified a comprehensive range of mitigation alternatives and actions they endeavor to implement as resources are identified and available. The HMP identifies all proposed mitigation actions relevant to achievement of the goals and objectives presented above. Wyoming County and participating jurisdictions have identified appropriate local mitigation actions along with hazards mitigated, goals and objectives met, lead agencies, estimated costs, potential funding sources, and the proposed timeline. These actions are identified in Volume II, Section 9 for Wyoming County and each participating jurisdiction.

### PLAN MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES

Hazard mitigation planning is an ongoing process. Section 7, Plan Maintenance, presents procedures for HMP maintenance and updates. The Steering Committee will continue ongoing mitigation efforts to implement the HMP and revise and update the HMP as necessary.

To monitor implementation of the HMP, Steering Committee members will meet annually to discuss the status of HMP implementation and will prepare a report summarizing the status of the HMP and any needed updates. The mitigation evaluation will address changes as new hazard events occur, as the area develops, and as more information is learned about hazards and their impacts. The evaluation will include an assessment of whether the planning process and actions have been effective, whether development or other issues warrant changes to the HMP or its priorities, whether progress is being made toward achievement of the communities’ goals, and whether changes are warranted. The HMP will be updated at a minimum within the 5-year cycle specified by DMA 2000.



## **POINT OF CONTACT**

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