

EPRR Task Force:

Subcommittee on Federal Funding Opportunities & Construction Standards Work Plan

A. Objectives

The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) convened the Presidential Task Force on Emergency Preparedness, Recovery, and Resiliency (EPRR Task Force) to consider a range of emergency preparedness, recovery and resiliency topics and related policy issues. Subcommittees of the EPRR TF have undertaken work in four key thematic areas:

1. Federal funding opportunities to support emergency preparedness, recovery, and resiliency initiatives
2. Impact of consensus-based construction standards on federal funding opportunities
3. Black Sky event planning and preparedness
4. COVID lessons learned and best practices

The Subcommittee on Federal Funding Opportunities & Construction Standards (FFOCS Subcommittee) will address two primary activities: 1) conduct research and provide ongoing education on federal funding to support pre- and post-disaster recovery, resiliency investments, and hazard mitigation; and 2) review existing consensus-based construction standards and their impact on federal funding eligibility.

B. Scope of Work

The FFOCS Subcommittee will identify available federal funding programs aimed at disaster planning, response, and resilience; detail applicable thresholds and requirements for commissions and stakeholders to qualify for such funding; and, memorialize key insights, references, and lessons learned into a reference manual. Work in this area seeks to raise awareness of the scope of assistance afforded by the Stafford Act and other federal funding outlets, the mechanisms in place to apply for assistance, and relevant timetables governing federal assistance programs.

Additionally, the FFOCS Subcommittee will review, analyze, and describe construction standards that apply to and inform the federal disaster grant programs that FEMA administers. The FFOCS Subcommittee will identify existing status quo construction standards, define the process by which those standards are agreed to by standards-making authorities, detail federal funding eligibility requirements and recipient obligations as they pertain to construction standards, and incorporate those lessons into a *Construction Standards Issue Brief*.

A contracted consultant with detailed knowledge of disaster response frameworks and federal and state disaster resources will support the Subcommittee's work efforts. The consultant will:

- Identify, collate, and coalesce a comprehensive documentation of federal funding opportunities aimed at pre- and post-disaster recovery, resiliency investments, and hazard mitigation.
- Review existing consensus-based construction standards and their impact on federal eligibility requirements for funding. Produce a *Construction Standards Issue Brief* on the processes by which consensus-construction standards are determined, how the federal government references them in funding decisions, and how they are implemented
- Draft a *Federal Funding Opportunities and Construction Standards Reference Manual* that incorporates both the comprehensive documentation of federal funding opportunities and construction standards issue brief.

- Identify and scope educational engagements for NARUC audiences to facilitate deeper understanding of available federal funding opportunities and the impact of construction standards on funding eligibility and ongoing recipient obligations.

The regular work of the FFOCS Subcommittee will be conducted via conference calls, webinars, email, and NARUC meeting sessions. The FFOCS Subcommittee in conjunction with NARUC staff will engage in extensive collaboration on drafting of a final *Federal Funding Opportunities and Construction Standards Reference Manual* and development of supplemental materials and resources.

C. Tasks

Task 1 - Develop work plan and schedule for deliverables.

NARUC staff in conjunction with the members of the FFOCS Subcommittee will develop a work plan that clearly delineates areas of responsibility and includes a timetable for completing each task for Subcommittee review and approval. The draft work plan Subcommittee leadership will report on the work plan and schedule during the EPRR Task Force at the NARUC annual meeting on November 9-12, 2020.

Additionally, the Subcommittee Leadership will review a Scope of Work document for a proposed RFP to engage a consultant with external expertise in disaster response planning to support the FFOCS Subcommittee's content development efforts.

Timeframe:

- Subcommittee work plan – September 15, 2020-October 30, 2020
- Consultant work plan – October 2020 - December 30, 2020

Task 2 – Research Federal Funding Opportunities and Product Content Outline.

The FFOCS Subcommittee will oversee NARUC staff and external consultant's collection and summary of relevant literature pertaining to federal funding opportunities related to disaster management planning and practice, and resiliency investments. Details must include:

- The scope of federal funding assistance programs, including but not limited to the Stafford Act, and explicit descriptions of each;
- Eligibility requirements (e.g., state or local governments, rural cooperative utilities, investor-owned utilities)
- Mechanisms in place to apply for assistance and relevant timetables governing federal assistance programs; and,
- Ongoing recipient obligations.
- Guidance for regulators for how state public utility commissions might reflect these federal funding resources in their own disaster planning efforts.

Working with the FFOCS Subcommittee and NARUC staff, the external consultant will prepare a content outline of the *Federal Funding Opportunities and Construction Standards Reference Manual*. The draft outline will inform the final manual and serve as a resource to state public utility commissions to identify federal funding opportunities related to disaster preparedness, resiliency planning, and recovery efforts.

Timeframe: January 2021 – July 2021

Task 3 – Review Existing Construction Standards & Authorities

The FFOCS Subcommittee working, with NARUC staff and external consultant, will compile existing construction standards and assess them for applicability and usefulness in disaster recovery. Further, the impact these construction standards have on federal funding eligibility and recipient obligations pertaining to federal funding compliance will be examined.

Timeframe: January 2021 – April 2021

Task 4 – Prepare *Construction Standards Issue Brief*

With NARUC staff, the external consultant will prepare the *Construction Standards Issue Brief* for review and approval by the FFOCS Subcommittee. Upon approval, the *Construction Standards Issue Brief* will be incorporated in the FFOCS Subcommittee’s *Federal Funding Opportunities and Construction Standards Reference Manual*.

Timeframe: April 2021 – September 2021

Task 5 – Prepare final draft *Federal Funding Opportunities and Construction Standards Reference Manual* for EEPR Task Force review and approval

The FFOCS Subcommittee, working with NARUC staff and the external consultant, will review and comment on iterative drafts of the *Federal Funding Opportunities and Construction Standards Reference Manual*. The FFOCS Subcommittee will finalize the *Federal Funding Opportunities and Construction Standards Reference Manual* for submittal to the EEPR Task Force for inclusion in the *NARUC Emergency Preparedness, Recovery, and Resiliency Manual*. The draft will incorporate the federal funding opportunities summary document and *Consensus Construction Standards Issue Brief* with detailed instructions to state public utility commissions on requirements for federal funding opportunities. The manual will identify historical and ongoing challenges with accessing federal funding programs for recovery, showcase the available funding programs and applicable requirements and educate State commissions on opportunities and challenges. This document will serve as a reference for all NARUC members and state public utility commissions to inform their state efforts at applying for federal assistance for emergency planning, disaster recovery, and resiliency upgrades.

Timeframe: September 2021 – July 2022

Task 6 - Enhance Collaborative Efforts at Information Sharing and Ongoing Education

The FFOCS Subcommittee will create ongoing educational programming to inform NARUC members and key stakeholders on available federal funding for disaster planning, recovery, and resilience, eligibility for federal funding, and best practices for applying those funds. This effort will include webinars, distribution of external publications relevant to the overarching objectives of the EEPR Task Force and FFOCS Subcommittee, and educational roundtables at NARUC meetings meeting to identify historical and ongoing challenges with accessing federal funding programs for recovery.

Timeframe: January 2021 - July 2022

D. Major Activities and Leads

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| Task 1: Develop Work Plan and Schedule |
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| Timeframe: September 2020 – November 2020 | | |
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| Activity | Lead | Timeframe |
| Appoint members & pre-plan with chair / vice chair | EPRR Task Force Chair Cmr. O’Guinn | September 2020 |
| Kick-off call with FFOCS Subcommittee | NARUC Staff (Will McCurry/Lynn Costantini/Danielle Sass-Byrnett) | September 28 - October 8, 2020 |
| Finalize Subcommittee work plan | Chair/Vice Chair Supported by NARUC Staff | October 2020 |
| Report out on FFOCS Subcommittee Work Plan to EPRR Task Force | Chair/Vice Chair | NARUC Annual Meeting November 9-12, 2020 |
| Task 2: Research Federal Funding Opportunities and Produce Content Outline Timeframe: January 2021 – July 2021 | | |
| Activity | Lead | Timeframe |
| Compile available federal funding opportunities for pre- and post-disaster recovery, resilience investments, and hazard mitigation | Consultant | January 2021 – June 1, 2021 |
| Finalize Federal Funding Opportunities documentation based on feedback from FFOCS Subcommittee | Consultant | July 2021 |
| Subcommittee Leadership report out on Federal Funding Opportunities to full EPRR Task Force | Chair / Vice-Chair | NARUC Summer Policy Summit July 18-21, 2021 |
| Task 3 – Review Existing Construction Standards & Authorities Timeframe: January 2021 – May 2021 | | |
| Activity | Lead | Timeframe |
| Review of existing construction standards, description of processes that standards-making authorities use to develop construction standards, detail of impact of construction standards on federal funding eligibility and recipient obligation. | Consultant | January 2021 – April 1, 2021 |
| Present findings to FFOCS Subcommittee | Consultant / NARUC staff | May 2021 |
| Task 4: Complete a draft of <i>Construction Standards Issue Brief</i> Timeframe: May – September 2021 | | |
| Activity | Lead | Timeframe |
| Draft <i>Construction Standards Issue Brief</i> | Consultant | May – July 2021 |
| Incorporate iterative drafts based on reviewer’s comments | Consultant/NARUC Staff | August 2021 |

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| Finalize <i>Construction Standards Issue Brief</i> | Chair/Vice-Chair | September 2021 |
| Report on <i>Construction Standards Issue Brief</i> to Full EPRR Task Force | Chair/Vice-Chair | NARUC Annual Meeting November 7-11, 2021 |
| Task 5: Complete Federal Funding Opportunities and Construction Standards Reference Manual Timeframe: September 2021 – July 2022 | | |
| Activity | Lead | Timeframe |
| Draft <i>Federal Funding Opportunities and Construction Standards Reference Manual</i> | NARUC Staff | September – December 2021 |
| Incorporate iterative drafts based on reviewer's comments | NARUC Staff Chair/Vice-Chair | December 2021– January 2022 |
| Finalize <i>Federal Funding Opportunities and Construction Standards Reference Manual</i> | Chair/Vice-Chair | January – July 2022 |
| Report on <i>Federal Funding Opportunities and Construction Standards Reference Manual</i> to Full EPRR Task Force | Chair/Vice-Chair | NARUC Summer Policy Summit July 18-21, 2022 |
| Present <i>Federal Funding Opportunities and Construction Standards Reference Manual</i> to NARUC Board | Chair/Vice-Chair | NARUC Summer Policy Summit July 17-20, 2022 |
| Final report out of FFOCS Subcommittee to full EPRR Task Force | Chair/Vice-Chair | NARUC Annual Meeting November 9-12, 2022 |
| Task 6: Ongoing Educational Programming Timeframe: January 2021 - September 2022 | | |
| Activity | Lead | Timeframe |
| Host quarterly webinars | NARUC Staff Chair and Vice Chair staff | Quarterly basis – Starting January 2021 |
| Offer NARUC meeting sessions | NARUC Staff Chair and Vice Chair staff | NARUC Winter Policy Summits February 2021/February 2022 NARUC Summer Policy Summits July 2021/July 2022 |

E. Key Dates

The FFOCS subcommittee will meet monthly throughout the duration of the initiative. The broader EPRR Task Force will convene at each NARUC meeting, with an expectation of receiving progress updates from the subcommittees.

| Meeting | Date(s) |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Kick off call | Week of Sept. 28 - October 2 |
| Monthly calls Subcommittee calls | TBD at standing day/time |
| NARUC 2020 Annual Meeting | November 9-12, 2020 |
| NARUC 2021 Winter Policy Summit | February 7-10, 2021 |
| NARUC 2021 Summer Policy Summit | July 18-21, 2021 |
| NARUC 2021 Annual Meeting | November 7-11, 2021 |
| NARUC 2022 Winter Policy Summit | February 13-16, 2022 |
| NARUC Summer Policy Summit | July 17-20, 2022 |
| NARUC 2022 Annual Meeting | November 9-12, 2022 |