

Bylaws of the Marion County, Florida, Hazard Mitigation Working Group

ARTICLE I. PURPOSES OF THE WORKING GROUP

The purpose of the Marion County Hazard Mitigation Working Group is to decrease the vulnerability of the citizens, governments, businesses and institutions of Marion County, Florida, to the future human, economic and environmental costs of natural, technological, and societal/manmade disasters. The Working Group will develop, monitor, and maintain a local strategy for hazard mitigation and post disaster redevelopment which will be intended to accomplish this purpose.

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

Participation in the Marion County Working Group for Hazard Mitigation is voluntary by all participating entities. Membership is established in accord with the following provisions:

- Membership in the Working Group is open to all jurisdictions, organizations and individuals supporting its purposes, and
- The membership and participation of local governments in the Working Group is controlled by contractual agreements between the Florida Department of Community Affairs, Marion County, and the participating municipalities, which are listed in Attachment A. These contractual agreements are incorporated hereto by reference, and their provisions are controlling.

ARTICLE III. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The organizational structure of the Working Group shall consist of a Steering Committee and permanent and/or temporary subcommittees.

A. The Steering Committee

The Working Group shall be guided by a Steering Committee of not more than twelve members, consisting of designated representatives of the following:

- One representative from the government of Marion County and each participating municipality,
- One representative from organizations and associations representing key businesses, industry, and community interest groups of Marion County, and
- Other such individuals appointed by a majority vote of the Steering Committee.

Members of the Steering Committee will be designated by formal resolution, appointment or other action to serve as the official representative and spokesperson for the jurisdiction or organization regarding the activities and decisions of the Working Group. To maintain good standing; members of the Steering Committee must have un-excused absences of more than three consecutive meetings.

B. Subcommittees

The Working Group shall have four permanent subcommittees: Risk Assessment, Mitigation Planning, Public Information, and Financial Issues. Membership of the permanent subcommittees is unlimited and is open to all interested jurisdictions, organizations and individuals.

Temporary subcommittees may be established at any time for special purposes by the chair of the Steering Committee, and their membership designated at that time.

Membership in the subcommittees is not restricted. There are no requirements for individuals to maintain good standing as members of a permanent or temporary subcommittee.

C. Program Staff

The Marion County Community Services Department, or other county agencies as may be subsequently designated, will provide and/or coordinate individual and organizations serving as the program staff for the Working Group.

ARTICLE V. OFFICERS

Any member in good standing of the Steering Committee is eligible for election as an officer. The Steering Committee will have a chair elected by a majority vote of a quorum of the members. The Steering Committee will also elect by majority vote a vice-chair. One of these positions will be elected from the representatives of local government and the other from the representatives of the private sector. Each will serve a term of one year, and be eligible for re-election for an unlimited number of terms. The chair and vice-chair of the Steering Committee are also considered to be chair and vice-chair of the Working Group.

The chair of the Steering Committee will preside at each meeting of the Steering Committee, make assignments of Steering Committee members to the permanent subcommittees, as well as establish temporary subcommittees and assigned personnel to them. The vice-chair will fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the chair in his or her absence.

The chair of each permanent or temporary subcommittee will be designated from the members in good standing of the Steering Committee by its chair, and will serve at the pleasure of the chair of the Steering Committee.

ARTICLE VI. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will be responsible for oversight and coordination of all actions and decisions by the Working Group, and is solely responsible for formal actions in the name of the Working Group, including the release of reports, development of resolutions, issuance of position papers, and similar activities. The Steering Committee makes assignments to the subcommittees, coordinates their work, and takes action on their recommendations.

B. Subcommittees

The permanent subcommittees have the following responsibilities:

1. Risk Assessment - to identify, analyze, and monitor the hazards threatening Marion County and the vulnerabilities of the community to those hazards, as well as to assist in the definition of actions to mitigate the impacts of those hazards.
2. Mitigation Planning - to define structural and non-structural actions needed to decrease the human, economic and environmental impacts of disasters, and to prepare for consideration and action by the Steering Committee a strategy for implementation of those initiatives in both the pre- and post- disaster time frame.
3. Financial Issues - to define the general financial vulnerability of the community to the impacts of disasters, to assist with identification of initiatives to minimize that vulnerability; and seek funding sources for all priority mitigation initiatives identified in the mitigation strategy developed by the Working Group.
4. Public Information - to secure public input and comment on the efforts of the Working Group; to inform the public about the activities of the Working Group; to conduct public information and education programs regarding hazard mitigation; to assist with the conduct of public hearings; and, to promote public acceptance of the strategy developed by the Working Group.

The permanent subcommittees may be combined or further divided into small groups at the discretion of the chair of the Steering Committee, and their duties and responsibilities altered accordingly. The responsibilities of temporary subcommittees will be defined at the time they are established by the chair of the Steering Committee.

C. Program Staff

Technical, clerical and other types of support activities to the Steering Committee and subcommittees will be provided through the Marion County Growth Services Department and other county agencies as assigned. The Growth Services Department will also serve as the legal governmental representative of the Working Group, and is empowered under County statutes to accept and disburse funds, enter into contracts, hire staff, and take such other actions as

necessary in support of, or in the name of, the Working Group. Other jurisdictions and organizations may also provide such services on a voluntary basis upon request of the Growth Services Department and/or the chair of the Steering Committee.

A. Authority for Actions

Only the Steering Committee has the authority to take final actions in the name of the Working Group. Actions by subcommittees or program staff are not considered as final until affirmed by action of the Steering Committee.

B. Meetings, Voting and Quorum

Meetings of the Steering Committee and its subcommittees will be conducted in accord with Robert's Rules of Order, when deemed necessary by chair of the meeting. Regular meetings of the Steering Committee will be scheduled with a minimum of 10 working days notice. The scheduling of meetings of a subcommittee is at the discretion of its chair.

All final actions and decisions made in the name of the Working Group will be by affirmative vote of a quorum of the Steering Committee. A quorum shall be fifty percent of the members of the Steering Committee in good standing at the time of the vote. Each member of the Steering Committee will have one vote. Voting by proxy, written or otherwise, is not allowed.

In extenuating circumstances, based on limited time tables, and a quorum not being immediately available, the committee members in attendance may elect to vote to on an actionable item which shall constitute tentative approval or denial. This vote shall be observed as a legal vote to move actionable items forward, but shall also be addressed at the next available meeting where a quorum is present in order to fully illustrate the conditions on which any item was under action through special conditions.

C. Special Votes

Special votes may be taken under emergency situations or when there are other extenuating circumstances that are judged by both the chair and vice-chair of the Steering Committee to prohibit scheduling of a regular meeting of the Steering Committee. Special votes may be by telephone, email and/or first class mail, and shall be in accord with all applicable statutes for such actions.

D. Public Hearings

When required by statute or the policies of Marion County, or when deemed necessary by the Steering Committee a public hearing regarding actions under consideration for implementation by the Working Group will be held.

E. Documentation of Actions

All meetings and other forms of action by the Steering Committee and permanent subcommittees will be documented and made available for inspection by the public.

VIII. ADOPTION OF AND AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

The Bylaws of the Working Group may be adopted and/or amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the members in good standing of the Steering Committee. All proposed changes to the bylaws will be provided fourteen (14) days prior to such a vote.

IX. DISSOLUTION OF THE WORKING GROUP

The Working Group maybe dissolved by affirmative vote of 100% of the members in good standing of the Steering Committee at the time of the vote, by order of a court of competent jurisdiction, and/or by instruction of the Marion County Board of Commissioners. At the time of dissolution, all remaining documents, records, equipment and supplies belonging to the Working Group will be transferred to the Marion County Office of Emergency Management for disposition.