

Yazoo Backwater Area Resilience Alternative
Funding Opportunities as of October 2021
*Additional details on the highlighted programs can be found in the
Resilience Alternative for the Yazoo Backwater Area dated February 2021*

1. FEMA Post-Disaster Recovery Programs

The Yazoo Backwater Area is currently covered by a [Disaster Declaration for Hurricane Ida](#) (see [here](#) for more details on Disaster Declaration 3569-EM-MS which was declared on August 28, 2021). As a result, post-disaster recovery funding is available for the Yazoo Backwater Area through at least August 28, 2022. There also may be opportunities to utilize some unspent HUD CDBG-DR grant funding for the Yazoo Backwater Area.

- **FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program:** Funding is available, and applications are accepted from state and local governments, in areas covered by an open Presidential disaster declaration. FEMA accepts HMGP applications for one year after a federal disaster declaration with the possibility of up to a 180-day extension at the state’s request
- **USDA Community Facilities Grant Program:** Funding is available, and applications are accepted from rural communities with up to 20,000 residents, in areas covered by a Presidential disaster declaration.
- **HUD CDBG-DR Grants:** Mississippi has a number [of open CDBG-DR grants, including a long-term Katrina grant that includes a significant amount of unspent funds](#). It is possible that the Yazoo Backwater Area may be eligible for funding under one of these grants (alternatively, opportunities may exist for diverting some of these funds to the Yazoo Backwater Area).

2. FEMA BRIC Program

- A. **BRIC COVID-19 Funding:** On August 25, 2021, FEMA announced that the state of [Mississippi would receive \\$25.9 million for natural hazard mitigation measures](#) as part of the response to the COVID-19 global pandemic. This funding will be distributed through the BRIC program (this *appears to be* in addition to the \$1 billion FY21 BRIC program allocation).
- B. **BRIC FY21 Funding:** [The FY21 BRIC program is accepting applications through January 28, 2022](#) (the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency has set an [application deadline of December 1, 2021](#)).¹ The FY21 BRIC Program will distribute up to \$1 billion, with each state/territory able to receive **up to \$1 million**. An additional \$919,000,000 (estimated) will be distributed through a National Competition for Mitigation Projects.
 - New BRIC Program Criteria for FY21 Relevant to the Yazoo Backwater Area:
 - Includes a new priority to enhance climate resilience and adaptation.
 - Includes a new priority to prioritize benefits to incentivize natural hazard risk reduction activities that mitigate risk to public infrastructure and includes disadvantaged communities as defined in Executive Order 14008 – Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad.

¹ Mississippi did not apply for any BRIC funding during the FY20 funding cycle. One article reports that only two Mississippi cities, Oxford and Columbus, applied for the funding and MEMA acted on its own to grant the requests.

- Prioritizes assistance that benefits disadvantaged communities as referenced in Executive Order 14008 - Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, in line with the Administration’s [Justice40 Initiative](#) to promote equity.
 - Revises the title of a “Small Impoverished Community” to “Economically Disadvantaged Rural Communities” (an economically disadvantaged rural community is a community of 3,000 or fewer individuals identified by the applicant that is economically disadvantaged, with residents having an average per capita annual income not exceeding 80% of the national per capita income, based on best available data).
 - Economically disadvantaged rural communities are eligible for an increase in federal cost share up to 90% federal/10% non-federal.
 - Doubles the number of communities to which FEMA is offering non-financial Direct Technical Assistance, from 10 to 20, to help build capability and capacity at the local level and includes disadvantaged communities
- Additional Important Information from Mississippi Emergency Management Agency: A Mississippi community may be eligible for a reduction in the 10-25% match requirements if they prepare a letter to MEMA that explains how the community is experiencing a hardship, according to Jana Henderson/MEMA Office of Mitigation Director.
- C. BRIC Non-Financial Technical Assistance:** FEMA will select up to 20 communities for [non-financial Direct Technical Assistance](#). Multiple communities located near one another with similar disaster challenges are highly encouraged to coordinate in making a single request. To apply, communities submit a Letter of Intent directly to FEMA (bypassing the state).
- D. Potential BRIC Funding Under the BIF:** \$1 billion, with \$200 million available for FY22-25.

3. FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance Grants

- A. Current FMA Funding Opportunity:** [The Flood Mitigation Assistance Grants program is accepting applications through January 28, 2022](#); MEMA has established an [application deadline of December 1, 2021 for Mississippi](#). FEMA will distribute **up to \$160 million** through this program, including for:
- Project Scoping (up to \$10 million).
 - Community Flood Mitigation (up to \$70 million).
 - Flood hazard mitigation planning.
 - Individual flood mitigation projects.
- B. Potential FMA Funding Under the BIF:**
- \$3.5 billion for FEMA’s Flood Mitigation Assistance Program, which is named “National Flood Insurance Fund” in the final text, with \$700 million/year FY22-25.
 - The BIF also provides \$500 million for the STORM Act, which establishes a FEMA program to help states establish revolving loan funds for mitigation projects (Stafford Act Sec 205).
- C. Potential Funding Under Reconciliation:** \$495 million for FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Revolving Loan Fund.

4. Wetland Reserve and Floodplain Easement Programs (USDA)

- A. Current WRE Funding:** Funding is available yearly, and the [current application deadline for Mississippi is October 29, 2021](#). The Wetland Reserve Easement Program is typically oversubscribed; applications can be submitted year round.
- B. Potential USDA Reconciliation Funding Applicable to Restoration in the Yazoo Backwater Area:**
- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), which includes Wetland Reserve Easements potentially will receive \$1.5 billion.
 - USDA NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program potentially will receive \$300 million.
 - USDA Conservation Technical Assistance Program potentially will receive \$200 million.
 - USDA Rural Partnership Program potentially will receive \$4 billion. This program provides flexible grants to rural communities impacted by economic transitions and climate change, to support job growth, economic resilience, and economic recovery.

5. Economic Development Administration (Commerce Department)

The Resilience Alternative highlights opportunities for driving economic growth in the Yazoo Backwater Area through the promotion of wildlife and cultural heritage-associated in collaboration with the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area, the Delta Blues Trail, the Delta National Forest, and the Theodore Roosevelt National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

Current Funding Opportunities: Funding could be pursued through the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) American Rescue Plan [Travel, Tourism & Outdoor Recreation program](#). EDA is focused on accelerating the recovery of communities that rely on the travel, tourism and outdoor recreation sectors. EDA's American Rescue Plan funds are allocated to support the following efforts:

- State Tourism Grants: \$510 million in non-competitive awards to help states quickly invest in marketing, infrastructure, workforce and other projects to rejuvenate safe leisure, business and international travel. [Mississippi appears to be receiving \\$3,238,831](#) in State Tourism Grants.
- Competitive Grants: \$240 million to help communities that have been hardest hit by challenges facing the travel, tourism and outdoor recreation sectors to invest in infrastructure, workforce or other projects to support the recovery of the industry and economic resilience of the community in the future. While there is no deadline for applying for these grants, [EDA strongly recommends submitting applications by January 31, 2022](#).

6. Other Potential Funding Through Reconciliation

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service potentially will receive the following program dollars that could be used to help improve conditions in the Yazoo Backwater Area:

- \$100 million for restoration and resiliency work in the National Wildlife Refuge System and other federal assets to address damage and threats from climate-induced weather events.
- \$10 million for wildlife corridor mapping, assistance to states and tribes on corridors.