# Region 6
# Annual Status Report



**2020-21**

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## Introduction

Region 6 includes the states of Louisiana, Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. These states saw a large number of disasters in 2020 and are continuing to recover from disasters suffered from previous years. Various initiatives are being undertaken in each state that will lessen the damages from future disasters.

## Key Accomplishments

**New Mexico** – New Mexico recently passed state level floodplain management legislation (found HERE) which was response to the April 2019 FEMA letter to the Governor regarding State compliance with the minimum standards of the NFIP. After much collaboration with other state agencies involved in multiple aspects of development, NM Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (NMDHSEM) developed language for state level floodplain management compliance. The State Legislature passed the Bill and Governor Lujan Grisham signed it into law on April 6, 2021. Over the next year, with input from the New Mexico Construction Industries Division, NMDHSEM will be developing rules, regulations, and Standard Operating Procedures. The new law will take effect and enforcement will begin July 1, 2022.

**Texas** – Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) is administering a new grant/loan flood mitigation program with over $750M in state funds that started in 2020 called the Flood Infrastructure Fund (FIF). As of Mar 2021, TWDB has awarded 59 projects totaling $137M. Another 68 applications totaling $333M are currently under review. About $300M remains unallocated and additional invitation to apply rounds are anticipated in Summer 2021. More information HERE

With so many different funding opportunities for flood, 3 state agencies (TWDB, GLO, TDEM) are collaborating to make this less complex. One product from this collaboration is a new website for Texas called the Flood Information Clearinghouse. This website provides a consolidated place for requests for state or federal flood funding assistance and pairs requestors with the appropriate state or federal resources.

Texas is committed to mapping the entire state (all 208 HUC-8 watersheds) with Base Level Engineering models and maps by 2024. About 35 watersheds are complete and online, with another 66 in progress. Funding for this effort comes from a combination of FEMA, state, and local funding. The USGS is hosting an interactive map where you can zoom in and look at map data and also download data/models/reports.

Texas has been working with USGS to expand coverage and enhance the functionality available on the Flood Decision Support Toolbox (FDST). One recent addition was working in our statewide building data and utilizing it to estimate consolidated depth-damage potential in flooded areas with any varied depth assigned in the viewer on the fly.

Statewide Flood Planning – 15 Regional Flood Planning Groups were formed in 2020 and those groups have begun the process of developing Regional Flood Plans due to the TWDB by Jan 2023.

These regional flood plans will be combined into the first consolidated state flood plan which is planned to be completed by Sep 2024. More information [HERE](#)

**Oklahoma** – On May 18, 2020 the Oklahoma Legislature passed Senate Bill 1269 which directed the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB) to develop a comprehensive State Flood Plan and established a State Flood Resiliency Revolving Fund. The Oklahoma Water Resources Board and other State agencies are in the process of preparing a draft State Flood Plan. The statewide plan will examine flood risks and potential flood mitigation projects on a watershed basis, not just at the community level. The Plan will examine need for additional flood risk information, such as flood maps, and also identify areas where flood control projects are needed. Needs identified by the Plan would then be ranked according to a cost-benefit ratio. Flood risk needs and assessments within watersheds could also be coordinated between communities in those watersheds.
State Cooperating Technical Partners Program Gives Project Update

Aaron Milligan with OWRB and Brandon Claborn with Meshek and Associates recently participated in a FEMA CTP Brown Bag Webinar to provide an update on their CTP Special Project. The project is part of the FEMA CTP Program which allows states to select special flood risk outreach efforts. The project involved conducting an assessment of flood risk data needs and sources with the end goal of providing information to community officials and citizens to spur greater NFIP participation by communities, flood insurance subscription by citizens, adoption of higher standards and greater investments in flood mitigation. A key piece of the project was development of a digital dashboard which can present information on local flood insurance policies, claims, repeat losses and grant awards. The dashboard can also be used to help non-NFIP participating communities make informed decisions about NFIP participation and flood mitigation planning. Public meetings are planned for spring 2021 to demonstrate the dashboard, promote the NFIP and review available community flood risk information.

## Challenges

**Texas** - Better adherence and consistency statewide to Substantial Damage Estimates, SD tracking, and SD regulations.

Seek more participation in the Community Rating System (CRS). Currently, only ~70 of 1400 Texas communities participate

**Louisiana** - FEMA will no longer hire a contractor for Substantial Damage Estimates. It is the communities' responsible to perform Substantial Damage Compliance or obtain a contractor to perform the duties to remain in compliance with the NFIP and their FDPO. The Disaster Response Team is in a state of flux and may not be available to assist very much if any.

The state is in talks with the State Fire Marshal's Office to assist our communities with these assessments, but nothing is confirmed. Most expenses incurred accomplishing this task will be reimbursed to the community through Public Assistance on a 75/25 match.