



National Tsunami Hazards Mitigation Program (NTHMP)

Rules of Procedure

November 2019 Revision

The *2018-2023 NTHMP Strategic Plan* states:

The Mission of the NTHMP is:

To mitigate the impact of tsunamis through public education, community response planning, hazard assessment, and warning coordination.

The Vision of the NTHMP is:

Reduced loss of life and property when a tsunami strikes any U.S. state or territory and resilient communities that are prepared for tsunami hazards.

The mission and vision of the NTHMP are achieved by a strong and active partnership between Federal and state agencies (here within, the term “state” or “state Members” refers to all 28 state, commonwealth and territory NTHMP Members (Appendix A)). This partnership enables all levels of government to prepare for a damaging tsunami in coordination with each other providing the greatest benefit to coastal communities, residents, and visitors.

NTHMP STRUCTURE

Membership

The National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program, a partnership between Federal and state agency representatives, and is the instrument through which the National Weather Service (NWS) shall conduct “a community-based tsunami hazard mitigation program to improve tsunami preparedness and resiliency of at-risk areas in the United States and the territories of the United States.” – *P.L. 115-25* (Appendix B).

The NTHMP partnership includes: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and all 28 U.S. coastal states, territories, and commonwealths.

GOVERNANCE – COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Authority

The NTHMP was formed in 1995 by Congressional action which directed the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to form and lead a Federal/state working group.

The NTHMP Coordinating Committee (CC) conducts its business in the model provided in Section 3204 of PL 115-25. To fulfill its specific responsibilities, the Coordinating Committee shall:

- (1) Through action of the Chair, appoint a Federal Grant Panel composed of at least three people who shall recommend to National Weather Service management how funds appropriated for carrying out the program under Section 5 shall be distributed.
- (2) Ensure that areas described in section 3204 of this title in the United States and its territories can have the opportunity to participate in the program.
- (3) Provide recommendations to the National Weather Service on how to improve the TsunamiReady® program, particularly on ways to make communities more tsunami resilient through the use of inundation maps and other practices; and
- (4) Ensure that all components of the program are integrated with ongoing hazard warning and risk management activities, emergency response plans, and mitigation programs in affected areas, including integrating information to assist in tsunami evacuation route planning.

Coordinating Committee Membership

Coordinating Committee membership will be comprised of two representatives from:

- NOAA (excluding Chair position)
- FEMA
- USGS
- The NTHMP Administrator is an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Coordinating Committee.

Also included in the Coordinating Committee will be one Emergency Management and one Science representative from:

- Alaska
- American Samoa
- California
- Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
- Guam
- Hawai'i
- Oregon
- Puerto Rico
- Washington
- U.S. Virgin Islands
- U.S. East Coast States
- U.S. Gulf Coast States

Each member organization (i.e., Federal, state, territory, and commonwealth government) will be responsible for designating official representatives. To ensure continuity and avoid conflict-of-interest, the designated primary appointees should not be a person whose salary is mostly or entirely funded from a NOAA grant. Each Coordinating Committee member officially designated by the member organization may designate one alternate to participate on their behalf in the event they are unable to attend a meeting of the Coordinating Committee. The Coordinating Committee member shall be responsible for informing the NTHMP Administrator of the alternate's name in advance of the meeting(s) in which the alternate will attend on behalf of the official representative.

Invitational travel may be offered by the National Weather Service Headquarters to officially designated Coordinating Committee members or NTHMP Subcommittee Leaders who do not have grant funds available to support travel to participate in official NTHMP in-person meetings. Requests for invitational travel funding will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and several factors, including available funding. Invitational travel is not offered to Leaders of a Caucus, Work Group, Task Group, or regular members of any NTHMP entity.

The NTHMP Chair will appoint the emergency management and science representatives for the East Coast and Gulf Coast states. A majority vote of the Coordinating Committee is required to affirm these appointments. A list of current representatives will be posted on the [NTHMP Website](#).

If a person designated to serve on the Coordinating Committee does not attend any in-person or telephonic meeting of the Coordinating Committee for five successive meetings, that person is subject to removal for non-participation by action of the Chair upon recommendation by the NTHMP Administrator. In that situation, the appointing authority will be requested to appoint another member who qualifies for appointment.

Officers

1. The NTHMP Coordinating Committee shall vote in odd years to recommend a NOAA Chairperson to the NWS Director (or designee) at the NTHMP Annual Meeting. The NWS has the final authority to appoint the NTHMP Chair.
2. In the event that the NTHMP Chair leaves his/her position within NOAA or resigns from office before his/her two-year term expires, the Chair shall recommend a replacement to the NWS Director/designee who shall confirm the replacement appointment. The Coordinating Committee shall vote to accept the appointment of the new Chair at its next regularly-scheduled meeting or at a special meeting if called by 60% or more of state voting members.
3. The NOAA Chairperson shall preside over the meetings of the NTHMP Coordinating Committee and shall exercise all powers usually incident to the office.
4. The NOAA Chairperson does not vote unless a Coordinating Committee vote ends in a tie. In the event of a tie, the NOAA Chairperson will cast the deciding vote.
5. Presence of the NOAA Chairperson is counted toward quorum for Federal agency members.
6. The NOAA Chairperson, or his/her designated appointee, shall attend meetings at which important NTHMP recommendations are presented and shall speak on behalf of the NTHMP.
7. A staff member designated by NOAA shall serve as NTHMP Administrator. The NTHMP Administrator shall keep a record of all meetings of the NTHMP and shall keep such files as may be required. All meeting minutes will be posted to the NTHMP website

(<http://nws.weather.gov/nthmp/>). Meeting minutes for closed Coordinating Committee meetings shall consist of meeting outcomes, decisions, and policy statements and not individual member comments. The NTHMP Administrator may convene and facilitate meetings of Work Groups and otherwise support activities of the NTHMP as requested by the Chair.

MEETINGS

The NTHMP will hold one meeting per year known as the Annual NTHMP Meeting. Meetings shall be open to the public, except at the discretion of the NTHMP Chair or with a vote of at least 60% of the members of the Coordinating Committee if the discussion will involve sensitive matters. Additional teleconference calls, Coordinating Committee meetings, subcommittee, caucus, and work group meetings may be convened as necessary, provided at least two weeks' notice of any special meeting is given to each member at his/her established business email account. Agendas for additional teleconferences or other meetings throughout the year shall be provided in a timely way as needed by the NTHMP Chair or the appropriate subcommittee, caucus, or work group leader. The NTHMP Administrator may distribute Coordinating Committee meeting agendas once approved by the appropriate Chair. If necessary, to ensure a constructive and democratic process, meeting business shall be conducted following "Roberts Rules of Order".

Annual NTHMP Meeting

1. The NTHMP will hold its annual meeting during July or August of each year for the purpose of addressing NTHMP business, convening subcommittee, caucus, and work group meetings, reviewing NTHMP member project accomplishments, presenting new and ongoing projects, and reviewing the activities of the NTHMP. Due to budget uncertainties, the Annual Meeting may be moved to a different time of year.
2. The NTHMP Chair (via the NTHMP Administrator) will submit a draft agenda to the members of the Coordinating Committee one month prior to the scheduled date of the Annual Meeting. Through correspondence with the Chair through the NTHMP Administrator, the Coordinating Committee may provide input, comments, and recommend topics to add to the agenda up to two weeks before the meeting.
3. The revised, final Annual Meeting agenda shall be submitted to the Coordinating Committee by the Chair (via the NTHMP Administrator) at least five working days before the meeting date.
4. Time will be allotted for each group that participates with the NTHMP to provide a brief report on accomplishments and future plans related to tsunami preparedness, mitigation, mapping, modeling, and warning coordination.
5. The Coordinating Committee may meet in closed session to formulate out-year priorities for the long-term vision of the program, which take into account recommendations of individual subcommittees, caucus(es), work group(s), and NTHMP members. The Coordinating Committee also will review each Subcommittee's Annual Work Plan measures and milestones to ensure progress is on track.

6. The Annual Meeting may also include work sessions for NTHMP subcommittees and additional caucus(es) or work group(s) as the Chair may appoint and that desire to meet
7. Items not included on the advance agenda will be discussed under new business or appended to the agenda of the next meeting.

Voting Procedures

Voting rights during meetings of the Coordinating Committee are distributed as follows: one vote each for Alaska, American Samoa, California, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, U.S. East Coast states, Guam, U.S. Gulf Coast states, Hawaii, Oregon, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Washington; and two each from NOAA, FEMA, and USGS. A simple majority will determine the Coordinating Committee's decision. The type of vote (ballot, voice, hand, etc.) is left to the Chair's discretion. In the event of a tie, the NOAA Chair will cast the deciding vote.

The only Federal Government employees who have a vote on the Coordinating Committee are the Chair (in the event of a tie) and the two appointed representatives from NOAA, FEMA, and USGS. If a Federal Employee is appointed by a state, territory, or commonwealth to serve as one of its representatives on the Coordinating Committee, that person must abstain from voting.

A quorum, consisting of a majority of state representatives (minimum of seven votes from state/territory representatives) and a majority of federal agency representatives (minimum of four federal agency voting representatives), must be satisfied in order to hold a vote on any NTHMP decision. NTHMP voting members must be physically present at an in-person meeting (on the phone during a teleconference) to vote. Proxies are not allowed; however, an alternate member (as defined in the Membership section of the Rules of Procedure) may attend Coordinating Committee meetings in the absence of the corresponding state member.

The emergency management member casts the vote on behalf of the state unless otherwise designated in writing and the NTHMP Administrator is informed. In absence of the emergency management member, the Science Member casts the vote. An alternate casts the vote if designated by the primary member and the NTHMP Administrator is informed.

NOAA/NWS Tsunami Activities Grant Program

The NOAA/NWS Tsunami Activities Grant Program is the mechanism used to fund NTHMP partner tsunami projects. Types of projects that qualify for funding are provided in annual NOAA/NWS Tsunami Program Grant Guidance provided by NOAA/National Weather Service. All NTHMP state, territory, and university partners who have members appointed to serve on the NTHMP Coordinating Committee and Tribes recognized by the U.S. Department of Interior are eligible to submit applications for new funding to the NOAA/NWS Tsunami Activities Grant Program as a prime or subaward partner. Grant application procedures and participation requirements are described in the annual Tsunami Program Grant Guidance.

Grant proposals for tsunami projects specific to localities within a state, commonwealth, or territory will be considered by the primary state applicant for inclusion in its overall request for grant funding and scored based on criteria provided in the NOAA/NWS Grant Guidance appendix on "Grant

Application Process for Tribes and Local Governments.” Local governments may not submit grant proposals directly to NOAA.

Grants have a performance period for one year or as may be updated by NOAA via independent decision-making and communication processes.

Note: Approved funding for NOAA projects that support a state will be executed within NOAA. Funding to support a Subcommittee, Caucus, or Work Group activity will be requested by an NTHMP partner as part of its overall grant request. The requesting state will have administrative authority over conducting and reporting on the grant-funded activity.

The general timeline and procedures for grant applications will be provided in the annual NOAA/NWS Tsunami Program Grant Guidance. Provided funding will be available for grants, NOAA/NWS will provide guidance by November 15 each year to all NTHMP members pertaining to grant pre-application content and format.

All grant recipients are required to comply with the Terms and Conditions and any Special Award Conditions appended to the grant when awarded.

SUBCOMMITTEES, CAUCUSES, WORK GROUPS, AND TASK TEAMS

1. Definitions

- a. A Subcommittee is a major entity of the NTHMP that carries out work on behalf of a focused segment of the NTHMP’s activities as identified in the *Tsunami Warning, Education, and Research Act* (P. L. 115-25) Section 3204.
- b. An NTHMP Caucus is a group that is based on geographic or technical interests and expertise. A Caucus is optional for participation and may include NTHMP Coordinating Committee members, grant-funded staff, and additional SMEs as may wish to participate.
- c. A Work Group is a group that works on specific activities and whose participants come from both within and outside the NTHMP Coordinating Committee and cuts across various NTHMP entities.
- d. A Task Team is focused on developing specific products or activities of the NTHMP and operates for the short-term. Usually, the performance period for a Task Team is a few months, but may extend up to one year, when it automatically sunsets (unless the NTHMP Coordinating Committee reauthorizes it to continue for up to another 12 months.)

2. Leadership
 - a. Each Subcommittee, Caucus, or Work Group defines its own leadership such as a Co-Chair or Chair/Vice Chair. These *Rules of Procedure* refer to these positions as Leaders. Consult each group's *Terms of Reference* for specifics on leadership and terms of office.
 - b. The Coordinating Committee confirms election or appointment of leaders of subcommittees, caucuses, and work groups.
 - c. One person may not serve as a Leader of more than one NTHMP entity at the same time.

3. Governance
 - a. Each Subcommittee, Caucus, or Work Group establishes its operating procedures and membership. These procedures are defined in *Terms of Reference*, which are equivalent to by-laws.
 - b. When an entity proposes modifications to its *Terms of Reference*, it must submit it to the NTHMP Coordinating Committee for approval. Revisions to *Terms of Reference* become effective upon Coordinating Committee approval.
 - c. Each entity's approved *Terms of Reference* shall be published on the entity's corresponding page on the NTHMP website. The latest version of the *Terms of Reference* as posted on the website governs operations of the group.

4. Approved NTHMP entities

As of the date of adoption of these *Rules of Procedure*, these are the permanent entities of the NTHMP:

- a. Mapping & Modeling Subcommittee
- b. Mitigation & Education Subcommittee
- c. Warning Coordination Subcommittee
- d. Island Caucus
- e. Mitigation & Recovery Planning Work Group

See the corresponding page on the NTHMP website for information about each of these entities, including governance, membership, and meeting notes.

CHANGE OF RULES

The Rules of Procedure may be amended at any meeting or teleconference of the NTHMP Coordinating Committee by a majority vote of the membership of the NTHMP Coordinating Committee.

Adopted: April, 2008

Amended: November, 2008

Amended: August, 2009

Amended: September 2014

Amended: July 2015

Amended: all subcommittee Terms of Reference updated per subcommittee actions effective before or during the NTHMP Annual Meeting of February, 2017.

Amended: February 2018

Amended: November 2019

Appendix A

Eligible NTHMP Member States, Territories, Commonwealths and US Federal Government Agencies

States, territories, and commonwealths with representatives on the NTHMP Coordinating Committee:

Alaska	Hawaii
American Samoa	Oregon
California	Puerto Rico
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	Washington
Guam	U.S. Virgin Islands

States represented on the NTHMP Coordinating Committee by the Gulf Coast members

Alabama	Mississippi
Florida (Gulf Coast)	Texas
Louisiana	

States represented on the NTHMP Coordinating Committee by the East Coast members:

Connecticut	New Hampshire
Delaware	New Jersey
Florida (East Coast)	New York
Georgia	North Carolina
Maine	Rhode Island
Maryland	South Carolina
Massachusetts	Virginia

The Federal Government Agency Members

Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Department of Interior's United States Geological Survey
Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency

Appendix B

NTHMP Structure

The following, taken directly from the *Tsunami Warning, Education, and Research Act of 2017* (PL 115-25, Section 3204), identifies the requirements for the structure and scope of the NTHMP.

§3204. National tsunami hazard mitigation program

(a) Program required

The [NOAA] Administrator, in coordination with the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the heads of such other agencies as the Administrator considers relevant, shall conduct a community-based tsunami hazard mitigation program to improve tsunami preparedness and resiliency of at-risk areas in the United States and the territories of the United States.

(b) Coordinating committee

In conducting the program under this section, the Administrator shall establish a coordinating committee comprising representatives of Federal, State, local, and tribal government officials.

The Administrator may establish subcommittees to address region-specific issues. The committee shall—

- (1) Recommend how funds appropriated for carrying out the program under this section will be allocated;
- (2) ensure that areas described in section 3203(c) of this title in the United States and its territories can have the opportunity to participate in the program;
- (3) provide recommendations to the National Weather Service on how to improve the TsunamiReady program, particularly on ways to make communities more tsunami resilient through the use of inundation maps and other mitigation practices; and
- (4) ensure that all components of the program are integrated with ongoing hazard warning and risk management activities, emergency response plans, and mitigation programs in affected areas, including integrating information to assist in tsunami evacuation route planning.

(c) Program components

The Program conducted under subsection (a) shall include the following:

- (1) Technical and financial assistance to coastal States, territories, tribes, and local governments to develop and implement activities under this section.

- (2) Integration of tsunami preparedness and mitigation programs into ongoing State-based hazard warning, resilience planning, and risk management activities, including predisaster planning, emergency response, evacuation planning, disaster recovery, hazard mitigation, and community development and redevelopment planning programs in affected areas.
- (3) Coordination with other Federal preparedness and mitigation programs to leverage Federal investment, avoid duplication, and maximize effort.
- (4) Activities to promote the adoption of tsunami resilience, preparedness, warning, and mitigation measures by Federal, State, territorial, tribal, and local governments and nongovernmental entities, including educational and risk communication programs to discourage development in high-risk areas.
- (5) Activities to support the development of regional tsunami hazard and risk assessments. Such regional risk assessments may include the following:
 - (A) The sources, sizes, and other relevant historical data of tsunami in the region, including paleotsunami data.
 - (B) Inundation models and maps of critical infrastructure and socioeconomic vulnerability in areas subject to tsunami inundation.
 - (C) Maps of evacuation areas and evacuation routes, including, when appropriate, traffic studies that evaluate the viability of evacuation routes.
 - (D) Evaluations of the size of populations that will require evacuation, including populations with special evacuation needs.
 - (E) Evaluations and technical assistance for vertical evacuation structure planning for communities where models indicate limited or no ability for timely evacuation, especially in areas at risk of near shore generated tsunami.
 - (F) Evaluation of at-risk ports and harbors.
 - (G) Evaluation of the effect of tsunami currents on the foundations of closely-spaced, coastal high-rise structures.
- (6) Activities to promote preparedness in at-risk ports and harbors, including the following:
 - (A) Evaluation and recommendation of procedures for ports and harbors in the event of a distant or near-field tsunami.
 - (B) A review of readiness, response, and communication strategies to ensure coordination and data sharing with the Coast Guard.
- (7) Activities to support the development of community-based outreach and education programs to ensure community readiness and resilience, including the following:
 - (A) The development, implementation, and assessment of technical training and public education programs, including education programs that address unique characteristics of distant and near-field tsunami.
 - (B) The development of decision support tools.

(C) The incorporation of social science research into community readiness and resilience efforts.

(D) The development of evidence-based education guidelines.

(8) Dissemination of guidelines and standards for community planning, education, and training products, programs, and tools, including—

(A) standards for—

(i) mapping products;

(ii) inundation models; and

(iii) effective emergency exercises; and

(B) recommended guidance for at-risk port and harbor tsunami warning, evacuation, and response procedures in coordination with the Coast Guard and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

(d) Authorized activities

In addition to activities conducted under subsection (c), the program conducted under subsection (a) may include the following:

(1) Multidisciplinary vulnerability assessment research, education, and training to help integrate risk management and resilience objectives with community development planning and policies.

(2) Risk management training for local officials and community organizations to enhance understanding and preparedness.

(3) In coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, interagency, Federal, State, tribal, and territorial intergovernmental tsunami response exercise planning and implementation in high risk areas.

(4) Development of practical applications for existing or emerging technologies, such as modeling, remote sensing, geospatial technology, engineering, and observing systems, including the integration of tsunami sensors into Federal and commercial submarine telecommunication cables if practicable.

(5) Risk management, risk assessment, and resilience data and information services, including—

(A) access to data and products derived from observing and detection systems; and

(B) development and maintenance of new integrated data products to support risk management, risk assessment, and resilience programs.

(6) Risk notification systems that coordinate with and build upon existing systems and actively engage decisionmakers, State, local, tribal, and territorial governments and agencies, business communities, nongovernmental organizations, and the media.

(e) No preemption with respect to designation of at-risk areas

The establishment of national standards for inundation models under this section shall not prevent States, territories, tribes, and local governments from designating additional areas as being at risk based on knowledge of local conditions.

(f) No new regulatory authority

Nothing in this chapter may be construed as establishing new regulatory authority for any Federal agency.

Appendix C – Fundable Mitigation Activities

The content of this appendix is included in NOAA/NWS Tsunami Activities Grant Guidance which is an administrative function of the grant provider: NOAA/NWS, not the NTHMP. This section was removed in July, 2015.

Appendix D– Description of Grant Program Distribution Process

The content of this appendix is not applicable to the NTHMP and was removed in July 2015. The grant provider, NOAA, determines the grant distribution process, not the NTHMP.

Appendix E – Acronyms

CC – Coordinating Committee
CNMI – Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
DEM - Digital Elevation Model
DOC – Department of Commerce
FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency
GAO – The United States Government Accountability Office
IC – Island Caucus
IOC - Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
ITIC – International Tsunami Information Center
MES – Mitigation and Education Subcommittee
MMS – Mapping and Modeling Subcommittee
MRPWG – Mitigation & Recovery Planning Work Group
NOAA – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NTHMP – National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program
NWS – NOAA’s National Weather Service
PL 109-479 – (original) *Tsunami Warning and Education Act of 2007*
PL 115-25 – *The Tsunami Warning, Education, and Research Act of 2017*
POC – Point of Contact
TWC - US Tsunami Warning Center
USGS – United States Geological Survey
USVI – United States Virgin Islands
WCM - Warning Coordination Meteorologist
WCS – Warning Coordination Subcommittee