



# FME for Small and Rural Communities FAQ

February 2026

## Background

1. What is the overall goal of the FME for Small Communities effort?
  - a. **Response:** The purpose of the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) FME effort is for the TWDB to perform a limited number of Flood Management Evaluations (FME), as identified, time ordered, and recommended by the Regional Flood Planning Groups (RFPGs), and return the results of the studies to the respective regions and communities so they can identify and recommend flood mitigation projects (FMP) and/or flood management strategies (FMS) in the regional flood plans. During the first cycle of the regional and state flood planning program it became apparent that there were numerous small and rural communities in Texas that do not have adequate resources, such as engineering staff to develop and oversee technical studies, or sufficient information already available to include a project that has flood risk reduction and no negative effect in the regional flood plans. This effort will enable small communities, including rural areas, to obtain completed studies with mitigation options conducted by TWDB contractors, allowing them to identify and recommend appropriate projects or strategies for inclusion in the regional flood plans.
2. When did this effort start?
  - a. **Response:** The studies to be performed under this effort are expected to begin after March 26, 2026, when the regional flood planning groups provide the list and scope of work of FMEs to be performed to TWDB. The need to support small and rural communities in Texas that lack sufficient engineering staff and technical resources was identified during the first flood planning cycle. The first cycle 2023 regional flood plans recommended many FMEs with fewer FMPs; this difference was especially apparent for small and rural communities across Texas. TWDB requested and received resources needed to perform FMEs for small communities during the second cycle of Regional Flood Planning. The work to be performed is reflected in Scope of

Work (SOW) Task 5B: Recommend a List of Flood Management Evaluations to be Performed by TWDB.

3. Who oversees which FMEs are performed? Why is the TWDB performing these FMEs instead of the RFPGs?

- a. **Response:** The RFPGs have full discretion in determining which FMEs meet each RFPGs metrics of smaller communities with limited resources and in recommending which FMEs are to be performed by the TWDB. RFPGs are required to provide a time-ordered list of FMEs, SOW, budget, and community affirmation form (optional) for each FME to be performed. The TWDB provides the technical resources that the small communities do not have and will provide oversight for all the work performed by TWDB contractors, including any needed refinement of scoping, budget, and performance of each study. This effort does not compete with the capacity of RFPGs and its technical consultants, rather the intent is to support smaller communities that lack resources to participate in the RFPG process and enable those communities to participate.

The results of performed FMEs will be provided to the region for inclusion in future regional flood plans. Regions retain the flexibility to determine the list and order of FMEs to be performed by the TWDB and how those FMEs are recommended via the RFPG-approved metrics. The RFPGs will also retain the authority to recommend any hazard mitigation efforts identified resulting from the studies. TWDB contractors will provide updates to both the RFPGs and the communities throughout the timeline of the study.

## General

1. Why are the RFPGs asked to develop metrics for identifying FMEs for small communities with limited resources?
  - a. **Response:** The RFPG process is a bottom-up approach in which planning groups have the latitude to determine the metrics that best meet the needs of their region. The TWDB has provided guidance for this FME effort but RFPGs have flexibility to determine the metrics that distinguish these FMEs from others identified in Task 4A and not performed under Task 4C and RFPGs provide the list of FMEs in order of timing to be performed by TWDB. Note: the TWDB may choose to prescribe the metrics for identifying FMEs for small communities in future planning cycles.

2. Wealthy suburb communities and Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs) could meet the metrics of small communities even though this is not the intent of the FME for Small Communities effort. How do we ensure FME funds meet the intended use?
  - a. **Response:** The TWDB’s basic criteria of “communities in Texas that do not have adequate resources” would eliminate communities with ample resources. RFPGs are to determine the appropriate metrics that best meet the needs of their region. The TWDB specifies that this effort is for smaller communities, including rural areas, that lack staff and resources and that regions should consider FMEs that are most likely to result in potentially feasible FMPs and FMSs. Beyond meeting these requirements, RFPGs have the responsibility to ensure that the metrics used meets the intent of the FME effort and fit the characteristics of each respective flood planning region.
3. How were FME consultants assigned to regions? Why can’t RFPGs be assigned their own prime consultant?
  - a. **Response:** The TWDB posted a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) on May 8, 2025, to procure an estimated five contractors through a competitive selection process. The fifteen engineering consultant contractors that were responsive to the RFQ were all evaluated based on a common set of criteria identified. The five highest scoring contractors, based on the criteria, were selected for consideration and the TWDB board authorized the negotiation and execution of contracts on October 2, 2025. Not all the highest scoring contractors that have been awarded Work Orders for the FMEs are currently involved as consultants in the RFPG process. FME consultants were assigned to regions based on a variety of factors including, but not limited to, keeping upper and lower watersheds together as well as region size. There may be a few situations where a consultant performing the FME for small communities is also the region’s prime consultant.
4. Do small and rural communities need to participate in the NFIP to be eligible for an FME for Small Communities study?
  - a. **Response:** No. However, TWDB strongly encourages participation and enforcement of floodplain management standards at least equivalent to or exceeding NFIP minimum standards. This is also a general requirement needed to apply for financial assistance under the Flood Infrastructure Fund (FIF) program. The only exception in the 2024-2025 FIF Intended Use Plan (IUP) is for an entity that is requesting FIF funding to fulfill additional requirements for participation in the NFIP.

5. Can the results of FMEs performed be used for regulatory flood boundaries?
  - a. **Response:** Yes, if that is desired by a community. In general, the results of FMEs are for planning purposes with the intention of generating FMPs or FMSs that provide at least one solution to mitigate flood events associated with a 1% annual chance flood event and that support specific RFPG flood mitigation and/or floodplain management goals. However, the results of FMEs performed could feasibly be used for regulatory purposes if the results are used for a Letter of Map Change (LOMC). An application utilizing the results of an FME can be submitted and a LOMC may be issued by FEMA if the mapping, modeling, and surveying data used meets the proper criteria. Once a LOMC is issued, the community can use the LOMC to help regulate development.
6. How much liberty does the RFPG have in adjusting the scope of work?
  - a. **Response:** The RFPGs are responsible for generating scopes of work for the FMEs to be performed. The SOW template provided by a TWDB is a template, not a scope of work. The TWDB anticipates receiving a well-developed scope of work with deliverables clearly identified for each task and sub-task for each proposed FME.  
Per the SOW template language, all FMEs must include the numbered/bold tasks, as applicable. However, the RFPGs have flexibility to modify the sample SOW as necessary and with an engineer's judgement. For example, scope of work tasks that should not be removed include meetings with communities and RFPGs, alternatives analysis, etc. The goal of Task 5B is to perform FMEs on behalf of small communities resulting in potential FMPs or FMSs to include in regional flood plans.
7. Can RFPGs include a reasonable project (meaning completed within a year, within allocated budget, resulting in FMPs) that is region wide and excludes the non-small/rural communities? If so, would we need buy-in from all the communities included?
  - a. **Response:** Yes. The RFPGs have discretion in choosing the FMEs to be performed by the TWDB given they meet TWDB (SOW and technical guidelines) minimum requirements, the RFPGs chosen metrics, and are within budget. Please make sure to provide clear metrics based on what the region recommended and show how each study meets TWDB (SOW and technical guidelines) requirements and region criteria.  
Please be mindful that the TWDB is attempting to complete the first two FMEs on the list in about 9 months so resulting FMP/FMS may be incorporated into the draft 2028 regional flood plans. Further, per the

September technical conference call, the TWDB is requesting that the RFPG submit community affirmation forms for the first two FMEs on their list. You would need buy-in from all affected communities. Note, the RFPG can also choose to perform FMEs at their discretion for Task 4C.

8. Are RFPGs able to change their lists of FMEs for the TWDB to perform?
  - a. **Response:** Yes, twice during each cycle i) when the time-ordered list of FMEs for TWDB performance is due and ii) when the draft regional flood plans are due. If TWDB has already begun working on a study, we will see it to completion and will not postpone a study once it has begun.
9. What are the expectations for the revised FME feature class that is due on March 26, 2026?
  - a. **Response:** The revised FME feature class should include all required and conditionally required fields, as appropriate, for all FMEs included on the Task 5B list of FMEs to be performed by TWDB.
10. Whose responsibility is it to complete the Community Interest Affirmation form for the FMEs to be performed by TWDB?
  - a. **Response:** RFPGs were asked to complete the first two Community Interest Affirmation forms by March 26, 2026, to help expedite the work of TWDB's consultants. Beyond the first two, RFPGs are encouraged to complete additional Community Interest Affirmation forms, to ensure that a community is indeed interested to have studies performed. However, it is the general responsibility of the TWDB consultants to complete all remaining Community Affirmation Forms as they work towards completing additional FMEs on the ordered list provided by the RFPG.
11. Can TWDB clarify expectations around what constitutes a "signatory authority" for a sponsor entity within the sponsor affirmation forms required to be submitted along with Task 5B deliverables?
  - a. **Response:** The Community Interest Affirmation forms provided by the TWDB indicate that an official representative of the community with authorized signatory authority may sign the form to 1) provide feedback, if any, on the scope of work of the project, 2) describe why the study should be performed, 3) affirm that the community does not have the resources to perform the study and will benefit from the state funding, 4) inform if redundant funding has been received, 5) provide relevant documentation, if any, and 6) confirm that the community is committed to being responsive and engaged. Individuals who can provide this information and who have signatory authority may sign the Community Interest Affirmation. It is likely that a County Judge, Commissioner or City Manager will have the authority to sign

the affirmation form. Note that the official representative may be different from the primary contact for day-to-day study implementation.

12. TWDB contractors will conduct monthly progress meetings with communities and TWDB – are these meetings held together or separately?

- a. **Response:** The TWDB contractors are required to meet with the TWDB and communities monthly. If desired, RFPG members/consultants may attend these regular meetings, but are not required to.

## Budget/Funding

1. Will small communities with FMPs that are derived from the FMEs be given full matching funding for construction?

- a. **Response:** Recommended FMPs included in the State Flood Plan, including those that are derived from this FME effort, are eligible for financial assistance via the Flood Infrastructure Fund (FIF). The 24-25 FIF program provides opportunities for loans with an interest rate of 0% and grants of varying amounts up to 70% of the total FIF eligible costs. For more information, please contact the State Programs Team at [Financial\\_Assistance@twdb.texas.gov](mailto:Financial_Assistance@twdb.texas.gov).

2. How does Task 5B (FME for small comms) differ from Task 4C (Performance of FMEs) and why don't all the funds go to the regions to perform FMEs under Task 4C?

- a. **Response:** Task 4C allows the RFPGs to perform any FME that meets the SOW and technical guidelines requirements. Task 5B allows TWDB to perform FMEs for small and rural communities as identified by the RFPGs. Additional resources for the FME for Small Communities effort were requested and received to perform this work. The FME for Small Communities resources and funds supplement the RFPG process by providing completed FME studies that were identified in Task 4A and that may otherwise have been performed in Task 4C which would utilize existing RFPG grant funds. Further, the FME effort allows TWDB to have these FMEs performed on behalf of the RFPGs without competing with RFPG funds or technical consultant capacity.

3. What happens to the funds that are not used in the current planning cycle?

- a. **Response:** Funds that are not utilized during the current planning cycle will be accessible during the following cycle until they are exhausted.