

EARTHQUAKE SAFE HOMES PROGRAM (ESHP) ESHP Retrofit Process Summary

The steps necessary to complete each Phase of the ESHP process are summarized below. For more information, refer to the [ESHP Design, Construction, and Reimbursement Guidelines](#) and [ESHP Owner Instructions](#) available at the [ESHP Website](#).

Retrofit projects reimbursable by ESHP must complete each Phase before proceeding to the next.

Phase I: Design Development

Once you have been invited by ESHP to proceed with eligibility verification and Design Development:

- Review program materials at the website to understand program procedures and requirements and return the included [Intent to Proceed Form](#) with supporting documentation requested on page 3.
- Determine whether your project is eligible for the [FEMA Plan Set](#) and obtain at least 2 bids for initial services:
 - **If you can answer yes to all questions on page 2**, your project is likely eligible for the FEMA Plan Set and it must be used. In this case you should consult with contractors that are familiar with it:
 - Request construction bids from at least 2 contractors that can adapt the plans. They must include the [ESHP Construction Bid Form](#). *A list of ESHP contractors is available upon request.*
 - Summarize bids using the [Documentation of Design or Construction Bids-For Owners](#) form, and submit everything to ESHP for approval of the maximum reimbursement amount for construction
 - **If you answer no to any of the questions on page 2**, engineered plans are required. Find a qualified engineer to prepare plans and calculations. You not typically need more than one bid for design. *A list of ESHP contractors is available upon request.*
- Retain your chosen design professional or contractor and forward the signed contract and appropriate ESHP [Engineering Addendum](#) or [Construction Addendum](#) to the ESHP office.
- Your engineer or contractor forwards the completed plans and calculations to ESHP via email in PDF format along with the completed [ESHP Project Description](#). ESHP submits plans to FEMA for approval.
- If your project involves engineered plans, use them to obtain at least 2 bids for construction that include the [Construction Bid Form](#) and submit them to ESHP using the [Documentation of Design or Construction Bids-For Owners](#) form. ESHP will confirm the maximum reimbursement for construction and you may hire your chosen contractor.

Phase II: Permit Application & FEMA Approval

Once you have completed all steps above:

- Forward the **signed construction contract** and ESHP [Construction Addendum](#) to your ESHP contact.
- Your contractor submits the **Permit Application** through the [Permit Center's on-line portal](#), just like any other permit, **noting ESHP in the description to ensure expedited routing**.
*** Notify your ESHP contact when this has been done so they can monitor routing.*
- Once the permit has been opened and FEMA confirms approval, ESHP issues a [Notice of ESHP Design Approval](#) to the owner. **The permit may not be issued until FEMA confirms approval.**
- Once permit requirements are met and fees are paid, permit is issued and construction may begin.

Phase III: Project Completion and Reimbursement

Your contractor will manage the project in coordination with permitting staff:

- Notify the ESHP office once the permit is final, and schedule and complete the close-out inspection.
- Pay all outstanding invoices and submit a [Reimbursement Request](#) with proof of payment for all costs. *Start by sending your ESHP contact a completed W9 to have your account setup.*

FEMA Plan Set Eligibility

The [FEMA Plan Set](#) *must be used* if the answer to each of the following questions is YES, unless the foundation is compromised or insufficient to meet the Plan Set requirements (see sheet S2 section H).

- 1. Is the building entirely residential, containing fewer than five residential units?** YES NO

The FEMA Plan Set is normally limited to single-family and duplex residences. This program expands eligibility to 3- and 4-unit buildings only if they are structurally similar and entirely residential.
 - 2. Is the home two stories or less above a crawl space?** YES NO

For this question, do not count the crawl space as a story, no matter its height.
 - 3. Are all the floors in each story at the same elevation?** YES NO

This question refers only to floors above grade. The intent is to exclude split-level houses, which are not eligible due to complex framing and behavior.
 - 4. Are the home's walls, floors, and roof constructed of wood framing?** YES NO

If the house has walls made of brick, concrete block, or concrete, answer No.
 - 5. Does the home have a continuous perimeter concrete foundation?** YES NO

If the foundation is built of brick or stone, answer No. If a concrete foundation has only distinct, disconnected pieces under wood posts, answer No.
 - 6. Does the home have an accessible crawl space?** YES NO

This question is intended primarily to rule out houses that are entirely "slab on grade" construction. However, even if the ground floor is made from wood joists, if the area between the joists and the ground is too tight for a worker to access, or if the underfloor area has no access hatch, answer No. If part of the house has a crawl space and part is slab on grade, answer Yes. If part or all of the crawlspace is tall enough to stand in, answer Yes.
 - 7. Are all the cripple walls less than seven feet in height?** YES NO

The "cripple walls" are the wood stud walls enclosing and within the crawl space. The height of a cripple wall is measured from the top of the concrete foundation to the underside of wood floor joists above. The height in question therefore refers only to the height of the wood portion of the wall, not to the total height of the crawl space (which can sometimes be high enough to stand in).
 - 8. Is the difference in height between the shortest and tallest cripple walls less than 4'-2"?** YES NO

Where the floor joists sit directly on a sill plate and foundation, with no cripple wall studs, the "shortest" height to be used in this comparison should be taken as 0'-0". This question is intended to screen out sloped and hillside sites, which lead to complex behavior. If you answered No to this question but your site is not sloped, consult with ESHP.
 - 9. Is all brick or stone veneer covering exterior walls, excluding chimneys, less than four feet in height above grade?** YES NO

If the home does not have any brick or stone veneer, answer Yes. This question is intended to screen out especially heavy structures. The four-foot limit is intended to allow wainscot-style veneer. Small areas that rise more than four feet above grade are acceptable. If you are unsure, consult with ESHP.
 - 10. Is the weight of the home's roof covering less than 11 pounds per square foot?** YES NO

If the roofing material is asphalt shingle, wood shingle, or metal, answer Yes. If the roofing material is clay, terra cotta, concrete, or stone (including slate), answer No. Some tile roofs are lightweight but made to look like traditional clay tile. If you are uncertain, consult with ESHP.
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SUMMARY: Is this project eligible to use the FEMA Plan Set?

YES NO

If the answer to ALL of the previous questions is Yes, this project is eligible to use the FEMA Plan Set. Otherwise, it requires engineered plans. Enter YES or NO here and continue completing the form on the front page.