



Firm Bio

H2O Partners, Inc. (H2O), a Texas Historically Underutilized Business (HUB), Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and Women's Business Enterprise (WBE), was formed in 2001 by Jo Ann Howard, former Federal Insurance Administrator at FEMA.

H2O has extensive experience assisting local, state and federal governments as well as the private sector to effectively mitigate against, prepare for, and recover from all types of disasters. H2O brings together a team of seasoned professionals who are experts in emergency management, training and e-learning, disaster recovery, grants management, planning, communications, outreach and inter-governmental coordination.

H2O has disaster experience at the Federal, State and local levels of government, including:

- ▶ Conducting training and curriculum development for agents, lenders and adjusters nationwide for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP);
- ▶ Serving as an appointee on the Governor's Commission for Disaster Recovery and Renewal for the State of Texas;
- ▶ Providing grants development and management services for the Public Assistance, Hazard Mitigation Grant, and Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant programs.
- ▶ Developing FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plans covering over 120 counties and 450 cities;
- ▶ Preparing Hazard Mitigation Plan Updates for approximately 100 jurisdictions;
- ▶ Working for the States of Louisiana and Mississippi to maximize funding after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita;
- ▶ Conducting Community Assessment Visits (CAVs) and NFIP compliance training for over 75 communities in Texas to evaluate floodplain ordinance enforcement and improve floodplain management practices; and
- ▶ Working with local communities, states and FEMA on more efficient ways to recover from disasters.



Grants management

H2O personnel are intimately familiar with FEMA grant processes and understand the eligibility requirements for all Hazard Mitigation Assistance programs. Staff have completed successful project and planning grant applications for governmental units and non-profit groups throughout the State of Texas, including: the Lower Colorado River Authority, the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority; the Concho Valley Council of Governments; the Texas Geographic Society; and the City of Austin.

► Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for Burnet County, Texas

H2O Partners, Inc. was selected in a competitive bidding process as a consultant to advise and assist Burnet County, Texas in developing and drafting a successful Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) application and a Texas Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for Disaster Relief in connection with DR-1709. H2O was responsible for conducting a cost-benefit analysis and an environmental and historical review. Under CDBG, H2O secured the maximum allowed for the community, enabling the county to rebuild drainage culverts, bridges and roads devastated in 2007 flooding.

► HMGP application and administration for Woodsboro, I.S.D.

In 2009 H2O successfully developed an HMGP grant for the school district in Woodsboro, Texas to develop a community shelter under Disaster Declaration, DR-1791 for Hurricane Ike. The school was awarded approximately \$1.3 million in federal dollars for the construction of the shelter, which will serve as a dual-purpose building for the school and the community as a whole. H2O is currently administering the grant.

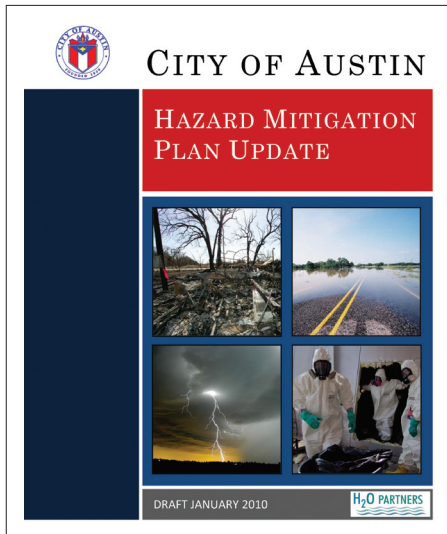
► Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Grant development for the West Central Texas Council of Governments (WCTCOG)

The WCTCOG area covers over 18,000 square miles in West Texas, and is subject to a large number of natural hazards, such as drought, extreme heat and tornado events. In 2009 WCTCOG selected H2O to develop a PDM grant application for 2010 funding to update their 2005, FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plan, which was originally developed by H2O.



**Community Disaster Shelter
Construction Project**
Town of Woodsboro • Woodsboro ISD





Hazard Mitigation Planning

H2O has successfully developed Hazard Mitigation Plans for regional and local governments, covering over 120 counties and 450 cities in Texas as well as the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center and Harrison County, Mississippi. Currently, H2O is developing updates to hazard mitigation plans for over 100 jurisdictions in Texas. These plans incorporate scientific techniques that utilize modeling to analyze risks from the full range of natural, technological and man-made hazards and recommend actions to mitigate future damage. H2O-developed plans have met all State and Federal Requirements as set forth in 44 CFR Parts 201 and 206 and the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) guidelines contained in Annex P.

► Hazard Mitigation Plan and Plan Update for the Texas Colorado River Floodplain Coalition (TCRFC)

H2O drafted a Hazard Mitigation Plan Update for the TCRFC, which is the first multi-jurisdictional plan update for the State of Texas. The updated plan covers 61 jurisdictions, including newly added communities that did not have the opportunity to participate in the original plan developed by H2O in 2004.

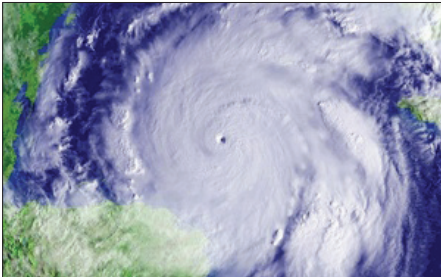
► Hazard Mitigation Plan and Plan Update for the City of Austin

The City of Austin's 2004 FEMA-approved mitigation plan was the second plan approved for the State of Texas. In January 2009, H2O began developing an update for the City of Austin to meet FEMA's standard for updating plans on a five-year schedule. The updated plan was submitted to TDEM in January of 2010 and details changes in risk, vulnerability and mitigation strategies.

► Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Rio Grande Border Region

The Rio Grande Region is unique in its geographic scope and close proximity to the U.S.-Mexico Border; therefore 17 natural and technological hazards were covered in the 2009, FEMA-approved plan. Over 65 jurisdictions participated in the development of the plan, which was approved shortly after the impact of Hurricane Dolly, allowing communities to apply for much needed grant funding.





Public Assistance

Key members of H2O have provided technical assistance and training in Public Assistance (PA) for Hurricane Katrina and Rita relief to Applicants and Subgrantees. H2O has conducted detailed reviews and reconciliation of application materials for the disbursement of PA funds to local governments, Electric Power Associations, state agencies, schools and nonprofits.

► Public Assistance for the State of Mississippi

Beginning in 2005, H2O Partners was part of a Mississippi team of contractors hired by the State of Mississippi to assist with the State's role as Grantee for Stafford Act funds. With its FEMA programmatic background, H2O Partners worked with the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to: monitor contracts; review debris removal load tickets for accuracy; and reconcile contractors' invoices.

► Development of PATOOLSUSA®

H2O's work in assisting the States of Mississippi and Louisiana following Hurricane Katrina involved developing unique checklist to assist communities with reporting requirements and compliance. This led to the development of PATOOLSUSA®, a website for Applicants and Subgrantees, which contains templates for tracking Project Worksheet obligations, versions, reimbursements, pending reimbursements and other aids. This PA toolset was developed to streamline and automate the process of reimbursement for Applicants to ensure that they receive every single eligible dollar. The PATOOLSUSA® website can be accessed by Applicants, Subgrantees and community members at www.patoolsusa.com and can be utilized to help obtain disaster relief funds from governmental agencies, including FEMA, for the repair, restoration, reconstruction or replacement of public facilities or infrastructure damaged or destroyed by a disaster. In addition, H2O is currently teamed with a PA tracking group with unique tracking tools to enhance H2O's capabilities in Public Assistance work.



Outreach and Training



H2O has trainers located across the country that provide state-of-the-art technical assistance, outreach, training and research support that foster mutually beneficial partnerships across levels of government and the private sector. Underpinning H2O's trainers are experts in the field of adult learning and curriculum development – instructional designers, content developers and information designers – who have sensitivity to adult learning needs and ensure that instructional techniques, materials and tools are of the highest quality to achieve learning objectives.

► National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Training

In 2008, H2O was selected as a subcontractor to provide Instructor Led Training (ILT) and Virtual Led Training (VLT) (web-enabled) to agents, lenders and adjusters under the NFIP. Under this initiative, H2O has expanded its staff of subject matter experts, experienced trainers and claims adjusters. Since 2008 alone, H2O trainers have trained over 22,000 agents, adjusters and lenders in classrooms and web-based sessions.



► NFIP 101 Training and Community Assistance Visits

H2O Partners conducted Community Assistance Visits (CAVs) for over 75 communities for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). In developing CAVs, H2O: assessed compliance with State and Federal NFIP regulations; provided advice and coaching to the communities on areas where programs met or did not meet NFIP regulations; and developed recommendations to Chief Elected Officials on how the community could improve their floodplain management program and meet compliance standards. As part of this initiative, H2O provided both off-the-shelf and customized training services for jurisdictions by conducting a series of 8-hour courses throughout the State of Texas in designated cities on "NFIP 101."



► Support to the State of Louisiana Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness

H2O Partners was part of a Louisiana team hired by the State of Louisiana to assist with the State's role as Grantee for Stafford Act under FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) Program. H2O provided customized training and education to Subgrantees regarding the business compliance processes to meet the Stafford Act Regulations and FEMA Policy Guidance for reimbursement of disaster costs

