

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

One of the most important aspects of successful hazard mitigation planning is the participation of the public throughout the planning process. The planning process includes an opportunity for the public, including businesses, academia, municipalities and neighborhood communities to provide comments during the development process. In addition to the Mitigation Planning Committee meetings, a series of public meetings will be held throughout the planning process. These meetings will allow the public to comment on the development of the plan and to pose questions to committee members. Public meetings and/ or comment periods will be announced as the plan development process moves forward.

## OTHER INTERESTING WEBSITES

### Special Needs Registry

[www.specialneeds.org](http://www.specialneeds.org)

This registry is to allow citizens with special needs and their associates an opportunity to provide information to emergency response agencies, so emergency responders can better plan to serve them in a disaster or other emergencies.

For the purpose of this registry, a special needs individual is someone who cannot receive, understand or act upon emergency protective orders.

The information collected here will not be available to the public. The information will be held securely and only accessed for the purpose of emergency response and planning.

### Ready Notify PA.org

[www.ReadyNotifyPA.org](http://www.ReadyNotifyPA.org)

**ReadyNotifyPA** is a system that helps local officials in Southeastern Pennsylvania send emergency text alerts and other important notifications to you quickly. **ReadyNotifyPA** can send these to your cell phone, pager, BlackBerry, PDA and/or E-mail account. You decide how you'd like to be notified. These **alerts are free**; however, your cellular provider may charge for text messaging.

## THE HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN IS AN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICE PROVIDED BY YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT



### Chester County Emergency Services

601 Westtown Road  
Suite 012  
West Chester, PA 19380-0990

Phone: 610-344-5000

Emergencies: Dial 911

Fax: 610-344-5050

On the Web at: <http://www.chesco.org/des>

### Agencies Involved:

Department of Emergency Services  
Local Emergency Planning Committee  
Water Authority  
Planning Commission

# Chester County Hazard Mitigation Plan



## Public Awareness

YOUR  
COMMUNITY'S  
PLAN TO  
MITIGATE  
HAZARDS!

## WHAT IS HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING?

In October 2000, in an effort to reduce the nation's disaster losses, the President signed into law the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. The Act provides an opportunity for communities to reduce natural disaster losses through mitigation planning. The proactive strategy is designed to reduce the potential for loss before an event occurs.

The term "mitigation" as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is:

*"Any cost-effective action(s) taken to eliminate or reduce the long-term risk to life and property from hazards."*

Actions can be structural or nonstructural in nature and can include construction of levees, storm drainage improvements, property acquisition, flood proofing, and natural resource protection, zoning ordinance amendments, land use planning, public awareness and improved emergency service measures, among others.

Local governments are required to have approved natural hazard mitigation plans to be eligible for post-disaster federal hazard mitigation funding.

## BENEFITS OF HAVING A HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN?

The Chester County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan will provide answers to the following questions:

- What hazards affect the County and its 73 municipalities?
- What hazards occur most frequently?
- Which hazards cause the most damages?
- Which hazards affect the most people and largest area?
- What hazards are the most costly to businesses and the local economy?
- What effect does changing demographics, employment, economic and community constraints have on future vulnerability?
- What are the cost-effective projects that may potentially mitigate these hazards?

After the plan has been developed, reviewed and approved by FEMA, Chester County and participating municipalities will adopt the plan; adoption will enable the jurisdictions eligible for hazard mitigation grant funds and provide each with a thorough understanding of its vulnerability to various hazards in addition to providing a blueprint for mitigating the damaging affects of such hazards.

## PROJECT PURPOSE

Planning has always played an important role in making communities safer places to live. Local zoning and subdivision plans, comprehensive plans, building codes and floodplain ordinances are all familiar community efforts aimed at these common goal. Hazard mitigation planning is a culmination of that effort which aims at identifying hazards and risks in your community and developing ways and means of reducing potentially disastrous losses of life and property.

Hazard mitigation planning is now more important than ever for communities interested in attaining federal funds for mitigation projects. Every mitigation grant program sponsored by FEMA now requires applicants to have a federally-approved mitigation plan to be eligible for project funding.

The goal of Chester County's hazard mitigation planning project is to make residents, businesses, property owners, operators of critical infrastructure, and municipalities less susceptible to the affects of future disasters by increasing the disaster assistance of the county and its participating municipalities. After suffering the effects of floods, severe winter storms, tropical storms, the Chester County Commissioners initiated a multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation planning effort. This process will identify the hazards that affect Chester County and prioritize the mitigation strategies to reduce the potential loss of life and property damage from those hazards.