

# Strategic Plan

## 2018 – 2023

### Certified Floodplain Manager Program



Developed by the  
Certification Board of Regents

## President's Message on CBOR Strategic Plan 2018-2023

Floods are the most pervasive and costly natural disaster in the country. For decades beginning in the 1930s, the response to flooding was to construct flood control projects, only to see more development be located outside the "protected" area that was then flooded the next time the waters rose.

Fifty years ago Congress enacted the National Flood Insurance Program in an effort to change the dynamic of build-flood-rebuild-flood again. In communities that agreed to adopt land-use regulations to guide new development away from the flood hazard, and standards for new construction within the floodplain when it couldn't be avoided, Congress would make sure that every citizen and business could purchase flood insurance to help pay the cost of repairing the damage to their structures following a flood.

Communities were also required to appoint or designate an official with the responsibility, authority and means to implement the land-use regulations that were intended, over time, to reduce the number of structures at risk. Implementing sound land-use regulations requires a multitude of skills and knowledge's ranging from an understanding of the constitutional limits to avoid a "taking" of private property, to hydrologic and hydraulic analyses, cartography, building sciences, statistics, land-use planning and communication skills. Floodplain management is a complex, but rewarding, profession.

In 1997, the Association of State Floodplain Managers created a national Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM<sup>®</sup>) program as way to assure local floodplain managers responsible to implement floodplain regulations possessed the minimum knowledge necessary to fulfill those obligations. Passing the CFM exam to become certified as a floodplain manager is only a first step in obtaining the broad skills and knowledge required to be an effective floodplain manager. And being a CFM should be considered as the minimum requirement to serve as a floodplain manager. Continuing education and networking with other floodplain managers are essential to build the broad base of knowledge required to effectively administer land-use regulations, implement mitigation projects and build the local programs that over time will reduce flood risk and increase the community's resiliency.

The Certification Board of Regents have adopted this plan to guide our activities and efforts over the next five years to assure all CFMs, and all floodplain managers aspiring to become certified as a CFM, that the program will continue to grow and expand to meet the needs of the nation's communities.



Mark Riebau, CFM  
President, ASFPM Certification Board of Regents

## Executive Summary

The program is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> year and has certified more than 10,000 CFMs in the nation. But there is still a need to expand throughout the country and improve the CFM profile through more effective relationships with partner organizations (including federal, state and NGOs), refining the exam and exam preparation materials, and recruiting more CFMs and expanding the leadership base.

### CFM Program Mission Statement

ASFPM CFM certification is the nation's baseline verification of professional competence and continuous learning in the floodplain management field.

### CFM Program Background

This certification program ensures that highly qualified individuals from a variety of curricula and backgrounds are available to meet the challenge of breaking the flood damage-rebuild cycle and stopping its negative drain on the nation's human, financial, and natural resources. A keystone of the certification is demonstrated knowledge and continuing education requirements that enhance the capabilities and performance of local, state, federal, and private-sector floodplain managers.

### Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

The strategic planning process involved a procedure for discovering and documenting facts and trends in the operating environment that are likely to affect the CFM Program in the future. The process also included a summary of internal information about the governance structure for CBOR, CFM Program and its history including past leadership, results it has achieved, its current structure, and its charter. A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis was chosen to create all the possible ideas and options, and then over the course of a year, these were refined, combined and created into actionable goals. Once created, these goals were sorted, and the regents multi-voted until they were refined to four areas with 4-5 goals in each.

### Goals/Strategic Direction

The goals are based on information CBOR gathered and considered through a consensus process. The strategic direction and goals included in this plan are CBOR's response to its understanding of what its stakeholders value most about the CFM Program, and current opportunities and challenges for offering a high quality program that supports the floodplain management community.

## Partnerships

1. Due to the strength of diversity and multidisciplinary nature of CFM program and the opportunity to extend and create partnerships with other related professions – make investments in those other certification programs by offering cross-organizational continuing education credits/training opportunities. Primary partnerships include building code officials and land use planners.
2. Continually enhance collaboration between the national CFM program and the accredited chapters.
3. Collaborate with federal and state partners to invest in emerging techniques and technologies to develop accessible and targeted training, education and professional development opportunities that are eligible for CECs.
4. Partner with higher education and additional partners in diverse fields (NGOs, philanthropy included) to incorporate CFM role in resilience activities, education and policy.

## Recruitment

1. Explore incentives for chapters to promote CFM programs.
2. Identify the characteristics of individuals who are successful, long-term CFMs with the goal of recruiting similar individuals.
3. Investigate ways to allow members of other organizations to become CFMs including reciprocity with respect to cost, continuing education requirements, training opportunities, etc.
4. To strengthen our membership and attract more millennials, demonstrate and draw the parallels between the CFM program and resiliency so that millennials and younger professionals see their place in the workforce. This resiliency “trend” should attract these professionals to become CFMs.
5. Enlist passionate practitioners, state floodplain management staff, and diverse array of partners/disciplines to socialize/improve understanding of CFM testing and maintenance processes, exam preparation training needs and opportunities, and develop on-demand training.

## Marketing/CFM Brand

1. Compare the CFM fee structure with other professions (via updates to John Ivey’s annual benchmarking report) to explain the value of the CFM program.
2. Develop and provide clear benefits of becoming a CFM, how CFMs can use the certification in their daily work and show how this helps in other aspects of their job (increased professional development, ethics training, project management, etc.).
3. Change the anti-development/pro-regulatory perception to focus more on the relationship of smart growth, reduction in disaster-related cost and the qualification of trained CFMs thereby enhancing acceptance and generating support. (E.g. municipal leagues and newly elected official marketing).
4. Explore ways to increase the participation of CFMs in the Hazard Mitigation Plan update process.

### Exam/Training

1. Develop a plan to raise the bar to qualify for CFM by gradually increasing the training, education and/ or experience eligibility requirements to take the CFM exam, such as collaboration with the Higher Ed Symposia to promote expansion of curricula to address FPM principles, and encourage colleges and universities to offer degrees in FPM that will help raise the bar.
2. Explore issue of preferred provider/preferred courses related to CFM exam and continuing education.
3. Increase the exam question pool to increase security, accessibility and quality.
4. Draft a discussion paper on the costs and benefits of moving the CFM exam to a digital format considering availability, accessibility and security.
5. Determine most common continuing education unit measurement terminology being used by organizations with whom we want to partner, and change our current CEC terminology to be more consistent (E.g. Professional Development Hours (PDHs) instead of CECs).
6. Develop plan to incorporate mandatory ethics training as part of CFM renewal requirements. Goal is to change current policy within the next 5-years to require ethics training.

### Key Performance Indicators

In order to pursue the strategic direction described above, CBOR will fulfill the strategic themes and objectives. The section below contains action plans that will be used to monitor the work being performed on each strategic objective and to measure the milestones and overall success of each plan of action

Key Result Areas	Key Performance Indicators	Example KPI Metrics
Partnerships	1. Cross-organizational training and credits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # MOUs for shared credits</li> <li>- # of webinars</li> <li>- potential regent seat</li> <li>- CFMs with multi accreditations</li> </ul>
	2. Strong accredited chapter partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- regent seat for AC</li> <li>- policy for review/comment</li> <li>- standardize policies</li> <li>- quarterly calls</li> <li>- data sharing, E.g. exam results/pass-fail rates</li> <li>- share best practices and lessons learned- both ways</li> <li>- formalize communication w/CBOR/EO</li> </ul>
	3. Emerging technologies with federal and state partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # webinars</li> <li>- # available for self-study</li> <li>- # MOOCs available</li> <li>- Digital exam</li> </ul>

	4. Higher education partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # MOAs</li> <li>- Higher Ed conference spot for CFM roles</li> <li>- Orgs that deliver training</li> <li>- Promote study guide towards more CFMs</li> <li>- Find and encourage FPM programs to have CFM info</li> </ul>
Recruitment	1. Create chapter incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reduced conference registration fees, discounted rates on training offered through Executive Office or other methods</li> <li>- annual MOA</li> <li>-fee schedule</li> </ul>
	2. Targeted recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # CFMs in our target profile</li> <li>- list of characteristics</li> <li>- evaluating all data and resources</li> </ul>
	3. Partner reciprocity agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-MOAs and # CFMs from orgs</li> <li>-# CFMS and CECs traded</li> <li>-# CFMs with multiple acreds</li> <li>- measure of cross-pollinations</li> <li>- reduced renewal or exam fees w/partners</li> </ul>
	4. Millennial targeting through resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore social media platforms to reach out, E.g. FB closed discussion group</li> <li>- MOOCs, E.g. Study guide elements</li> </ul>
	5. Recruit FPM/CFM champions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mid-career champions</li> <li>- Regent recruitment process</li> <li>- Recognition – formal</li> <li>- John Ivey Awards</li> <li>- Notes and cards to special CFMs</li> <li>- 10/15 year pins</li> <li>- SME on FB or other discussion group</li> </ul>
Marketing/CFM Brand	1. Benchmarking for CFM fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- John Ivey Benchmark report</li> <li>- Update .PPT on website with this info</li> <li>- Upkeep of history of CFM</li> </ul>
	2. Benefits of becoming a CFM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Succession planning</li> <li>- Talk to the wallet-salaries-“Did you know”</li> <li>- Enlightened self-interest (Vanderbilt study)brochure/video</li> <li>- increasing brand by PSAs post-disaster</li> </ul>

	3. Refocus anti-development/regulatory to smart growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- #structures and savings</li> <li>- response time to comment periods</li> <li>- Add CFM to outreach materials (FSC)</li> <li>- ID # of submit for rate policies and lower ins. Rates to see where those communities are</li> <li>- NACo-Guide to working with Local Elected Officials on Coastal Mgmt.</li> <li>- or like documents</li> </ul>
	4. Increase CFMs in HMP updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-outreach to % of communities</li> <li>- increases demand for CFMs</li> <li>- LMS (FLA specific)</li> <li>- Encourage FEMA to require CFMs be involved in mitigation planning</li> </ul>
Exam/Training	1. Develop a plan to raise bar to qualify for CFM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-explore accredited chapters requirements and successes</li> <li>- develop a plan</li> <li>- policy changes i.e. Provisional CFM</li> </ul>
	2. Preferred training providers/courses	<p>Evaluate options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pre-approved CECs</li> <li>- pre-approved trainers</li> <li>- preapproved courses</li> <li>- fee evaluation</li> </ul>
	3. Increase exam question pool.	-% increase per annum
	4. Digital exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussion paper</li> <li>- Go/no go by date TBD</li> </ul>
	5. Terminology assessment for CEC use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- seek data from partners and our CFMs</li> <li>- evaluate thru PDC benchmarking review (John Ivey)</li> </ul>
	6. Mandatory ethics training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote CBOR/PDC course</li> <li>- Move to webinar format for train-the-trainer</li> <li>- Chapter/State level deployment</li> <li>- use as opportunity to reach out to other professions for credits</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

The ASFPM CFM program must be adaptable and resilient in the face of a changing external environment in which the trend continues to point to a greater need for our certification to a wider audience of professionals. While it is important to move toward building partnerships and increasing recruitment efforts to build the CFM brand, concurrent efforts must be made to maintain a challenging and secure CFM exam and to meet CFM needs for quality training. Finding the balance and making the right adjustments and gauging the “market” impact will take time, learning and analysis. There is no precise model for translating our actions into the desired outcomes and therefore, this strategy should be treated as a living document, subject to course corrections along the way.

Annual reviews of progress against each of the four major strategic goals will happen in the spring of every year as we develop CFM program goals for the annual ASFPM Board of Directors Goals & Objectives. CBOR annual goals will be tracked via the “action items” lists at every meeting and call. If it is found that the plan has not successfully met many or most of its goals, we may need to explore more far-reaching options, including reaching out to other leadership partners such as ASFPM committees and board. This is an ambitious but manageable plan with many individual actionable elements. Focus goals will be chosen annually from this plan, especially for elements that will require additional resources or clear points of focus, we will be sure to include them in the association’s annual goals.

Through the successful implementation of this plan, the CFM program will better prepare the nation’s professionals for positions of leadership and impact in their communities, state and nation, as well as build a robust revenue stream to support training, increase the CFM brand profile, diversify its partnerships and attract the next generation of leaders.

### Appendix A: SWOT Analysis and refinement of goals

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis was chosen to create all the possible ideas and options, and then over the course of a year, these were refined, combined and created into actionable goals. Once created, these goals were sorted, and the regents multi-voted until they were refined to four areas with 4-5 goals in each. Specifically, these combined goals consisted of the following elements:

- *Strengths* are internal characteristics, qualities, and capacities that are doing well and support the organization’s accomplishments.
- *Weaknesses* are internal capabilities or qualities that need to be improved.
- *Opportunities* refer to external activities or trends from which the organization may benefit or utilize to grow or enhance performance.
- *Threats* are external activities or trends that threaten the current and future success of the organization.

Next, these elements were combined to form goals:

	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
STRENGTH	<b>INVEST</b>	<b>DEFEND</b>
WEAKNESS	<b>DECIDE</b>	<b>DIVEST</b>

- A strength paired with an opportunity becomes a strategy for a potential **investment** of resources/effort
- A strength paired with a threat becomes a **defensive** strategy (i.e. what do we do to protect our strength from the threat?)
- A weakness paired with an opportunity becomes a chance for us to **decide** if we want to improve that weakness (i.e collaborate or more training needed?)
- A weakness paired with a threat forms a strategy of potentially **divesting** that activity/program or at least doing damage control so the situation doesn’t get worse

### CBOR Strategic Planning Exercise, 3/17/2017, Updated 4/25/2017

Strengths:

- Uniformity of national test and standard requirements;
- Buy-in from the state and chapters. They are drivers for our program;
- Passionate, committed practitioners. Proud of CFM and want to mentor;
- Comprehensive on subjects--whether you are coastal or Midwest, engineer or planner,

- Public perception of expertise of CFM designation—reputation of knowledge and skills;
- Recognition of the public and INTEGRITY associated with its security;
- CEC focus, branding solid;
- Growing steadily annually;
- Strong support of ASFPM;
- Promotes professionalism;
- Supports the association;
- Staff support;
- Support and mentoring of Chapters between each other and EO/States and having priority of states be promoting the CFM program;
- Other Agency support: FEMA, USACE, NOAA etc.;
- Gateway or building block to good community development. Encourages diversity of approaches;
- Appeals to multiple professions;

Weaknesses:

- Testing process. It is available when people want to take the exam;
- Maintaining CECs and training opportunities for existing CFMs;
- consistency between national program and the accredited chapters;
- Basic understanding of how the program works;
- Not enough brief, on-demand training for CFMs readily available (ie. 30-min, one topic, YouTube);
- Marketplace does not put enough value on the certification and the profession;
- Not attracting millennials into profession or keeping them.
- Lack of resources to give individuals and directions on where to go to find what is available.
- No state or federal requirement for CFM designation or perception that not needed for job;
- Basic lack of exam prep or training. Self-study of 25 technical manuals is too much to expect;
- Local program report—legal titled FPM in ordinance—70% other duties as assigned and only spend 10% of their time on FPM;
- Lack of perceived value;
- Expectation that E/L273 is a prep course;
- Overwhelming amount of resources—how to sort;
- Communicating CFM benefits and values and what those are;
- Not rewarding our sales force (states & chapters)—another award or other acknowledgement;
- Incomplete understanding of why people do not renew;
- Chapters on different fee structures nationally (accredited chapters);

Opportunities:

- Improving the recognition of CFM by promoting and rewarding at the state level;
- Identify grants and foundation monies available for chapters and CFMs to provide training, buy materials for a community, or get out the value of the CFM program;
- Disaster brings awareness so taking advantage of that post-disaster space—both preparedness and post;
- Ride the resilience wave. How can CFM be more promoted, included, integrated;
- International Building Codes and getting FPM integrated, thus CFM. Recruit building code officials;
- Increase partnerships;
- Videos present an opportunity to grow awareness. More promotion of the CFM program to Elected official and municipal league;
- Resource materials—simplify;
- Target marketing to specific partners, associations, and others we have not reached out to in the past— to turn “competitors” into partners (International Code Council Coastal and Floodplain certification – C1), higher learning institutes;
- Work CFM into future testimony in DC;
- Encourage communities to hire CFMs for floodplain administrator and hire consultants with CFMs for quality;
- Reaffirm the connections to resilience such as the 100 resilient cities initiative (Nashville) and resilience officers. Building stronger inroads with other resilience professionals;
- Understanding emerging technologies Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) – online, breaking big course into chunks), apps for specific topics, prompts for training;
- Increase our exam pool before we are forced to (security breach);
- Increase exam pool to prepare for digital randomization of exam questions;
- Build capacity of states to leverage CFMs (volunteer cadre so communities can have SDs done by CFM post disaster).
- Encourage FEMA hire contractors that are CFMs;

Threats:

- Fee structure—complicated and perceived expense. Work vs personal expense. Fees for CECs if personal expense. Relationship to membership;
- Not a requirement, just a good idea;
- Security breach;
- State legislative pressure to reduce support of higher standards;
- Anti-regulatory atmosphere;
- Splintering between accredited chapters and the national program;
- Competing certification programs (ICC-C1);
- Engaging partners to understand FPM requirements, via CFM encouragement. HUD Manufactured home installers licensing program has no requirement to have any kind of flood training. Manufactured home installers;
- Financial threats: R&V, digital exam;

- NFIP reauthorization may eliminate need to be NFIP community or impose regulations and therefore no need for FPM or CFM;
- Private market Insurance absent FPM construction standards;
- National accreditation that would require a different CBOR structure and administration. Accredited chapters would change also;
- Further marginalization of FPM to smaller and smaller duties;
- Perception that FPM is anti-development.

	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
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- A weakness paired with an opportunity becomes a chance for us to **decide** if we want to improve that weakness (i.e collaborate or more training needed?)
- A weakness paired with a threat forms a strategy of potentially **divesting** that activity/program or at least doing damage control so the situation doesn't get worse

### INVEST (Opportunity + Strength)

- a. Due to the strength of diversity and multidisciplinary nature of CFM program and the opportunity to extend and create partnerships with other related professions – make investments in those other certification programs by offering cross-organizational continuing education credits/training opportunities. Benefits – builds membership, increases awareness within other organizations, increases number of CFMs.
- b. Knowing that the CFM branding is high, that the public perception is strong, I suggest a strategy to appeal to attracting more millennials and others to the profession by utilizing our chapter strengths. It was suggested that on an annual basis, ASFPM develop a program where

to reward chapters for all the CFMs in that state. (I.e. the states that have the highest ratio of ASFPM members who are CFMs to NFIP communities, receive a Gold Pass for the year, which includes access to free ASFPM training for the year, public recognition via ASFPM, and the local rate to conference.) RPerry suggestion: i.e. States that have highest ratio of CFMs to individuals/flood programs resembling characteristics identified as successful long-term CFMs as per strategy below, receive...

- c. CBOR should invest in identifying characteristics of individuals who are successful, long-term CFMs with the goal of recruiting similarly situated individuals.
- d. Strategy – Encourage the APA to support floodplain planning in planning curricula and support the CFM program.
- e. Strategy – Raise the bar to become CFM gradually increasing the education and experience requirements to be eligible to take the CFM exam thru collaborating with the Higher Ed Symposia to promote expanding existing curricula to address FPM principles, and encouraging college and universities to offer degrees in FPM causes that will lead toward.
- f. Strategy – Collaborate with federal and state partners to invest in emerging techniques and technologies to develop accessible and targeted training, educations and professional development opportunities for a variety of FPM topics.
- g. Enlist passionate practitioners, state FPM staff, and diverse array of partners/disciplines to socialize/improve understanding of CFM testing and maintenance processes, exam preparation training needs and opportunities, and develop on-demand training needs.
- h. Given that flooding is the number one natural hazard, and that floodplain managers are not usually co-located with emergency management/state hazard mitigation officers and thus have not been integrated into mitigation planning convince FEMA that a requirement of State Level Mitigation Plans must be documentation that a CFM was involved in development/revision of the plan. Additionally, local governments should be encouraged to have documentation that a CFM was involved in the development/revisions of their local Mitigation Plans.

#### **DIVEST/DAMAGE CONTROL (Threat + Weakness)**

- a. Due to inconsistency of CFM program between national and accredited state programs need to negotiate a successful outcome where both parties feel like the partnership is preserved. Situation needs open dialog so both parties understand all concerns and need to understand what success looks like and how both parties can compromise to achieve success.
- b. CBOR should decrease emphasis on advocating for higher standards and natural and beneficial functions (responsibility of other ASFPM committees) and strengthen emphasis on increasing number of CFMs and making the preparation for taking the exam clearer, simpler and less intimidating.

### DEFEND (Threat + Strength)

- a. Leverage the strength of the consistent growth of the CFM program over the years to defend against the further marginalization of the local FPM duties by providing clear benefits to participating communities of hiring a CFM; how CFMs can use the certification in their daily work; and show how this helps in other aspects of their job (increased professional development, ethics training, project management, etc.).
- b. Identify members of other organizations as our best candidates for future CFMs. CBOR should use its established reputation and strength to compete with other organizations FPM certification initiatives by investigating options for members of other organizations to become CFMs at a competitive price.
- c. CFM Exam Threat - Working with technology that is here, we need to strategize in working to move forward in developing and moving the CFM exam in a digital format that will give us the needed protection from any exam leaks. The cost will be high in the beginning, but the benefits outweigh the future of protecting the CFM exam.
- d. Opportunity – Reach out to organizations of building code officials to provide more structured guidance on the need and effect of FP compliance. Participate in presentations at building code conferences with a slant towards compliance with FP ordinances. Use this as a means to est. and broaden collaborative effort between building code officials and FP administrators.

### DECIDE/COLLABORATE (Weakness + Opportunity)

- a. CFM program has a perceived weakness of not having enough to offer the millennial generation. They are a generation that wants their success and they want it now. With the opportunity to ride the “resilience wave,” we can demonstrate and draw the parallels between the CFM program and resiliency so that millennials and younger professionals see their place in the workforce. This resilience “trend” should attract these professionals to become CFMs.
- b. CBOR should decide to make the study/prep for becoming a CFM simpler, clearer and less intimidating.
- c. Given information in new ASFPM local programs report, CBOR should decide to switch emphasis from having a CFM in every NFIP community to “Every NFIP participating community should have easy access to the knowledge and skills of a Certified Floodplain Manager.”
- d. Divest from CEC and change to common term - CBOR should determine most common continuing education unit measurement terminology being used by organizations we most want to partner with, and change our current CEC terminology to match (i.e. Professional Development Hours (PDHs)).
- e. Partner with higher learning and partners in diverse fields (philanthropy included) to incorporate CFM role in resilience activities, education and policy.