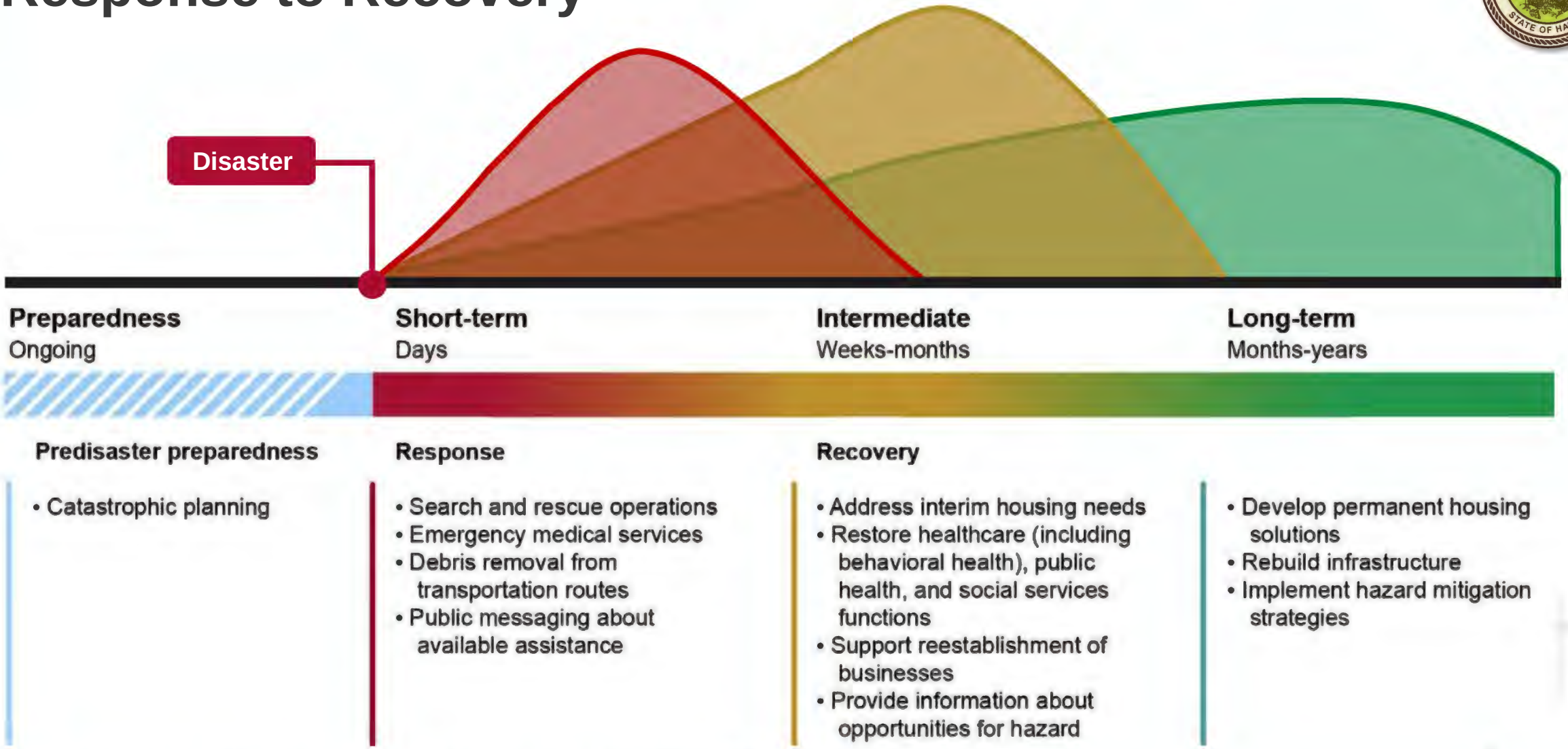
Received at DRIP meeting on 6-17-2026
DRIP-9(4)

Kona Low Update:

Maui County Council DRIP Committee

June 17, 2026

Response to Recovery



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Homeland Security policy. | GAO-22-104039

Leveraging Partnerships

The County expects a faster reimbursement for Kona Low related expenditures and projects due to well developed relationships with both FEMA and HIEMA

Kona Low Event Overview

OOR immediately engaged assistance during the event, leading to the following to expedite recovery:

- Developed forms and processes to facilitate the collection of force account labor, equipment, and materials documentation.
- Assisted the County in establishing documentation practices to support disaster recovery and potential reimbursement efforts.
- Organized the debris task force
- Acted as primary interface and liaison with HIEMA and FEMA

Kona Low Event Overview

In March 2026, Maui County was impacted by two consecutive Kona Low storm systems that produced record rainfall, severe flooding, and widespread infrastructure damage.

The storms caused roadway failures, utility disruptions, erosion, wastewater system impacts, and community isolation, while compounding vulnerabilities in areas still recovering from previous disasters.

Widespread Event Damages

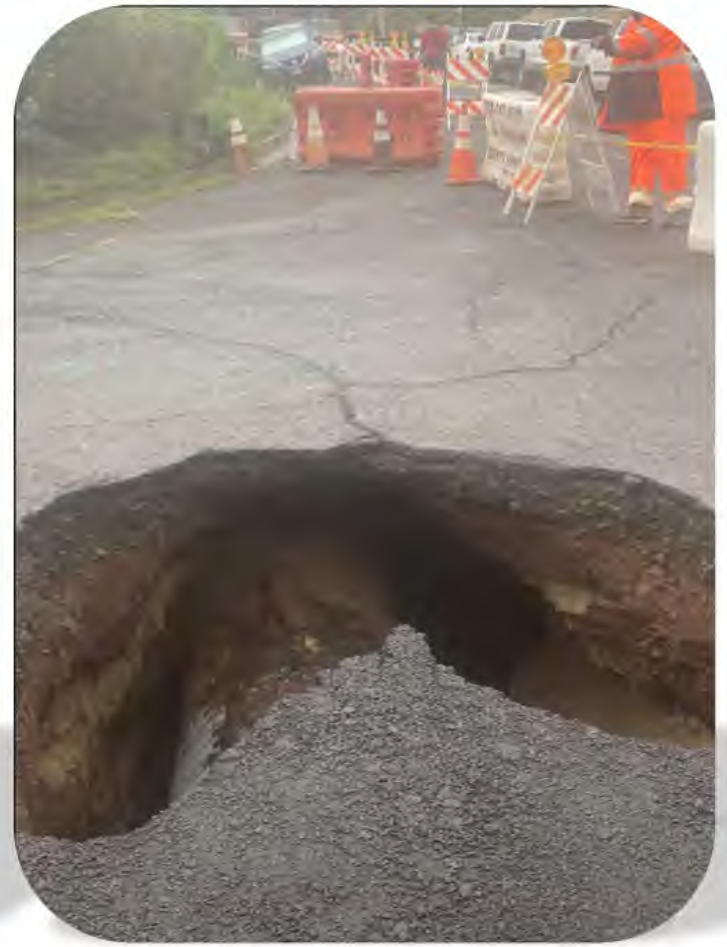
Moloka’i

Rushing runoff caused rockslides and ditch-wall collapses. East Moloka’i farm owners and residents were left isolated, unable to access roads or assess crop damages.

Lahaina

Record-breaking rainfall from back-to-back Kona low storms triggered massive sinkholes near Liloa Street, North Laalo Place, and the Lahaina Bypass.

Floodwaters undermined roadways, trapped vehicles, shut down local roads, and forced evacuation advisories.



Central Maui

The Central Maui Landfill suffered damage to the Lahaina Fire Debris Site as floodwaters broke a major retaining wall. The main landfill was left with eroded roads and stormwater flooding that limited access to the landfill.

Kula

The Kula Gym, a vital community asset, was severely damaged. The historic gym suffered roof failure as well as extensive damage to the new gym floor.

Lower Kula Road was completely washed out and unuseable.

East Maui

Hana was effectively cut off when flooding and landslides made road access impassable in both directions. In response, the County organized multiple outreach events to support affected residents.

Iao Valley

In Wailuku, floodwaters along ʻĪao Stream destroyed a large portion of a residence, with roughly 100 feet of property washed away.

Kihei

South Kihei Road:

- Large sinkhole near Kamaole II Beach Park.
- Damaged sewer and water lines, leaving approximately 200 residences without service.

Area wide:

- Multiple sinkholes including one large sinkhole

Kona Low Disaster Overview – FEMA IA

Outreach Events (March – June)

- Iao Valley Community Meeting
- South Maui Community Meeting
- West Maui Community Meeting
- Moloka'i Events and Meetings
- Hana Event – Helene Hall
- Kihei Event – Malcolm Center
- Lahaina Community Meeting

Kona Low Disaster Overview – FEMA IA

- Application period closed on June 14, 2026
- Recovery Centers / Expanded Service Centers
  - Lahaina
  - Kahului
  - South Maui
  - Moloka’i
  - Hana
  - Kihei

Community Assistance

- HIEMA
- FEMA
- Small Business Administration
- Hawaii Community Foundation
- Red Lightning
- Red Cross
- Maui United Way
- Maui Food Bank
- Hawai'i Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity
- Aloha House
- USDA
- Moloka'i Cares

Kona Low Disaster Overview – FEMA IA

Individuals & Households

- **$4,250,963.12** Approved
- **737** applications approved

Housing Assistance

- **$2,228,397.23** Approved
- **249** Approved

Other Needs Assistance

- **$2,022,565.89** Approved
- **737** Approved

Kihei Business Assistance

- OOR and council member Tom Cook's office are developing an assistance program providing partial rental reimbursement.
- Program will be available to eligible businesses impacted by the S. Kihei road closure.

Federal Grants

NRCS

- **Scope of Work:** Emergency watershed protection program to remove 300,000+ cubic yards of sediment and debris.
- **Estimated Amount:** **$20M+**

FHWA-ER

- **Scope of Work:** Repair federal road damages including sinkholes County-wide.
- **Estimated Amount:** **$10.8M**

Kona Low Disaster Overview – FEMA PA

DR-4909 - FEMA Public Assistance

Incident Period: March 10 – 24, 2026

- Emergency Work Deadline: October 7, 2026
- Permanent Work Deadline: October 7, 2027

Estimated Damages: $50 million

92 Damaged Sites

- Emergency Work (Category A&B): $2.8m
- Permanent Work (Categories C-F): $47m
- Floodplain Management & Code Enforcement (Category I): TBD

FEMA Accelerated Deadlines

We are on time / ahead of schedule for these accelerated deadlines

Task	New FEMA Expectations (Days Post-Declaration)	Traditional FEMA Pace (Days Post-Declaration)
Recovery Scoping Meeting	30	75-90+
Submit Final Damage Inventory	90	135-150+
Complete Site Inspections	110	250-300+
Submit EEIs following site inspections	115	250-360+
Submit Streamlined Project Applications	115	365-400+
Complete DDD	140	275-360+

DR-4909: 60 Day Priorities

- Recovery Scoping Meeting (RSM) with FEMA – Completed
- Finalize Damage Inventory (DI) – Completed 44 days ahead of FEMA deadline
- Ongoing site inspections – Initiated 3 months ahead of FEMA deadline
- Ongoing submission of Streamlined Project Applications (SPAs)
  - Category A – Debris Removal Costs
  - Category B – MEMA EOC / Emergency Response Costs
- Initiate Substantial Damage Determinations for properties in floodplain
- Begin validation of Cost Estimates with FEMA

Roadblocks to Recovery

CAT G/404 Mitigation

- 404 mitigation is not available
- Category G – Parks and Other – not available
- Both are part of HIEMA appeal to FEMA, but cannot be considered as part of long-term recovery strategies at this time

Federal procurement compliance requires a lengthy process for permanent work

- Shortening timelines or omitting required steps increases risk of audit findings and losing all reimbursement for the project in question

Support for PNPs

Recovery under FEMA isn't limited to only local government. However, local organizations are frequently overlooked. These groups are the lifeline for a community and a crucial facet of comprehensive recovery for the community.

Provided support for PNPs in understanding which groups could be eligible for FEMA PA.

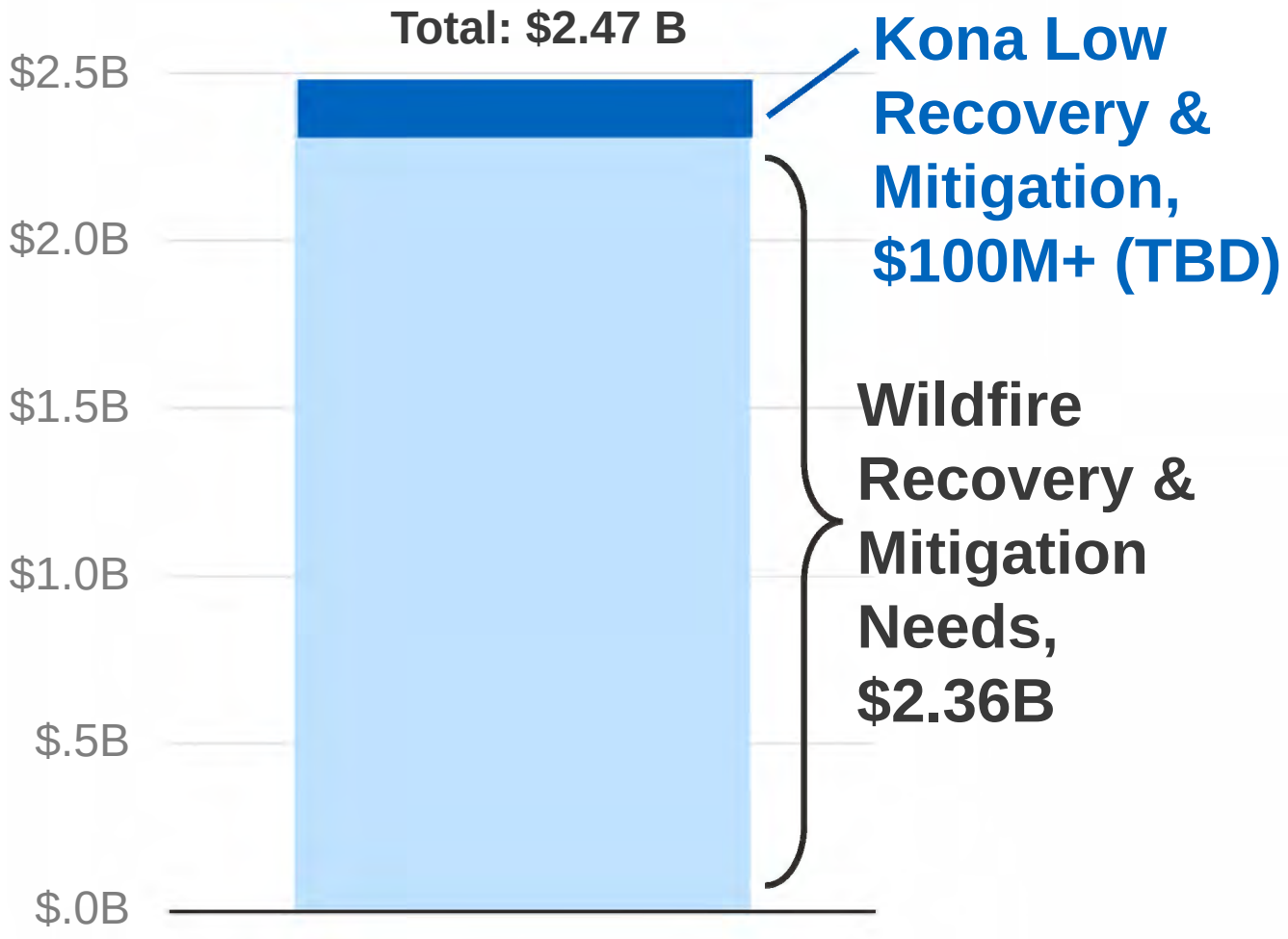
Partnered with Maui United Way to spread word to as many organizations as possible.

Coordinated with State to submit Requests for Public Assistance by FEMA deadline.

Attended RSM and are providing structural assessments for local school

Infrastructure Recovery Needs (updated 2026)

Wildfire + Kona Low



Projects included in funding strategy:

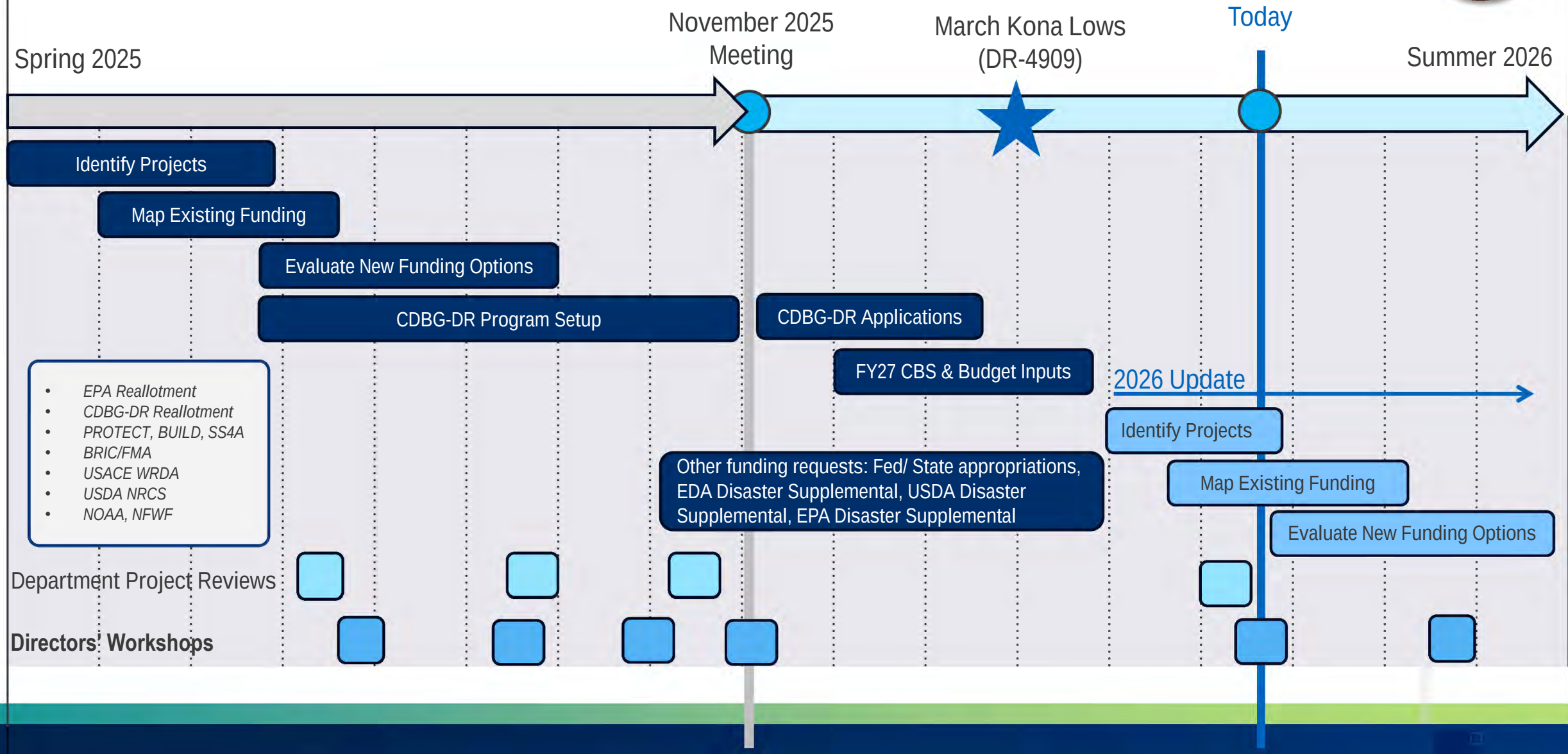
- Infrastructure projects critical to rebuild and recovery after the **2023 Maui Wildfires**
- Infrastructure projects critical to rebuild and recovery after the **2026 Kona Low storms**
- Mitigation projects to mitigate impacts from future disasters

Other general parameters:

- High funding need (>$1M)
- Includes projects where CDBG-DR funding was sought, but not secured
- Includes projects that support housing and CDBG-DR funded housing developments
- Other County/ Department/ regional priority projects, e.g., Lahaina Long Term Recovery Plan/ One Water
- If debt funded, consider alternative funding approaches (federal funding to offset GB or SRF$)

Funding Strategy

Updates Since November 2025 Meeting



Next Steps

- Site inspections with FEMA and HIEMA
- Finalize damage reports with FEMA concurrence
- Long term recovery discussions
- Continue to refine long term plans
- Preparations for hurricane season