ID # (assigned by CSG): 12-S-24-OK

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: Oklahoma

Assign Program Category (applicant): Emergency Management

Program Name: SoonerSafe – Safe Room Rebate Program
Administering Agency: Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management
Contact (Name and Title): Michelann Ooten, Deputy Directory
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1. How long has this program operated (month and year)? Seven months
2. Describe the program:
   • Why was it created?
     After an active year of tornadoes not only in Oklahoma but also in neighboring states in 2011, the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management in cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Office of the Governor put a plan in motion to create a new statewide residential safe room rebate program to aid Oklahoma homeowners.

   • Why is it a new and creative approach or method?
     The program utilizes hazard mitigation grant funds, which the state receives after a Preseditentially declared disaster. Since there are limited funds available and those funds are used for a variety of different county and municipal hazard mitigation projects, OEM worked with a web development partner, Oklahoma Interactive, to create an online registration system to reduce costs for personnel and postage, thereby providing the maximum amount of rebates possible. Additionally, in recent years this type of grant project has been limited to counties and municipalities, so developing a statewide program for the first time since 2003 required new procedures to be put in place by both OEM and FEMA to meet the requirements of the grant.

   • What are the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order?
     The registration phase of the SoonerSafe program launched in September 2011. Oklahoma homeowners were able to register online for a chance to be selected for a residential safe room rebate rebate. To meet grant requirements, the OEM SoonerSafe team reviewed each address to determine eligibility. Approximately 16,000 people registered for the program.
before the first random selection process took place in January 2012. Since that time, OEM and Oklahoma Interactive have worked to notify the selected rebate recipients and the OEM SoonerSafe team has worked with the recipients on a one-on-one basis to collect their required documentation. The selected rebate recipients have until September 31, 2012 to install safe rooms and submit the required documentation. Once a homeowner has submitted the requested items, OEM can begin to process their rebate checks. The first round of rebate checks are expected to be mailed to recipients in mid-April.

- **Is it effective? Provide tangible results and examples.**
  Yes. In just over three months, approximately 16,000 people registered for the program. OEM was able to secure funding to provide 503 safe rooms this year and is already working to secure additional funding to continue and grow the program in 2013. OEM has also been able to use the SoonerSafe registration website, www.soonersafe.ok.gov, to help counties and municipalities collect applications for their local residential safe room projects, making it easier for emergency managers to execute rebate programs locally. Additionally, the program has raised overall awareness of the importance of having a safe room as an extra layer of protection in the home. Many people who registered for the program have had safe rooms installed already, regardless of receiving a rebate or not.

3. **Did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator's name, present address, telephone number, and e-mail address.**
   Yes. OEM developed this program in cooperation with FEMA.
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4. **Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?**
   Oklahoma worked with FEMA to create the first statewide safe room rebate program following the 1999 and 2003 Oklahoma tornado outbreaks and helped fund nearly 10,000 individual above and below ground safe rooms across the state. Since that time, the grant changed and safe room rebate programs have been executed at the county or municipal level rather than at the state level. These past programs relied on paper applications and phone banks to collect registrants. The SoonerSafe program was the first statewide safe room rebate program to be enacted since the grant changed to emphasize local projects.

5. **What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter when attempting to adopt this program?**
   The biggest challenge for this program is working within the confines of the federal grant, which requires that homeowners must first register for the program, wait to be notified of selection, install their safe room, submit their paperwork, and then receive a rebate. If the homeowner completes any of those steps out of order, they will be deemed ineligible for the program. This issue can be combated with clear, consistent messaging to the public.

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Use these as guidelines to determine the appropriate Program Category for your state’s submission and list that program category on page one of this application. Choose only one.

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- Economic Development
- Transportation

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- Elections
- Information Systems
- Public Information
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- Telecommunications

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- Aging
- Children & Families
- Health Services
- Housing
- Human Services

Human Resources/Education
- Education
- Labor
- Management
- Personnel
- Training and Development
- Workforce Development

Natural Resources
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- Environmental Protection
- Natural Resources
- Parks & Recreation
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