

WHAT IS THE CDBG-DR PROGRAM?

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Since 1992, Congress has provided nearly \$100 billion through HUD's Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery Program (CDBG-DR) to help states and communities recover after a Presidentially declared major disaster.

CDBG-DR funds address the "unmet needs" of disaster recovery that may not be met by other federal programs or funding sources. The use of CDBG-DR funds is also subject to limitations of appropriations language (no substituting for FEMA or Army Corps funding when available) as well as the Stafford Act prohibition on the duplication of benefits.

Despite its critical role in disaster recovery, the CDBG-DR program is not statutorily authorized. As a result, these vital resources are often delayed in reaching communities and households in need. When a major disaster strikes, Congress must specifically approve funds for CDBG-DR, which can be used to address immediate and long-term recovery, infrastructure, housing, and economic revitalization. When HUD receives CDBG-DR funds for specific disasters they must publish a unique Federal Register notice outlining program requirements, which slows down the flow of funds.

NLIHC and its Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) of more than 850 local, state, and national organizations support the [Reforming Disaster Recovery Act](#), introduced by Senators Brian Schatz (D-HI), Susan Collins (R-ME), Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Todd Young (R-IN), and Representative Al Green (D-TX). If enacted, the bill would permanently authorize the CDBG-DR program and establish important [safeguards and tools](#) to help ensure that this federal disaster recovery resource reaches all impacted households, including the lowest-income and historically marginalized survivors who are often hardest-hit by disasters and have the fewest resources to recover.

WHAT IS AN "UNMET NEED"?

When CDBG-DR funds are approved by Congress, HUD will conduct assessments using FEMA Individual Assistance (IA) and Public Assistance (PA) as well as SBA disaster loan data to determine the level of need each state or municipality has. HUD uses this to appropriate funds.

Upon receiving funds, a state or municipality will create an Action Plan detailing how it plans to utilize them. The state will conduct an assessment of the disaster's direct impact (e.g. destroyed homes or damaged businesses) and indirect impact (e.g. population loss or destroyed industries) together with the assistance available from federal, state, local, and other sources. The difference between them is the current level of "unmet need" which CDBG-DR funds will address

Grantees frequently use CDBG-DR to rebuild owner-occupied and rental housing, including federally assisted and public housing, to address transportation, water/sewer, and school infrastructure, and to support small businesses and local industries.

WHY ARE CDBG-DR FUNDS NECESSARY?

As a long-term, flexible, disaster recovery program, CDBG-DR can focus on the needs of those whose recovery was incomplete, as well as a disaster's broader housing, economic, and infrastructure-related impacts that are unaddressed by short-term recovery programs administered by FEMA and other disaster responders.

FEMA programs are designed to quickly assist disaster survivors as they work to repair or replace what was destroyed by a disaster. They cannot be used to address further reaching effects of disasters such as dramatic population shifts, changes in housing stock, and broader economic impacts of disasters that require the construction of new buildings, services, job training and employment assistance, or infrastructure. CDBG-DR can address these broader regional impacts.

Moreover, FEMA's IA program may only be extended up to 18 months, well before disaster recovery is complete. The program is notoriously difficult to navigate for disaster survivors, often results in improper denials of aid, and the assistance provided is often insufficient for many of the households with the greatest needs to recover. As a result, many households continue to suffer from the effects of a disaster long after FEMA is forced to focus on other disasters. With rising rents and unemployment caused by the disaster, long-term recovery resources like CDBG-DR are necessary to ensure households truly recover.

WHAT AREAS RECEIVE THE MOST CDBG-DR FUNDING?

Since 1992, CDBG-DR funds have assisted states across the country:

Top 20 Recipients of CDBG-DR Funds Since 1992

1.	PR	11.	NC
2.	LA	12.	AL
3.	TX	13.	SC
4.	NY	14.	MO
5.	MS	15.	IN
6.	NJ	16.	IL
7.	FL	17.	OR
8.	CA	18.	ND
9.	VI	19.	TN
10.	IA	20.	CO

WHY SHOULD HUD ADMINISTER CDBG-DR?

Given the agency's expertise in housing and community development, HUD, not FEMA, should operate long-term recovery programs. FEMA has a poor track record of addressing the housing needs of low-income survivors and has demonstrated little interest in improving its programs. Unlike FEMA, HUD provides housing assistance to millions of households, supports the construction and rehabilitation of affordable homes, and invests in community development.

FEMA is best at immediately responding to disasters and assisting states and localities at addressing the immediate needs of disaster-impacted areas. Given the rising number of disasters, the agency would require a massive influx of support to both address the immediate needs of disaster-impacted areas across the country and simultaneously remain in a disaster-impacted community for the time it takes to achieve long-term recovery goals. FEMA is not equipped to administer a long-term recovery program, and requiring it to do so, many compromise its ability to address urgent response needs.

While a larger conversation around disaster recovery is welcome and much needed, the current needs of disaster survivors require that HUD continue to facilitate long-term recovery programs and that the program receive much needed reforms to ensure that all disaster survivors can receive assistance they need to fully recover in a timely manner.

For more information on CDBG-DR and the Reforming Disaster Recovery Act please contact Sarah Saadian (ssaadian@nlihc.org) and Noah Patton (npatton@nlihc.org).