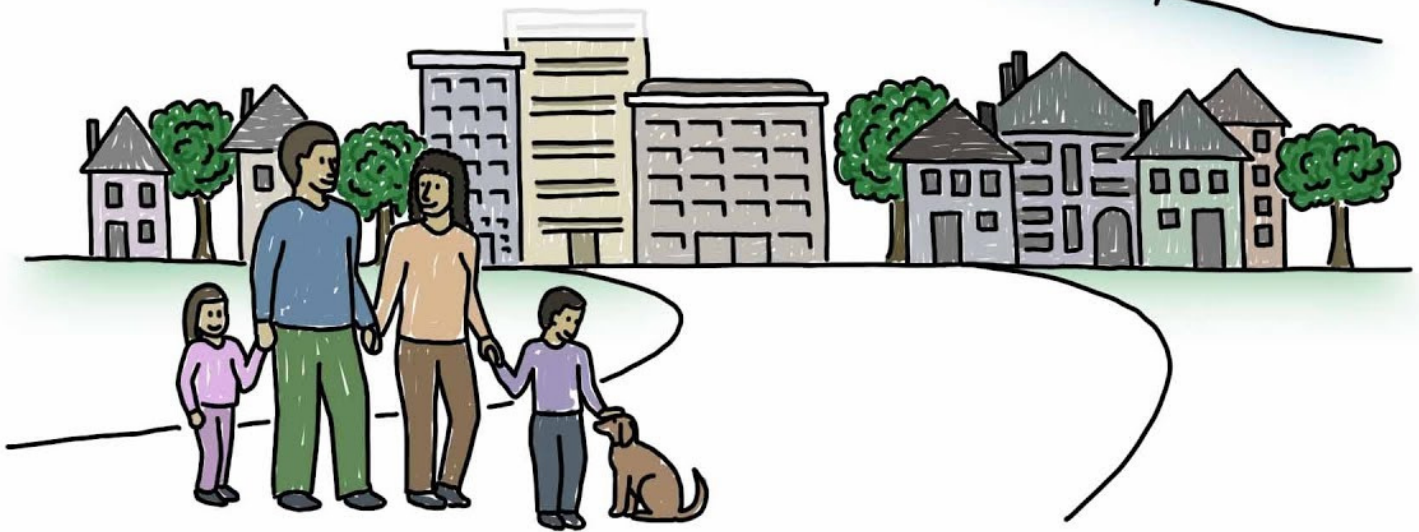


DRSI DIGEST

APRIL 2021

HUD Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program



MESSAGE FROM DRSI DIRECTOR: TENNILLE S. PARKER

The Disaster Recovery and Special Issues Division (DRSI) is pleased to publish the second issue of our DRSI Digest. The DRSI Digest is a quarterly newsletter to keep grantees and partners informed on the latest policy issues affecting our grantees, announcements on training and information-sharing, and highlighting the work Community Development Block Grant disaster recovery (CDBG-DR) grantees are doing in the field every day.

Recently, major disaster declarations have increased in frequency and magnitude. Because of this, it is more important than ever for CDBG-DR grantees to consider implementing resilience and mitigation strategies into their recovery activities. Data shows that disasters disproportionately affect low-and moderate-income residents and other vulnerable populations because they are less able to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the impacts of a disaster. To combat this, CDBG-DR grantees must continue to support and contribute to community-wide resilience efforts. This edition of the DRSI Digest describes the importance of resilience and provides an example of a CDBG-DR grantee pursuing a comprehensive recovery strategy.

NEW DRSI PRODUCTS

[NEW DRGR USER MANUAL
CHAPTERS AND DATE UPLOAD
AVAILABLE](#)

[HUD'S COMMUNITY RESILIENCE
TOOLKIT MATERIALS](#)

[FY 21 CDBG LMI SUMMARY
DATA](#)

Questions about the newsletter?
Send an email to DRSIPolicyUnit@hud.gov

DRSI EVENTS AND UPDATES

UPCOMING DUE DATES

- **May 2021:** Existing CDBG-MIT Grantees, receiving additional funds, must submit any updates to its prior mitigation certification submission.
- **June 2021:** New CDBG-DR grantees receiving funds for a disaster occurring in 2019 must submit its certifications and implementation plan.
- **July 2021:** CDBG-DR and CDBG-MIT grantees receiving additional funds must submit a substantial amendment to its action plan.

2021 CDBG-DR AND CDBG-MIT VIRTUAL TRAINING SERIES

HUD concluded its 2021 CDBG-DR and CDBG-MIT Grantee-Led Virtual Training series. This series allowed grantees to share their best practices and lessons learned related to hot topic issues within the grant program. Materials from the series are expected to be posted on the HUD Exchange this month. Grantees are encouraged to check the website [here](#).

WHAT IS COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Community resilience is a community's ability to prepare for natural hazard risks, adapt to changing conditions, and withstand and recover when natural disasters occur. Incorporating resilience measures into CDBG-DR eligible activities is a cost-effective way to prepare for future events and recover more quickly when events occur.

To promote resilience planning, communities should engage key stakeholders, build community support, integrate comprehensive resilience goals, and implement realistic resilience actions. CDBG-DR grantees are encouraged to refer to CPD's Resilience Toolkit for strategies to implement resilience measures with recovery efforts.

Additionally, the National Institute of Standards and Technology has a Community Resilience Planning Guide that can be used as best practices to incorporate resilience. Both resource are available on the [HUD Exchange](#) and the [NIST website](#).

EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

CDBG-DR grantees can incorporate resilient strategies in several ways.

- Creating and improving public facilities and infrastructure in low-and moderate-income areas.
- Making changes to current building practices.
- Spreading public awareness to prepare for and recover from disasters.
- Relocating households to lower risk areas.
- Developing new affordable housing stock that can withstand current and future risks.





POLICY UNIT: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

1

FAQ: When identifying total assistance received by or available to each CDBG-DR beneficiary, should the grantee only consider disaster assistance provided to the beneficiary for the same disaster the CDBG-DR assistance is being awarded for?

ANSWER: No. When multiple disasters occur in the same location, and the CDBG-DR beneficiary has not recovered from the first disaster at the time of a second disaster, the assistance provided in response to the second disaster may duplicate assistance for the same purpose and need as assistance provided after the first disaster.

The total assistance to be considered in a Duplication of Benefits analysis is to be calculated based on the “recovery purpose” for the eligible CDBG-DR activity and not based on the disaster for which funds were awarded. A duplication occurs when a person, household, business, or other entity receives disaster assistance from multiple sources for the same recovery purpose, and the total assistance received for that purpose is more than the total need. This is because Federal assistance serves only to “supplement insurance and other forms of disaster assistance.”

When two disasters occur in the same area, and the applicant has not fully recovered from the first disaster before the second disaster occurs, CDBG-DR applicants can provide documentation to the grantee to illustrate how the disaster assistance for the first disaster was used for eligible purposes.

However, applicants are not required to maintain documentation related to the use of the disaster assistance beyond the period required by the agency that provided the assistance. If documentation cannot be provided and the applicant has passed the time period required to maintain the documentation, the grantee may accept a self-certification regarding how the applicant used the other agency’s assistance. The June 20, 2019 Federal Register Notice outlines the requirements for duplication of benefits at 84 FR 28836.

2

FAQ: For 2017, 2018, and 2019 disasters, does the waiver of 42 U.S.C. 5305(a)(24)(A) and (D) “to the extent necessary” permit all homeownership assistance activities under 42 U.S.C. 5305(a)(24)(A) through (E)?

ANSWER: Yes. HUD’s waiver of 42 U.S.C. 5305(a)(24)(A) is replaced with an alternative requirement “to the extent necessary” to allow for “homeownership assistance for households earning up to 120 percent of the area median income.” Under this waiver and alternative requirement, grantees may provide homeownership assistance to households earning up to 120 percent of area median income in any of the forms identified in 42 U.S.C. 5305(a)(24)(A) through (E). The waiver of 42 U.S.C. 5305(a)(24)(D) eliminates the statutory limitation on providing only up to 50 percent of down payment assistance, so that together with the alternative requirement, grantees can provide up to 100 percent of down payment assistance for households earning up to 120 percent of the area median income.

DRSI REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT

FORT WORTH TEXAS (FWT)

The Fort Worth Regional Team, headed by Phyllis Foulds as Assistant Director FWT, is comprised of 7 CPD Specialists, 1 Financial Analyst, 1 Program Support Specialist, and 1 DRGR Specialist. The FWT regional team currently works with grantees and CPD Field Offices in Arkansas, Iowa, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas.

A MORE RESILIENT IOWA...

The State of Iowa, a grantee covered by the FWT Region, has been actively working to incorporate resiliency in its recovery strategy. In 1993, the State of Iowa received approximately \$38.7 million in CDBG-DR funds, where the primary objective was to repair, restore, and replace facilities damaged by the disaster. Then, in 2008, Iowa experienced one of the most significant flood disasters of its history – where 85 of Iowa’s 99 counties received a Major Disaster Declaration. HUD awarded \$890.8 million in CDBG-DR funds for the State to address the remaining unmet needs in the most impacted and distressed areas. For Iowa, the Cedar and Iowa River watersheds were the hardest-hit areas, where two small towns – Oakville and Palo – were submerged by the flood.

By 2008, the State realized that flood damage had nearly doubled nationally since its initial CDBG-DR award and that Iowa’s population in flooded areas had increased by 18 percent. The State knew that its previous recovery approach from 1993 alone would not be sustainable and began considering innovative resiliency strategies that could bolster its recovery efforts. Of the \$890.8 million, nearly \$28 million was spent on mitigation activities designed to reduce the impact of future flood-related disasters.

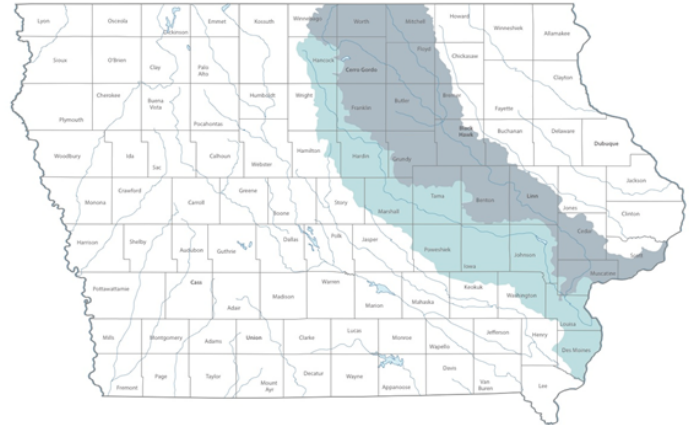


Image Source: Iowa Economic Development Authority

The State’s mitigation activities consisted of:

- Floodplain mapping for land use and hazard planning,
- Floodplain education to better inform land-use decisions,
- Planning grants to reduce development and risk of flood-prone areas,
- Flood insurance promotion to reduce future uninsured flood losses,
- Sustainable building training to encourage resilient new construction,
- Watershed planning to rehabilitate Iowa’s flood management systems, and
- The Iowa Watershed Project to install 150 small-scale green flood mitigation projects in three of Iowa’s watersheds.



Image Source: Iowa Economic Development Authority



Image Source: Iowa Economic Development Authority

THE IOWA WATERSHED APPROACH

After the success of the Iowa Watershed Project, Iowa continued its mission to create resilient communities state-wide by participating in HUD's National Disaster Resilience (NDR) competition. The State received an additional \$96.9 million to expand the Iowa Watershed Project by including nine additional watersheds and creating the "Iowa Watershed Approach." The Iowa Watershed Approach reduces flood risk, improves the quality of life and health of residents, and develops a program that is replicable throughout the Midwest and the United States. An effort this large required significant municipal coordination and private-public partnership engagement within the watershed.



Image Source: Iowa Economic Development Authority

In March of 2019, the State was again hit by flooding. Levees along the Missouri River burst, inundating communities with water up to nine feet above the first-floor level for as long as eight weeks. Responding proactively, the State applied for funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce for a regional planning grant to see how it could improve land-use in flooded areas. This collaborative application promotes comprehensive, sustainable, and resilient flood mitigation practices. On January 27, 2020, HUD allocated \$96.7 million to the State to recover from its 2019 flood disaster and approved its action plan on August 7, 2020. The State's participation in the regional planning grant laid the foundation for identifying the remaining unmet needs and connecting funding sources to leverage with CDBG-DR funds to maximize the Federal investment. The State of Iowa continues to illustrate comprehensive recovery actions that aim to prepare the State and its communities for future disasters and recover more quickly.