



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

Office of the Assistant Secretary | 330 C Street, S.W., Suite 4034  
Washington, DC 20201 | [www.acf.hhs.gov](http://www.acf.hhs.gov)

**DCL#:** CSBG-DCL-2023-12  
**DATE:** May 15, 2023  
**TO:** The CSBG Network  
**SUBJECT:** Community Action Month 2023: Partnership in Disaster Relief  
**ATTACHMENT(S):** N/A

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Dear Colleague,

Community Action Month is a chance to highlight the diverse ways in which the leadership and service of community action agencies makes a difference in cities, towns, and tribal lands across the country. This letter emphasizes the impact of community action agencies in disaster recovery efforts.

In 2021, an estimated 1 in 10 households were impacted by some form of natural disaster.<sup>1</sup> And we know that disasters exacerbate economic disparities as people experiencing poverty are more vulnerable to disasters, suffer more serious consequences, and have longer recovery times because of the impact of poverty on their daily lives.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, when we, at the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), think about advancing equity, taking a preventative and proactive approach, utilizing a whole family, community-based strategy, and being innovative in our delivery model, we place support for individuals and families recovering from disasters at the center of our efforts. Through [strategic goal number four](#) in ACF's Strategic Plan, we've documented our commitment to "support communities and families to respond to acute needs and facilitate recovery from a range of crises and emergency situations," and it is my pleasure to highlight how the Community Action Network is supporting this goal through life-sustaining work before, during, and after natural disasters.

The Office of Community Services' (OCS) theme for Community Action Month, "We See You: Partnering Across the Community Action Network to Advance Equity" is the perfect backdrop

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (September 13, 2022). Retrieved from Our Way Home Blog: *Building more Resilient, Equitable, and Inclusive Communities*.

<sup>2</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (July 2017). Retrieved from Disaster Technical Assistance Center Supplemental Research Bulletin: *Greater Impact: How Disasters Affect People of Low Socioeconomic Status*.

for me to share my appreciation for your efforts to partner in support of disaster relief and to spotlight the work done in local communities to aid in recovery from disasters.

Partnerships between the federal government and tribal nations and between the federal, state, and local levels are essential for effective and swift disaster recovery. The innerworkings of these relationships are not always visible, but what is visible is the tangible support individuals, families, and communities receive during the times they need it most – whether it is support with home repairs, temporary housing, health care, transportation, food, clothing, personal hygiene items, or caseworkers to help individuals and families navigate disaster recovery.

To see various ways that Community Action Agencies, in particular, are leading the charge in disaster recovery, please watch the following spotlight videos which includes interviews with individuals and families served by CSBG as well as CSBG program administrators:

- [Kentucky](#): After severe storms and flooding, the LKLP Community Action Agency employed CSBG and LIHEAP funds for immediate disaster relief.
- [Oregon](#): Following extreme heat and wildfires, Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action used the flexibility of CSBG to rapidly deploy vital services such as shelter, utility assistance, and case management.
- [Texas](#): The Hidalgo County Community Service Agency utilized CSBG disaster relief funds to support families with significant damage to their homes after catastrophic flooding.

Lastly, Congress recently appropriated an additional \$25 million in [CSBG Disaster Supplemental Funds](#) to OCS to help support recovery from Hurricanes Fiona and Ian. Grant recipients will receive their first disbursements in July 2023. ACF and OCS will continue to support these efforts and create innovative solutions to support communities before, during, and after disasters, with an emphasis on creating equitable access and outcomes for children and families.

Be sure to access the [Community Action Month](#) page on the OCS website and connect with us on Twitter: [@ACFHHS](#), [@ContrerasACF](#), and [@OCS\\_ACFgov](#).

Please take time this month to celebrate yourselves as you reflect on the impact of your work and know that **We See You!** Thank you for all that you do.

/s/

January Contreras  
Assistant Secretary  
The Administration for Children and Families