

FAQs

State of Florida Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Initiative



Q Will every county in the state receive some of the funding?

A No. Federal guidelines require that the funds go to areas with the greatest unmet needs. The Department is using three sets of damage assessment data to determine the counties with the greatest need (and that were hit the hardest by the storms). This data comes from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (infrastructure), the Agency for Workforce Innovation (unemployment) and the Governor's Hurricane Housing Workgroup (housing). Disaster impact information will be utilized to prioritize funding. Funds will be awarded in the order of need until all funding has been depleted.

Q Why has a total dollar amount per county been set as a cap?

A A cap was necessary to ensure that several highly impacted areas received a share of funds.

Q Must local governments meet the 10% match requirement?

A No. HUD has indicated to the Department of Community Affairs that state housing funds already expended for disaster relief and recovery sufficiently meet the match requirement. Local governments are not required to provide any matching funds.

Q Must every service area be surveyed?

A No. The Department will accept any one of the following: (1) a survey that was completed within the past five years for a CDBG project, (2) HUD census data by place, tract or block group, (3) the HUD total population and total LMI population percentage of the local government, or (4) a properly conducted new survey. The survey or data used must conform to the service area.

Q What happens if we provide an estimate and it changes when we finalize the plans and specifications?

A As long as it is directly related to the disaster, addresses an eligible need, and does not exceed the award amount, the Department will allow modifications to the contract.

Q What if we complete a project and have funds remaining? Must they be returned to the Department?

A Funds could be used to address other needs related to the disaster as approved by the Department, if the work can be completed within the contract timeframe. If no other need exist or the local government does not wish to address another need, the funding must be returned to the Department so that it can be provided to another community.

Q Is there a need to target low and moderate income (LMI) persons as beneficiaries of the activities?

A Yes, the federal guidelines state that at least 50% of the funds must benefit LMI persons.

Q If a local government submits an application for two types of activities, how will the LMI percentage be calculated?

A The local government should total the unduplicated beneficiaries of all activities to determine LMI benefit. So, if housing rehab and sewer system improvements were made, you would add the beneficiaries of all activities to arrive at the total served. However, the same beneficiaries cannot be counted more than one time. For example: if 10 LMI persons received housing assistance and 20 LMI persons benefited from street improvements, if the persons that received housing assistance were among those that benefited from the street improvements, you would have a total of 20 LMI beneficiaries, not 30.

Q Our town has needed some infrastructure improvements for several years, but has not been able to fund them. Can we use this funding to make those improvements?

A No. Unless the improvements are needed as a result of the disasters or to mitigate future disaster damage, the improvements cannot be made. Also, only cities and counties that were severely impacted by the hurricanes should expect to receive funding for mitigation.

Q I was told that my community would receive a substantial amount of money for relief and recovery. Why am I not getting that amount of funding?

A Many of the dollar amounts that were mentioned in local meetings included the funding from all available sources. CDBG resources were announced December 10, 2004 and no preliminary estimations were made. Keep in mind, however, that the Governor's Hurricane Housing Workgroup is supporting a legislative initiative that recommends substantial additional housing funds if approved by the Legislature.

Q Do local governments need to conduct a public hearing to receive comment on the proposed projects?

A No. The federal regulation does not require a public hearing. However, you must select an alternative means of gathering citizen input. This can be done through the use of newspaper advertisements, information posted to websites and in public

places, or by appointing a citizens advisory council that represents a broad sector of the population.

Q Will local governments receive points for leveraging other funds?

A No.

Q How will counties document and certify that no other funding exists for the project or that it is not eligible for reimbursement by FEMA or another agency?

A Certifications will be a part of the application form and will require the signature of the chief elected official. Local officials should use FEMA funding for all projects that are eligible under FEMA guidelines. Insurance benefits should also be used to as great an extent as possible.

Q Can a local government use two sources of funding to complete a project?

A Yes. Funds from several sources may be needed for large projects. Financial and programmatic records should clearly indicate the sources of funding used to accomplish the activity.

Q Our sewer system failed during one of the hurricanes and raw sewage flooded the streets for days. Can we make improvements to keep this from happening again?

A Yes. Mitigation such as this is allowable. However, local governments must prioritize projects to keep from exceeding the county's cap.