

**CDBG-DR and CDBG-MIT Grantee-Led Sessions**

**3: CDBG Grantee Cross-Agency Coordination**

**Tuesday, March 30, 2021**

Scott Ledford: Thanks, Paul. And hello again, everybody. I'm joined again by my colleague Olivia Healey, and we'll continue to be the moderators of these sessions.

We have had some logistics questions related to the joining links for these sessions. So we want to be sure you all know that each link is unique, and you should follow the link that is sent to you for each session.

This is the last session of today. Then we'll pick back up at 1:00 o'clock Eastern tomorrow with three more sessions and then again three more sessions on Thursday.

For those who haven't been in previous sessions, speakers are each covering their content through its conclusion. Then we start the Q&A portion of the session. We have questions that you sent in advance through the questionnaire that was distributed. We'll go through those first. Then we'll turn to the questions coming in through the Q&A box.

So this is just another reminder that you can still submit questions throughout this presentation using the Q&A box that Paul identified on the right side of your screen.

It's now our pleasure to formally introduce the presenters for this session. Maziar is the chief disaster recovery officer for the California Department of Housing and Community Development. In this capacity, he oversees and coordinates the department's response, recovery, and mitigation policies and programs related to housing and infrastructure needs after natural disasters.

Prior to this role, he was the assistant deputy director for the Division of Financial Assistance from 2011 to 2019, focusing on housing and community development policies and programs. From 2010 to 2011, he was the director and from 2008 to 2010, the deputy director for brownfield cleanups at the California Department of Toxic Substances Control.

Olivia Healey: Then we have Amanda as well. So Amanda is the section chief over disaster recovery and mitigation for infrastructure and multifamily housing at California's Department of Housing and Community Development. She's been instrumental in setting up teams to implement and manage disaster recovery and mitigation programs to work with local communities impacted by the 2017 and 2018 wildfires.

Their programs include infrastructure, multifamily housing, owner-occupied housing, rehab and reconstruction, planning, public services and economic development.

Scott Ledford: And we also have Sue presenting today. Sue is a senior specialist for disaster recovery at the California Department of Housing and Community Development. Starting her DR career in 2013, she has achieved great accomplishments, serving as the HCD team lead for the National Disaster Resilience Competition, along with other state partners where the state was awarded over \$70 million in NDR funds to address wildfire resilience.

Additionally, Sue is the department's first DR liaison in disaster response as HCD's initial lead for the state's disaster recovery framework when the housing recovery, economic, or the

infrastructure recovery support functions were activated by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

And without further ado, I will hand it over to Sue. Sue, you're still on mute.

Sue Naramore: There we go. Thank you, Scott. Hello, everybody. So to give you a background of how California has its mitigation and disaster recovery unit set up, we handle disaster in basically three phases.

At this point, Maziar and his team handle the response period once the state activates disaster recovery support functions through our Office of Emergency Services, and they work at -- he and his team work in the joint field offices, work directly with Cal OES and directly with FEMA, being the frontline face for HCD with the local jurisdictions and disaster survivors as we begin response and then moving into recovery. Those phases overlap, as all of you are aware.

And then as we -- as a response begins to wind down, Maziar and his team and then myself come in, and we begin to work on the action plan when we're going to get disaster recovery funding from HUD. And so all of us work on the -- working with the local jurisdictions to work on an unmet recovery need and begin to prepare and develop the action plan and get it submitted.

Once the action plan has been submitted, Amanda and her team come into play and start really working on identifying needed programs and frameworks for program design and, ultimately, standing up the program implementation. So those are the three phases of disaster recovery at HCD.

Since the National Disaster Resilience Competition was launched in 2014, we knew that HCD was really headed into a larger role in disaster recovery. I had started with the drought.

As you all are aware, California had a historic four-year drought that was in full swing in 2013. We provided disaster assistance for drought impacted survivors. And then that position really just sort of moved into the National Disaster Resilience Competition where HCD was the grantee. But it was truly a state-led competition, a state-led grant competition. And it really solidified HCD's ability to and process for cross-collaboration in California with -- regarding disaster recovery and resilience and adaptation.

Oops. Wrong way.

So the overview for HCD mitigation grant. For the 2017 wildfire disasters in Northern and Southern California, HCD received a total of \$212 million for those disasters in CDBG funds. \$88 million of that is CDBG mitigation funds.

So our approach to program design for those funds is really to sort of work backwards, in some ways. We want to make sure that we are sort of beginning with what we need to accomplish and making sure that the connection to the mitigation definition is threaded throughout those conversations in order to maintain focus on what this funding can do.

As probably all of you have experienced, CDBG-DR and mitigation become the catchall for what can be -- what money can be used to fix everything. And we know that there are certainly some regulations and requirements that don't allow it to be that full catchall. So we need to make sure that we have the definition for mitigation front and center as we're having these conversations.

We look to maximize investment in benefiting, obviously, the most impacted distressed areas. We want to leverage, as opposed to duplicate or supplant, any other state or federal funding because, as Heather was really clear in the previous session, we don't get enough money in order to fully fund generally any programs or to make anybody whole. So it's really important that we collaborate and make sure that we've got a capital stack that can complete the projects that are so necessary for recovery.

As we've all heard, all disasters are local. So it's very important in our process that we address state and local needs and goals and really work those partnerships as thoroughly as possible to make sure that we are all on the same page throughout this work.

Additionally, we obviously have expenditure deadlines, and it's critical to ensure that milestones and project goals can fit within those particular deadlines.

So we're going to talk about the 2017 disasters. We did get money for 2018. We're in the process of standing all of that up now. So we'll focus today on the 2017 disasters that are further along in the process for mitigation.

So in October of 2017, we had a series of fires that basically all started on the same day and burned a total of 200,000 acres and destroyed almost 9,000 structures and cost the state about \$8.66 billion in damage.

And then two years later in December, an even bigger event happened, again, mostly on the same day. These fires burned out, and it burned over 308,000 acres. And at the time was the largest fire season we had had in the history of the state. Unfortunately, 2018 and 2020 have far surpassed that.

HCD last -- we last received CDBG-DR dollars in 2008. Many of the fires that we've had have not been presidentially declared. So while CDBG-DR is a great driver of conversations about mitigation and about recovery, the state's very much been in those conversations with the -- all the fires that we do have that don't get presidentially declared.

Essentially, we are always preparing for the next fire and, of course, in California, watching water levels. And at present, we are beginning to watch for signs of another potentially severe drought coming, which then, obviously, exacerbates all of the fire risk that is here in California.

So for the 2017 disasters -- fire disasters, you can see the green -- on your screen, you can see the green on the map, and then you can see the blue on the map. The green on the map is DR 4244, which was the October set of fires. And that included what the news media had dubbed the Wine Country Fires.

And then the blue is the 4353, which is the -- which was -- included the Thomas Fire, which at the time became the largest fire in the state of California down in the -- in Ventura and Santa Barbara.

One of the challenges we've seen when we had the most impacted distressed areas identified, we only had two full-sized counties. The rest were -- all five zip codes. And in the amount of acreage that burned and the size of the areas that burned, really pinpointing the mitigation money in those areas as opposed to surrounding areas has been an interesting challenge that we are continually looking to meet.

With only two most impacted and distressed counties for 2017 and the five zip codes, the mitigation requirement for 50 percent of the funding being spent in the MID areas -- oops. Sorry. I'm not changing the right slides. I apologize -- within the MID areas, the requirement that the other 50 percent benefit the MID has made it challenging for some of those areas to apply for funding. So we're looking at flexibilities the way that -- in the best way that we can.

And next, I will hand it to Maziar.

Maziar Movassaghi: Good afternoon, everyone. Before I start my presentation, I wanted to say it was only three years ago that I was at the first DR clinic and I was taking so many notes, I was sweating in my seat and running to Sue after every session going, oh, my God. Did you hear about Section 3? Did you hear about OIG?

So for everyone who's new on here and this seems overwhelming, hang in there. These sessions are very, very good.

All right. So I'll get started with the state consultations that we initiated at the first step of developing our action plan. So building on the good relationships that Sue and the team had built with the NDRC grant, we reached out to three key state agencies.

One of them was the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. This is the main statewide entity that handles the state planning activities, manages the state climate adaptation work. So kind of it was important to kind of get their information.

We also did consultations with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. We call them CAL FIRE. CAL FIRE not only had and has a lot of data in the immediate aftermaths of a disaster about structures being destroyed, but they had a wealth of knowledge about the behavior of fire and what can be done to mitigate it and impact fires.

And we also coordinated with the Governor's Office of Emergency Services. Cal OES, and not only for their response program but in their hazard mitigation side and with the SHMO, the state hazard mitigation officer.

All three of these agencies have their own mitigation related grants, a combination of state and federal funding. So in addition to doing these consultations to learn more about fires and fire

behavior and what communities can do to be more resilient to wildfires, it was really important to coordinate our administration of these mitigation related grants. Next slide, please.

All right. So our approach in dealing with the mitigation needs assessment was to use these state consultations to really look at the state hazard mitigation plan, learning from Cal OES about what's in that document, what are some of the gaps and what are some of the challenges and what we can do to help advance what's been already identified, the state hazard mitigation plan, and really learning about the different processes and networks that are built around developing identifying hazards at the state level.

We also then reviewed the local hazard mitigation plans. This is a document that each local government is supposed to produce and update. And it really allowed us to engage local governments and better understand what their specific local hazards are vis-a-vis the state hazard mitigation plan and really try to understand what's -- how they are potentially utilizing not only the hazard mitigation plan but other local planning documents as well.

In California, each local government is required to also have a safety element that addresses mitigation and [inaudible] to community from natural hazards.

We also looked at community wildfire protection plans [inaudible] communities as far as being more fire resilient, and in some ways, to no surprise, we also bumped into some local governments or local communities that did not have wildfire protection plans or other similar plans. So the absence of these documents sometimes is also very telling as well.

But looking at the three layers of the state level, the local level, local hazard mitigation plans, and then the local documents really allowed us to get a broad spectrum of what are the identified needs and also what are the identified challenges. Next slide, please.

So after doing these consultations, the next big consultation really was to go meet with local governments and the local fire safe councils to really establish relationships, not only with the typical constituency and stakeholders -- we all deal with the housing community officials, but also the broad range of folks in local government.

In some of our meetings, we really had a chance to have the public works official, the building official, the emergency management official, and the local housing community development official in the room together and just talking about what are the known impacts, what are the known issues. Really opened up channels of communications at the local level as well.

One example I'll give you in the [inaudible] fire '18, at that time the deadliest fire to California, the deaths were associated with a lot of seniors with accessibility and functionality issues not being able to evacuate in a timely manner.

So in one of our meetings, it was really amazing to see the local emergency management official really connect with the building official and the housing community development official to see, hey, we really need to map out where are units set aside for seniors with accessibility and

functionality issues to aid not only in the evacuation procedures but also in the planning for recovery and also planning and identifying whatever the local mitigation needs are.

On a state level, the local CAL FIRE folks had local offices throughout the state. So it really allowed us to, again, leverage their networks and their understanding of fire related issues and really bring them into this discussion with the CDBG folks that really brought in, again, a broad spectrum of folks to really allow for that.

And the chart you see before you gives you a snapshot of the more fine-tuned granular information we got from the different counties. The map you saw early on in the presentation really showed Northern California, Southern California. There were some overlapping issues, but there were some very unique to each one of the local governments we consulted with. So next slide, please.

We conducted our public meetings really in two rounds. The first round really was to really go around and educate the local governments, other state partners about what is this DR grant, what are the requirements, and really, kind of like I said, encourage and initiate the discussion between public works, housing, community development, emergency management, building officials to really start thinking about how they can utilize these funds.

In the second go around, we focused more on what was in the development of the action plan, the program proposals, and what was really California's response.

You'll note there's a couple of asterisks. At the tail end of round two is when the COVID pandemic hit, and we adjusted on the fly and conducted our last two meetings using virtual platforms like we did today -- like we're doing today.

Our goal really was to host at least a meeting in person in each one of the most impacted and distressed areas, again, really to kind of not only do education and outreach but connect different individuals within local governments and local communities so they can really understand how best to use these funds to meet their communities' needs.

So I'll stop there and turn the microphone over to Amanda. They'll give you some information about the programs themselves.

Amanda Ohman: Thank you, Maziar. Glad to be with you this afternoon. Yeah. So as Sue and Maziar went through how we collected data and information on unmet needs assessment and the damage that occurred in these areas and then doing the outreach and working with partners, we put together two programs.

The first program is our Resilient Infrastructure Program. We allocated approximately 70 percent of the funds to this program because there was an overwhelming interest in infrastructure but looking more broadly beyond traditional road projects.

And then in the meeting of the infrastructure resilience goals, that included looking at FEMA lifelines of safety and security, communication, food, water, shelter, transportation, health and

medical, hazardous material management, energy, power, and fuel, and flood risk. And those are in addition to the goals of benefiting the communities that were most impacted and not just having the infrastructure in that community but also looking at where the infrastructure project will be to benefit that area as well.

So it isn't -- we didn't require that every infrastructure program has to be in the MID, but it does have to either be in the MID or impact and benefit the MID areas.

And then we have a 50 percent benefit to low- and moderate-income population. In addition to that, we focus also with our partners and subrecipients to think about vulnerable populations. And they need to be consistent with the local and regional plans promoting resilience, as well as, when they submit their project applications, there must be a plan for long-term operation and maintenance.

The eligible applicants include city and county governments, and we did it in two rounds. As Maziar stated that in looking at some of the local plans, while some have them, there were ones that could be updated. So we also wanted to not have people miss out on infrastructure programs -- infrastructure projects.

So if there was shovel ready projects, they could immediately apply for the program. And then we held back some funds for a round two, which brings us to the second program that we implemented for the mitigation funds.

So we allocated \$22 million for planning and public services. And as I stated, that part of it is to - for them to be able to put a plan together that is needed for the infrastructure. Our eligible applicants are local governments, cities, counties, and nonprofits. And we just recently did our NOFA and actually had a couple of nonprofits submit projects for this program.

The project also and activities have to address the risk to community lifelines that support health and safety and mitigate future disasters. The program, one of the intents is to also provide funds for them to build capacity. The impact on rural areas of the disasters led to impacts to the tax base and limited available staff and capacity for applying for recovery and mitigation dollars. So the program allows local governments to apply for capacity building funding and planning dollars that can lead to further implementation dollars.

And it supports public services that inform communities about their disaster risk and how to reduce risk. And that is really critical for this time in wildfire as they consider how to educate their citizens how to respond when a fire occurs, as well as work together with neighboring communities and have a regional approach to mitigating the impact of fires or any other disaster that occurs.

And those are our two programs, and I'll turn it back to Sue. Thank you.

Sue Naramore: So the next two slides are really about key takeaways in both the needs assessment and unmet recovery needs action plan assessments.

So for the needs assessment, as we talked about earlier, that HCD's been involved with the response work with Cal OES and FEMA very early on. It's important. One of the key things we found is that being in the disaster at that time allows great relationship building with the frontline local government staff from the county administrators on down in order to begin to build that trust and really start those conversations early.

Those relationships are absolutely key to being able to assist them with getting you the data that you need for your needs assessment. And and you can stay much more up to date on what they have, on what they're planning, and what their needs are, because at many times, as you've all probably found, they're -- once the disaster hits, they're not even sure what they need. So it really allows a strong relationship to help move through and get the right data.

The FEMA and Cal OES on -- and from California are obviously the trusted messengers for the disaster response. And so with us being there, it, again, puts us in that category of being sort of the face of the disaster for them and the face of assistance so that you can really begin to -- when it's time to begin working on the needs assessment, you can just launch right from the response relationships that you built.

The other key takeaway was, very early on in many of the disasters, especially in 2017, I found that I could be in a meeting with the disaster response folks, but they had no idea who the housing and community development folks were in the local jurisdiction. I'm sure it's not unique. Everybody's wearing their hat and getting their work done, but building those bridges so that those people talk and really can align what they need at the local level has been critical.

I remember talking to them about HMGP, talking to some local housing community development people in a section about HMGP, and they had no idea what it was. Only the emergency management people and public works folks knew what HMGP was. So bringing that together really opened up many opportunities for us and for the local jurisdictions in terms of of possibilities for recovery.

We found also that it's really critical to be strategic in what you ask of impacted local governments. If you can find the information and get it confirmed, save them the time. They are in absolute overwhelm, as, again, that's a firm grasp of the obvious, but they really are just trying to deal with what's coming at them on a daily basis. So if you can find the information and then confirm it with them, that's ultimately the fastest and the easiest way to get the information that you need.

And then using the relationships with local government, and select your public meeting locations with your local governments and with the -- because they're used to communicating with the impacted constituents, impacted residents. And so making sure that you are putting your meetings in places that they are already comfortable going, we found is a really key issue.

And so the other -- the last piece that I'll say that I didn't put on the slide that I should have is that we wound up using as a template the -- essentially, from the action plan requirements, building a template for them that we sent them ahead of time. They could begin perusing through, and they knew what subjects we needed. They knew why we needed them, and we could help them figure

out where to go to get that information. It was a learning curve for all of them. So it turned out to be a very helpful document.

And then on the action plan, the key takeaways, coordination with the agency in setting a clear schedule with all of the partner agencies on the timelines for review and the timelines on when drafts had to be completed and getting buy in from leadership early is really important, not only internally in our -- in HCD as a department, but also with our control agency departments. That's been very critical.

One of the other things we found the key takeaways early on, in 2017, we wound up having a lot of meetings, and we wanted to -- to prepare for the action plan, we made sure that there were lots of meetings during response in order to talk about things. And we found that that was a bit overwhelming.

So in 2018, we have sort of rolled back some of that and made sure that we -- every meeting we have has a purpose. And so when mitigation came around, we followed that same principle, that mitigation is a very large sort of nebulous subject for so many people who haven't dealt with it.

So it was really important for us to engage in the local and state-level housing departments, public works departments, highway departments in order to bring together the people that have expertise in what mitigation really is and could mean for the local jurisdiction to assist with the learning curve that everyone's going through as we sort of wrestle with what does mitigation actually look like and how do we measure it.

We encourage everyone. We kept records, very good records of all of our outreach activities. We -- in our document storage system, we make sure that we've got all the emails, all the fliers, all attendee lists. And through that, we're able to build a list of interested parties for future communications about all of our programs. And we have found that to be really helpful in communicating with our -- with the disaster -- not only disaster survivors, but also the jurisdictions.

We also structure outreach to evolve over the action plan timeline. So we begin in our communications to education in those early meetings and begin to paint a picture of what this might look like. And then we have more structured discussions later in the -- in later meetings in order to bring more detail to the education pieces and the overall kind of conversations we had -- or we had early on. We found that it was far more digestible that way for everyone.

And leveraging state funding is absolutely critical because the local jurisdictions, for the most part, know what local funding they can go after, whether it's the -- in California, the local CAL FIRE office or unit in that area. They know what other CAL FIRE or other U.S. EPA funding they can go for and make sure that those other leveraged conversations are taking place. So you can figure out where the mitigation [inaudible] can fill gaps that are still outstanding from whatever state funding is available.

And so, as we said, the most important piece of all of this really for the action plan and the needs assessment is relationships and planning for the conversations you're going to have. Next slide, please.

Thanks. So in closing, as we said, building the relationships with cross-agency partners before, during, and after response. HCD is also involved in, like many of you probably are, your statewide hazard mitigation planning. And you really bring the housing view to those plans. And building those relationships and having those common conversations makes the response and recovery conversation much easier and much faster as disasters do hit.

And from 2017 we learned -- and we're doing this in 2018 and with all the mitigation funds -- it was really important to ground the needs assessment and the action plan in local plans as much as possible, having a place to start the conversation from where the local jurisdiction knows what's in their plan. They are familiar with that plan. It is a language they understand.

So it really gave them in 2018 and in mitigation some very solid ground to begin these recovery conversations, because, again, as you know, they're all -- everyone's very overwhelmed. Not sure. Where do I begin? In 2017 I got several calls from assistant city managers saying, Sue, what should I be doing today? I need to know what I should be doing today, because there's just so much overwhelm happening.

And so grounding the needs in plans they already know and have on their shelves was a really good way to keep -- to get things moving in a good direction and start the real detailed conversations.

And then, lastly, leveraging the experience of the other state agencies, both because you're going to need data from them and to ease the learning curve. And, obviously, having folks assist in the ownership and the lift really does provide a much more cohesive push toward recovery.

And as the local jurisdictions see the state level departments and agencies working together, we found that it does really instill much more confidence and really opened up communication lines in a very quick and seamless way for us.

And with that, that's our presentation. We're happy to take any questions.

Scott Ledford: Great. Thanks, Sue, and thanks, Amanda and Maziar as well.

So we do have a couple of questions that came in from the questionnaire. I just want to put in another plug for folks to go ahead and submit more questions through the Q&A box. We do have a couple, and we'll get started.

So, Sue, you might have covered this a fair bit. Again, this question came in in the questionnaire before your presentation was available to people, but, "What approaches have been implemented for coordination of CDBG-MIT projects with local planning officials, state planning officials and regulators, and other federal agencies?"

And the follow up is probably an interesting part to talk about. "What happens if there is not an agreement with state and local agencies on proposed federal MIT action?"

Susan Naramore: Wow. That's a really good question. So read me the first part of that one again.

Scott Ledford: Sure. "What approaches have been implemented for coordination of CDBG-MIT projects with local planning officials, state planning officials and regulators, and other federal funding agencies?"

Susan Naramore: So that really is where we were talking about the local -- their local plans, whether it is their -- just the overall general plan or, in the case of California general plans, they have to have a housing element, a safety element, and an adaptation element for resilience.

And so the local planning officials are very intimately aware of what's in these plans. We found that starting with these conversations with their local plans to be the -- honestly, the best way in to having these conversations. And then we overlay what mitigation can and cannot do into where they're trying to go. We certainly look at the most critical needs for -- needs first that would allow the broadest scale of recovery and mitigation from obviously future fires, floods, or earthquakes to begin the basis of those conversations.

And then the second part was, what do you do if there's not an MOU or not an agreement between? So --

Scott Ledford: Yeah. My read of the question is it's, what if there's not agreement amongst the parties?

Susan Naramore: So I think that, ultimately, the state agencies are all very aware that, as I said, all disasters are local, and we really stand on the regulations of what we can and cannot fund in order to assist with priorities.

The local jurisdiction may have a different priority than the mitigation can pay for. So we will do what we can to assist in finding ways to pay for that issue, if we can, either our funds or suggest other funds, and sort of strategically and respectfully maybe move that off to the side, if this funding can't pay for it, in order to redirect to prioritizing projects these funds can pay for.

So we don't ever discount what someone wants to spend money on. We simply try to prioritize based on identified funding sources. Maziar or Amanda, do you have anything else to add on that?

Maziar Movassaghi: I would just add in that at HCD, we do regular monthly coordinations with CAL FIRE and Cal OES as we administer these similar programs. And, actually, at times we have found there are projects that are rejected or not fundable by one department that is reachable by another department. So in some ways, we try to harmonize by looking at our overall grant administration.

Olivia Healey: Great. Transitioning to our next question that we have, you guys have talked a lot about different -- your different community engagement approaches. And at the local level and the state level, as you guys are reaching your public outreach requirements as a project partner, does the MIT funds require more robust engagement that includes your community representation?

Susan Naramore: Well, I would probably -- from my experience with this, I think you've got learning curves on both sides, whether it -- with regular DR it is how and why the national objectives have to be met, hard core disaster tieback -- right -- is a much bigger issue.

These wind up in a broader conversation because the tieback issue is -- while it's got to benefit the MID, it is -- it doesn't have to have been damaged by the disaster.

So from my point of view, that's really how the differences in those conversations happen. And in my experience, it's an easier conversation for the public works folks to have because that disaster tieback is something that they've probably already been really fighting tooth and nail with FEMA on about, our road was damaged. FEMA says you can't prove it. And so we have some -- we have a little more leeway.

But Maziar was really involved in all of those conversations. So he's probably got more detail to add to that.

Maziar Movassaghi: Yeah. I was going to jump in here and say, definitely this mitigation requires additional layers of engagement.

I'll share one specific example. We were meeting in Southern California, and a few local emergency management officials had showed up because they heard that this money is available for them to upgrade the computers in the local emergency operations center.

And when the gentleman quickly figured out this is not the funding source, his body language was just looking at the door. He was getting ready to leave. But when he heard in his jurisdiction his public works official start talking about -- with the building official about programs around retrofitting, his body language changed. He was engaged. He was starting to ask questions. And we actually ended up staying about 45 minutes after the session was over and really felt like I facilitated a conversation about three individuals from the same local jurisdiction that one would have assumed they are already having these discussions, but they have never had these discussions.

So it definitely takes that additional engagement and it's not all on you but you should definitely facilitate it. Just getting these different folks to understand, for instance, low mod levels and having those tables around so they can kind of look at it was really helpful in getting the juices going between the different folks. That's it for me.

Scott Ledford: Okay. Let's see. We'll jump into the Q&A box now. So there's a question that came in. I'll read the question first, and then there's actually a little bit of a response already provided on this.

"So since there is not a forum of elected government for a zip code, why not expand the MID to the city or county governments containing the zip codes?"

So there's two parts to this. One part is kind of a HUD related answer to this, which Jen has provided that since 2018 and 2019 disaster allocations, HUD has allowed grantees to expand MID areas from a zip code to a county, but it's up to the grantee if they choose to expand or keep a more targeted approach. So I think hearing from our California folks on that front.

Susan Naramore: I can respond or Maziar, do you want, or Amanda? Okay.

So we -- that is exactly what we have done. For instance, in Mendocino County, the zip code that was the most impacted, distressed in Redwood Valley is a part of -- unincorporated part of the county. So we did -- we have definitely been working with them on this.

The interesting challenge with it is that they are -- it's mostly rural. Most folks are on well and septic. There is -- for mitigation the fuel brake work and clearing is going to be critical. But what they really want is -- they really need is water. The difficulty is that there are not enough repairs in order to fix the water system, and the county has not been adding more people onto that water system because the water source isn't strong enough.

So if there -- but it's far enough out of town that connecting to the water system at the county seat is prohibitive. So it's been very interesting to work with the county seat on the -- this particular area that is fairly isolated and is -- as a most impacted, distressed in order to figure out what true recovery really looks like for them.

So in most of the zip codes, we have gone with whatever the local -- the -- if it's unincorporated, we go to the counties. If it's -- if it is incorporated in a zip code, then we go with them. And I'm sure as everyone has experienced, there are varying -- seriously varying degrees of capacity for this kind of work at the local level, especially in some of our rural jurisdictions that had more impacts, have fewer population.

Many of the rural jurisdictions in California, perhaps that's true elsewhere, are really finding that seniors are moving -- are retiring and moving out of the high-cost city areas and moving into the lower-cost rural areas. And the service needs are really changing. And so many of the DR funds and then, of course, talking about mitigation has centered around who the population is that lives in these areas and what is most needed for safety in terms of -- and mitigation against the disasters that really impact those specific populations.

Olivia Healey: Great. We have an additional question that came through asking if you guys could talk a little -- talk about your citizen advisory committee plan, and how did you decide what that committee would look like?

Maziar Movassaghi: Excellent. I'll take that one. So when you look at the geography map, our first reaction was holy cannoli. How do we find a committee that covers rural Northern

California and also the L.A., Ventura, Southern California beautiful sunshine and put it all together?

It was during our state consultations with other state agencies that we were introduced to a number of activities that the State Office of Planning and Research has already rolled out as a way of harmonizing all that's happening in California around climate adaptation, mitigation and resiliency.

So we really started talking with them, saying, well, what kind of -- how do you get the word out, and how do you engage across these different communities and different spectrums?

About the same time, the feedback from the locals was making it clear that the mitigation we're talking about, even though the disasters were wildfire related, the local mitigation needs were either wildfires or flooding or seismic. This is California, after all, and L.A. and Ventura were in the eligible disaster communities.

So we took all that together, and we realized, well, what's our first approach? Do we go to something like a fire safe council? We realized that's too narrow to fire issues, and it leaves other hazards off the table. So at the end, we settled on a committee, the Technical Assistance Climate Adaptation Committee that was set up that has representation from local governments, from subject matter experts, knowledgeable folks, in addition to other state agencies.

It's -- it -- and the goal for this committee was to collaborate and leverage the different mitigation and resiliency and climate adaptation work that was happening around the state.

Again, in California, some of these other agencies that I was mentioning to you were rolling out mitigation grant programs that were two to three to four times larger than the CDBG-MIT allocation. We wanted to leverage with those. So we ended up on this committee that has a broad reach that would allow us to not only communicate broadly across all geographies but also talk to other players that are in this mitigation and resiliency world.

Scott Ledford: Great. Thank you. Since we're having a session on cross-agency coordination, the next one is right for you. "Where were your biggest obstacles to inter-agency coordination?"

Maziar Movassaghi: I'll jump on this one, but, Sue and Amanda, feel free to chime in.

First and foremost, from an HCD perspective, the biggest obstacle is that our lens is particularly focused on low-moderate households and vulnerable communities, whereas CAL FIRE, Cal OES, and to a certain degree OPR as well, have a much broader stakeholder population that they are required to serve by their mission.

So probably our biggest obstacle was sometimes finding a language to talk about these different populations. Again, they're intended to be broad, community wide. And here we are. We're asking questions about communities with limited language, accessibility, communities that, for a variety of reasons, were choosing to live in some of these rural areas that were not necessarily connected, for instance, with the local hazard mitigation planning or the local fire safe council.

So to me, that was the biggest obstacle was really being able to see these different populations and also being able to communicate to our colleagues and other agencies, what do we mean when we say low mod? What do we mean when we talk about vulnerable populations? That's it for me.

Susan Naramore: I think those were the -- those were the biggest pieces that I saw as well, that we all sort of have different drivers for the work that we do and the education around that for all of the stakeholders in the process.

Maziar Movassaghi: And if I may add, vice versa to us. The biggest obstacle was really trying to understand what is the difference between forest ecology and proper thinning and beetle bark management and how that ties into watershed and the whole kit and caboodle. That was a learning experience on our part to, again, be able to understand the information that was being shared with us.

Olivia Healey: Thanks. I know we're running close on time, but we have one more question that we'd like you guys to answer, and then we can switch to doing a closeout for our session and for the day.

The last question is, "For the planning program, did you notice a difference in the proposed projects received from nonprofits versus local governments?"

Susan Naramore: Amanda, do you want to take that one?

Amanda Ohman: Yeah. I'm sorry. I'll respond to that. The -- not a huge gap, not a big difference at the local governments are more geared to planning and wide-scale efforts for the entire community, whereas nonprofits have a specific focus.

One of the nonprofits did a proposal for a vulnerable population of people who have a sight -- who experienced -- who have trouble with sight and how that is addressed during a time when a disaster occurs and whether there are services and a plan for them.

So not really, but the nonprofits are more focused, and they can all work together.

As Maziar and Sue we're sharing about the outreach and the relationships, we've been able to carry those relationships into our programs where we do a lot of office hours, webinars, workshops, phone calls, answering questions, because we want to look at it from a holistic approach for the state and those areas.

So it does give us an opportunity that, while a nonprofit may come in, they also have an opportunity to work with the local government and vice versa, to be able to carry out an activity in planning and public services.

Scott Ledford: Great. Thank you. Libby, do you to advance us to the last couple of slides here.

So here's a few resources. You've probably seen the HUD Exchange before. Has showed up in the Q&A box. That is also where we will be posting the webinar recording and resources.

Also, the California HCD CDBG-MIT website is provided in here for you.

And then once again, a big thank you and especially to our presenters today, and they have graciously agreed to provide their contact information. So scribble it down right quick, if you'd like to. Otherwise, it will be in the slide deck that gets posted.

Thanks again to everybody, and we look forward to seeing you tomorrow.

(END)