



# Strategies for Immediate Action

Your jurisdiction can leverage response and recovery resources to support people who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness in their post-disaster transitions. Early intervention can prevent disruptions that lead to bigger problems.

**Limit the displacement as response winds down.** As disaster shelters close, make sure that every single occupant has appropriate housing. Ideally, housing is within the community, or as close as possible, so that people can reengage with their communities and get back to work, school, doctor appointments, and other critical life activities.

- **Enforce disaster shelter exit standards.** Disaster shelters should stay open until all occupants have a safe place to go. Ideally, your community developed shelter exit standards in advance of the disaster (See [Response Guide](#) and [Preparedness Checklist for Shelter and Services](#)). If not, work with the State, FEMA and Red Cross to keep disaster shelters open as long as possible and develop viable alternatives.
- **Identify local and federal housing resources to fill gaps until permanent options are developed.** Use your HOME, CDBG, CoC, ESG, and other HUD funding to create pathways to housing for those leaving shelters. This may mean repurposing existing funds for housing vouchers while additional affordable housing is developed with recovery funds. It may also mean active outreach to public housing and subsidized multifamily properties to identify newly vacant units. Request extensions for FEMA Individual Assistance, where possible, to help pay for interim housing. (See the list of [resources that support housing and services post disaster](#).)

**Partner with the CoC.** Reestablish connections with [your CoC](#) that may have been lost over time and renew dialogue. Ask how you can support each other. See the [list of potential partners](#) in the [Planning Guide](#).

- **Ensure services.** Work with the CoC to identify the need and understand roles to ensure that all persons experiencing or at risk of homelessness receive case management services. It will also be necessary to determine how the coordinated entry process will work in post-disaster efforts to ensure that persons experiencing homelessness are assessed and prioritized for resources appropriately.
- **Maximize shelter options.** Work with emergency shelters to maximize space available for people who have nowhere else to go. This may mean opening winter shelters early, expanding existing emergency shelters, identifying suitable vacant housing units and providing housing and hotel vouchers.
- **Provide funds.** A relatively small infusion of funds (compared to the funds needed to develop housing) can make a significant difference in service providers' ability to scale up their operations to meet recovery needs



**NOTE:** If your community receives CDBG-DR funds, these funds may be used to support eligible activities beginning on the date of the declared disaster. It may take time for these funds to reach your community, but activities conducted during this time may be eligible for reimbursement consistent with CDBG-DR regulations. Don't wait for funds to start your activities, but track your costs so you can be reimbursed.

**Make aid accessible to everyone.** Remember that without intentional effort, recovery resources are unlikely to reach people who lack the skills to navigate the system.

- **Provide disaster case management services for people experiencing homelessness** to help them navigate the disaster recovery programs and access the resources to which they are entitled. Work with your service provider network to identify professional staff and resources for disaster case management services.
- To prevent further homelessness, **engage case managers in the disaster shelters.** Once individuals leave the shelter, it is significantly harder to establish relationships, maintain contact, and provide sufficient support. Early investments of resources in the shelter can contribute to stability and avoid problems later on.
- **Write program policies that affirm that people experiencing homelessness are eligible for assistance.** The local disaster recovery system must work closely with the CoC to identify people experiencing homelessness, both prior to or as a result of the disaster, as eligible for shelter and services. Confirm that program procedures account for the fact that people experiencing homelessness may not have formal addresses. Compensation requirements should recognize that people experiencing homelessness may have lost belongings including tents, sleeping bags, equipment, and clothing.
- **Connect disaster recovery job opportunities with people experiencing homelessness.** Leverage recovery activities and [Section 3 requirements](#) to provide jobs for very low-income people, including those experiencing homelessness. Opportunities may include low-skilled, temporary jobs to support clean up and debris removal, distribution of emergency items, as well as training for new jobs connected to disaster recovery construction and other activities.