



CWDA

Advancing Human Services
for the Welfare of All Californians

FACT SHEET: EMERGENCY SERVICES AND DISASTER RESPONSE SUPPORT

Summary

This proposal would provide funding and resources to bolster county human services departments' disaster preparedness and response.

Background

Over the past 5 years, the state has experienced an unprecedented number of emergencies and disasters, including but not limited to record-breaking wildfires and the pandemic. Counties, particularly county human services departments, are at the front line of disaster response and recovery.

Numerous counties redirect personnel for disaster response, including caseworkers, social workers, and others whose regular work is critical to the timely provision of human services programs. Funding for tasks done outside of regular work hours overwhelmingly comes from department budgets and takes significant time to be reimbursed, if it is reimbursed at all. This has resulted in significant impacts to county human services budgets in recent disasters, which in turn poses to further reduce counties' capacity to respond to new disasters while also maintaining other critical programs and services.

With disasters occurring more frequently and at larger scales, families require immediate assistance when faced with a loss of their housing, possessions, and income. Yet many of those impacted by disasters report delays receiving federal and state assistance. Human services programs, particularly IHSS, currently have limited capacity to timely deliver disaster-specific services. Dedicated staff, funding and resources are greatly needed on the county level to improve disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

Solution

- Provide every county with dedicated staffing resources for the purpose of:
 - Supporting and coordinating response efforts during a disaster, including the continued provision of human services programs and benefits.
 - Supporting recovery efforts after a disaster, including case management services prior to, and during, the establishment of services provided by FEMA.
 - Supporting neighboring counties in a mutual aid capacity with continuation of human services programs and benefits when they suffer a disaster.

Estimated costs: \$70 million for dedicated staff, plus an additional \$25 million and \$50 million costs ongoing for disaster response

- Provide funds for emergency response planning, training for staff and volunteers, supporting disaster response, mass care and shelter services, continuing the provision of human services and benefits, and supporting recovery efforts. *Estimated costs: \$45 million with \$9 million ongoing costs for staff training and \$300,000 for volunteer training*
- Require a State-County planning group for improving disaster response for persons living in poverty, Access and Functional Needs populations, those experiencing pre- and post-disaster homelessness and other disadvantaged communities. *Estimated Cost: \$1 million with \$1 million ongoing*

Contact

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