



OFFICE OF HUMAN SERVICES, EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM

The White House Report on the Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina outlined recommendations that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) coordinate with other departments of the Executive Branch, State governments and non-governmental organizations to develop a robust, comprehensive, and integrated system to deliver human services during disasters. In 2006, the Secretary of Health and Human Services tasked ACF to coordinate with other HHS Operating Divisions to develop this capacity. As a result, OHSEPR was created to provide policy development, coordination, guidance and support to the ACF Assistant Secretary and the ACF Regional Offices. OHSEPR has emerged as a leader in human services emergency preparedness, response and recovery providing technical assistance to other federal agencies and States.

In emergency preparedness, response, and recovery, OHSEPR works in partnership with the ACF Immediate Offices of the Regional Administrators in the ten HHS regions. Each region has a Regional Emergency Management Specialist serving as senior advisor to the Regional Administrator and subject matter expert on emergency preparedness, response, and recovery in the region. OHSEPR has a designated Lead Regional Administrator for Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery. Together, OHSEPR and the Immediate Office of the Regional Administrators provide technical assistance and support to State, grantees, local, Tribal, and Territorial governments in their preparedness planning efforts.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response (OHSEPR) promotes the resilience of vulnerable individuals, children, families and communities impacted by disasters and public health emergencies, and provides expertise in human services preparedness, response and recovery through policy, planning, operations and partnerships.

VISION

A nation of children, individuals, families, and communities that can recover rapidly and equitably from a disaster or public health emergency.

Director

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PREPAREDNESS

OHSEPR and the Immediate Office of the Regional Administrators collaborate with ACF-supported human services programs and grantees to ensure continuity of service delivery, improve outcomes for client populations, and meet surge requirements for new disaster-caused needs. OHSEPR and the Immediate Office of the Regional Administrators build ACF's internal capacity to support States, grantees, local, Tribal, and Territorial governments by assisting ACF programs to develop emergency plans and provide technical assistance and training.

RESPONSE

OHSEPR supports States, grantees, local, Tribal, and Territorial governments impacted by a disaster to address the human services needs of affected children, individuals, families, and communities. OHSEPR develops situational awareness on impacts to ACF-supported programs, provides technical assistance on ACF program disaster waivers and flexibilities, and provides deployable liaison officers and subject matter experts on human services and the needs of children and youth.

RECOVERY

Effective delivery of human services is critical to a recovery that engages the whole community. As communities recover from disasters, pre-disaster human services needs are often intensified, and new human services needs emerge. Within ACF, OHSEPR, Regional and Program Offices support the Health and Social Services Recovery Support Function by providing subject matter expertise on human services needs in the community, technical assistance about ACF programs, and supporting state and local task forces focused on the needs of children and youth. When tasked by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), OHSEPR deploys the ACF Immediate Disaster Case Management Program, providing case managers to help individuals and families with disaster-caused unmet needs with referrals to social services and local resources to assist in their recovery.

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