



OFFICE OF HUMAN SERVICES EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM

After Hurricane Katrina, OHSEPR was created to provide policy development, coordination, guidance and support to the ACF Assistant Secretary, Programs and the ACF Regional Offices. This development arose from the White House Report on the Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina, which summarized key recommendations for improving disaster preparedness, response, and recovery in the U.S. One of these recommendations was for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to 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 a disaster. In response to this recommendation, the Secretary of HHS tasked ACF to coordinate and develop this capacity to deliver human services in disasters. Through this work, OHSEPR has emerged as a leader in human services preparedness, response and recovery through policy, planning, operations and partnerships.

In emergency preparedness, response, and recovery, OHSEPR works in partnership with the ACF Programs and 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.

OHSEPR 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 support on disaster waivers and flexibilities for ACF Programs, 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. OHSEPR manages the ACF Immediate Disaster Case Management (IDCM) Program and when tasked by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), OHSEPR deploys a cadre of screened, trained and credentialed case managers. The ACF IDCM activation is a time-limited program that provides case managers to assist individuals and families with verified disaster-caused unmet needs, to develop and carry out a disaster recovery plan. In this process, disaster survivors are assisted by a single point of contact and linked to resources that support a more rapid recovery.

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