



ASPEN TECH
POLICY HUB

PROJECT



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this project, please visit
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Demystifying Long-Term Disaster Recovery Grant Administration

Technical assistance opportunities at the US Department
of Housing and Urban Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) administers the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding program to assist affected communities with long-term disaster recovery. Communities often face significant delays in receiving funds, in part because applicants must meet many procedural requirements. We recommend that HUD improve applicants' abilities to meet these requirements by (1) requesting the assistance of technology service groups such as the [US Digital Service](#) or [18F](#) to create a web-based guidebook for grant applicants and recipients, and (2) hosting monthly "office hour" webinars where staff answer questions sent in advance by grantees. These solutions would improve the technical assistance experience for grantees by enhancing access to supportive materials and providing a mechanism for HUD to regularly update this content.

PROBLEM

CDBG-DR administration requires that grantees navigate many procedural requirements that often change with each congressional appropriation. HUD produces technical assistance materials to support grantees, but the assistance can be overly broad and is located across many repositories on [HUD Exchange](#) – an online platform that hosts



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resources for HUD-administered grants – and requires updates to reflect procedural changes. Often, grantees are unaware of resources like the CDBG-DR toolkit, and many materials in this repository are almost 10 years old. As communities increasingly rely on CDBG-DR funds to adapt to climatic risk, HUD should provide more accessible and timely technical assistance.

Often, grantees are unaware of resources like the CDBG-DR toolkit, and many materials in this repository are now almost 10 years old.

SOLUTION

This project recommends that HUD (1) create a web-based guidebook for grant applicants and recipients with the assistance of existing technology service groups within the federal government, such as the US Digital Service or the 18F division of the General Services Administration, and (2) host monthly “office hour” webinars where HUD staff answer questions sent in advance by grantees on the most pressing technical assistance needs. The web-based guidebook would serve as a single reference point for grantees and could be easily updated and maintained by HUD. Where relevant, content currently hosted on HUD Exchange could provide the foundation for the guidebook, while content generated through the webinars could be used to update and standardize procedures.

For more information about this proposal, see: (1) [a policy brief](#) for HUD explaining this proposal and providing mockups of the guidebook; (2) [sample emails](#) to market the office hours; and (3) [a sample flyer](#) to market the office hours.

ABOUT THE HUB

The Aspen Tech Policy Hub is a Bay Area policy incubator, training a new generation of science and tech policy entrepreneurs. We take science and tech experts, teach them the policy process, and support them in creating outside-the-box solutions to society's problems.

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