

SEM-PP-05 – Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Adopt

PROPOSED POLICY: FAC recommends the following for the Housing Federal Supplemental Funding post Hurricane Ian:

- Anticipating that Congress will pass a disaster supplemental bill for Hurricane Ian recovery, FAC recommends Congress either (1) reduce the regulatory restrictions associated with housing recovery under HUD (CDBG-DR), or (2) direct those funds to FEMA but ensure, like CDBG-DR, they lose their federal identity and can be used to match FEMA federal dollars.
- Alternatively, at a minimum, Congress should allow “Entitlement Communities” to receive CDBG-DR funds directly.

STAFF ANALYSIS/BACKGROUND:

As with prior disasters in Florida, it is anticipated that Congress will soon pass a supplement disaster relief bill to address long-term recovery issues. Past appropriations have been extensive addressing unmet needs in marine debris, workforce training, agriculture, nutrition assistance, housing, among others. For example, following Hurricane Irma, Congress passed a supplemental appropriation that included more than \$700 million for housing repair and replacement, affordable housing, and voluntary buyouts. These funds were appropriated to the Department of Housing and Urban and Development (HUD) that must follow a rigid regulatory process that does not reflect the heightened needs of the impacted communities. Once initial federal requirements are met, a sub agreement with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) must be executed. DEO then begins a process of hiring management consultants to begin implementing its proposed programs. In short, once a disaster occurs, a community may not see any financial relief until 2-3 years following the disaster.

On September 23, the governor issued Executive Order 22-218 (2022-09-23) and EO 22-219 (2022-09-24) declaring a state of emergency for all sixty-seven counties regarding Hurricane Ian. (<https://www.floridadisaster.org/info/>) On September 28, the hurricane made landfall on Cayo Costa, on the southwestern coast of Florida, as a strong Category 4 hurricane. The storm has had catastrophic implications on the state of Florida, with a climbing death toll and severe exterior damage.

Hurricane Ian impacted several counties, including but not limited to Charlotte, Citrus, Collier, DeSoto, Dixie, Flagler, Gilchrist, Hardee, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Lafayette, Lake, Lee, Levy, Manatee, Monroe, Orange, Osceola, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Johns, Taylor, and Volusia counties. These counties were eligible for federal assistance under FEMA.