

# Appendix C: Summary of Public Comments

## Responses to Public Comments

This document describes the comments received from the public following the release of the initial CDBG-DR draft Action Plan. Each section addresses comments and questions that correspond to specific topics mentioned in the draft Action Plan.

- Release date: August 4, 2023
- Comment period: August 4, 2023 - September 5, 2023
- Approved by HUD: TBA
- Number of comments received

Comments were received via email through [transform386.org](http://transform386.org) and via comment heard at our public engagement meetings and public hearing. The duration of the public comment period as well as instructions for how public comment submissions could be made were posted to the webpage and expressed in video and powerpoint presentations. Additionally, notice of the public hearing and comment period were mailed via postcard, shared on social media sites and advertised in five local newspapers. Recordings of the public hearing can be found on the CDBG-DR official website at [www.transform386.org](http://www.transform386.org).

## Public Comments Related to rehab and reconstruction of affordable housing

1. Commenter would like a home buyout of home.

### DRR response:

DRR will open its application site for homeowners who meet criteria for assistance for housing rehab or reconstruction. If these options are not feasible, buyout may be an option in consideration with the homeowner and local municipality.

2. Commenters would like assistance with home repairs, windows, painting, roofs streetlighting, and sidewalks.

### DRR response:

DRR must use these CDBG-DR funds in this category to assist homeowners whose homes have been damaged by Hurricane Ian. These funds are not able to be used for repair/maintenance of housing that did not receive damage.

3. Commenters would like for funding to be provided to a local Habitat for Humanity to provide repairs to low income homeowners.

### DRR response:

Individual homeowners must apply and qualify for assistance with home repairs as a result of Hurricane Ian. Habitat could be designated as a contractor if deemed eligible by

the Implementation contractor who will be responsible for hiring general contractors to conduct the necessary repairs or reconstruction.

4. Commenter state that 200 MHUs require elevation or demolition and replacement due to flooding.

**DRR response:**

All owners of MHUs that were damaged by Hurricane Ian that meet the income requirements are eligible to apply for assistance. Each home will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine what can be done to assist the homeowner.

5. Commenters stated that they did not have enough assistance from FEMA to complete work. Some do not have insurance and are not eligible for SBA loans.

**DRR response:**

All owners of homes that were damaged by Hurricane Ian that meet the income requirements are eligible to apply for assistance. Each home will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine what can be done to assist the homeowner. A duplication of benefits analysis will be done on every home to determine the amount of assistance that can be provided based on other sources of funding.

6. Commenter stated that their home is to be raised through the HMGP program but they need assistance to pay for their percentage of the project.

**DRR response:**

Homeowners can apply for assistance to meet their need for gap funding with a project funded through HMGP. They must apply through the same process and meet the same qualifications for assistance.

7. Commenter with severe repetitive losses need increased assistance.

**DRR response:**

All owners of homes that were damaged by Hurricane Ian that meet the income requirements are eligible to apply for assistance. Each home will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine what can be done to assist the homeowner. A duplication of benefits analysis will be done on every home to determine the amount of assistance that can be provided based on other sources of funding.

8. Commenter stated mitigation is needed on housing damaged by flooding prior to lifting the house three feet over floodplain.

**DRR response:**

Every eligible project that requires elevation will have appropriate mitigation to ensure the safety of the home.

9. Commenter requested assistance for trailer lot renters to purchase the property from landlords.

**DRR response:**

This is not an eligible expense under the CDBG-DR grant program.

10. Commenter would like to submit a grant proposal to develop “gold standard” construction and development using green building programs.

**DRR response:**

CDBG-DR requires rehabilitation and construction to meet certain green standards to ensure the long-term sustainability of the homeowners.

11. Commenter asked the minimum amount of the funds that are required to be used for housing.

**DRR response:**

The unmet needs assessment must be used to help determine the amount of funding spent in all categories. The assessment indicated that there was a need of over 82% or \$661 million in housing. We have budgeted only 60.8% or \$200 million.

**Public Comments Related to multi-family housing**

1. Commenters requested an affordable housing trust fund.

**DRR response:**

These funds cannot be used to create a trust fund for affordable housing. However, \$50,000,000 has been budgeted for the replacement of lost PHA housing and the creation of new affordable housing throughout the county.

2. Commenters stated the need for replacement of public housing authority units.

**DRR response:**

\$50,000,000 has been budgeted for the replacement of lost PHA housing and the creation of new affordable housing throughout the county.

3. Commenter proposing new multi-family duplex units on a church property.

**DRR response:**

The church would need to apply as a developer or partner with a non-profit developer to receive assistance for the construction of these units.

4. Commenter stated that the allocation for new affordable housing, \$50,000,000 may need to be reconsidered as it may not be adequate. Further the amounts offered per unit of \$35,000 per non-PHA unit and \$60,000 per PHA unit may be too low.

**DRR response:**

The amounts listed in the draft action plan align with those recently utilized by the County's Division of Community Assistance (CA) in their procurement for affordable housing partners. There were a number of responses for those funds with the same allocated amounts per unit. If the county is unable to find developers wishing to apply for funding with these incentive amounts, then both DRR and CA will work together to adjust the amounts accordingly.

**Public Comments Related to infrastructure and mitigation**

1. Commenter asked the minimum amount of the funds that are required to be used for infrastructure. And what is the maximum amount that can be used for mitigation.

**DRR response:**

The unmet needs assessment must be used to help determine the amount of funding spent in all categories. The assessment indicated that there was a need of over 12.6% or \$101 million in housing. We have budgeted 15.2% or \$50 million in addition to the almost \$43 million in mitigation funding. There is no maximum for mitigation only the required minimum of 15%.

2. Commenters requested funding to assist non-profits in recovery for facility damage.

**DRR response:**

Non-profits can apply for assistance through the infrastructure and or mitigation grant programs.

3. Commenters requested assistance with seawalls, beach sand and renourishment, beach walkovers, condo pool replacement, road safety and landscaping, dune restoration on beachfront property.

**DRR response:**

HUD requires the primary focus to be on very low to moderate income families and their homes. Individuals may apply for assistance with their homes, but other projects as listed above are not eligible expenses.

4. Commenters requested assistance with drainage canals, stormwater, cleanout of ditches, new lift/pump stations, raise flooded sidewalk in front of school, storm drains, retention ponds, road repair.

**DRR response:**

Local governments can apply for funding through the infrastructure and mitigation grant programs for all of the above types of projects except for maintenance.

5. Commenter requests the preservation of flood-prone green spaces inside of urban areas as a strategy for preventing future flooding.

**DRR response:**

Homes and areas within neighborhoods may be eligible for a buyout program, provided the homeowners are willing sellers and the local municipality is willing to provide permanent maintenance for the property as stormwater or greenspace. Cities may also submit applications to purchase property for creating stormwater and/or other infrastructure to mitigate against future storms. Land acquisition as a stand-alone activity is not currently contemplated in this plan.

**Public Comments Related to business repair**

1. Commenter requested funding for repairs for their business.

**DRR response:**

There is no funding allocated for business owners as the unmet needs assessment dictated that funding should be prioritized to housing and infrastructure recovery.