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FEAM Disaster Case Management Program (DCMP) provides vital support for the operation of crucial disaster recovery aid for many Americans. The disaster recovery process can be very long and difficult for individuals, and case managers help manage the full recovery for individuals from housing to mental health to other needs. Seeing survivors to repair/rebuild/return to their homes helps communities recover their economy and tax base. I am a researcher who has studied disaster recovery for years across numerous states.

DCMP could be improved in several ways:

1. Early arrival of case management support, starting within 1-2 months post-disaster. This is important so that 1) survivors do not have to switch case managers; 2) survivors do not have to provide information multiple times to different agencies/case managers; 3) case management starts when the most funding is available through donations that can be distributed; 4) survivors learn to use their different funding options wisely and not duplicate benefits.

A faster start to of DCMP could be achieved through pre-contracting with Case Management Agencies in a way similar to having pre-positioned Debris Management contracts with state governments.

2. Preferred contractors for DCMP should be nonprofit agencies that currently conduct case management and are often early arrivals to disaster areas (e.g., National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster members). These agencies should be preferred because they bring co-benefits to survivors that amplify the investment of the federal government. For example, NVOAD members have additional resources to cover unmet needs and are willing to provide them through case management programs they run. In contrast, private companies are not giving away additional supplies, donations, or providing volunteers to survivors.

Selecting an appropriate nonprofit partner could happen similar to the contracting with NVOAD during Hurricane Harvey in which a consortium of nonprofits implemented the DCMP, which was a huge success (NVOAD has an evaluation available of that program)

3. DCMP should be coordinated with Local Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRG). These groups coordinate many organizations post-disaster to manage "unmet needs roundtables". Having case management within their umbrella is important to ensuring all resources available to survivors travel through case management. If possible, the local LTRG should receive the contract for DCMP or a subcontract for the DCMP.

These contracts with LTRGs could be pre-positioned and prepared to staff up case management quickly.

4. DCMP wages to case managers should not be hirer than those of case managers already working in the disaster recovery. Wage differentials hurts local organizations who lose employees to hire paid short-term DCMP roles and reduce capacity of local organizations.

The DCMP wage could be set annually to match a specific cost of living ratio by geographic area. This way local organizations would know what wage they should offer to have it align with later DCMP arrival.

If DCMP goes away, it will cause duplication of benefits for survivors and waste of crucial resources by nonprofit and religious partners. Improving the speed of start-up for the program, in contrast, and working with available nonprofits supports efficient use of government and nongovernment resources.

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