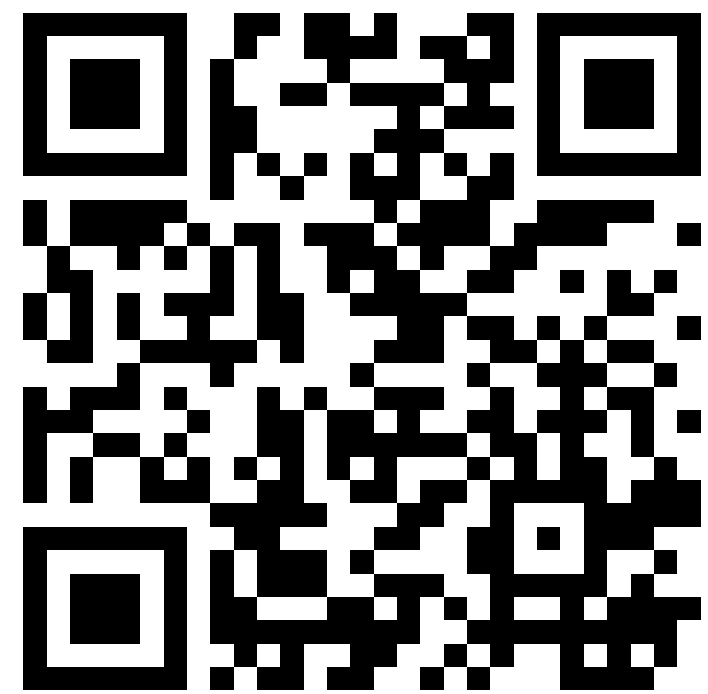


# THROUGH NATURAL DISASTER TO PROSPERITY: A CALL TO ACTION



Community   
Strategies Group

 aspen institute

# Why Equitable Disaster Relief?



The insurance approach fails to account for and address the big-picture dynamics, health, and prosperity of a community.

Building to recreate pre-disaster conditions would mean rebuilding substandard conditions and reproducing inequitable outcomes for community health and prosperity.



When we go in to do recovery in these communities, what does equity look like? What does recovery look like when a community has this background, this history as its foundation?



**Simonne Dunn**  
Recovery Planning Coordinator,  
FEMA





# Health Equity & Natural Disaster Recovery

Communities with high rates of chronic health conditions will have different needs in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, and the stress of a disaster may exacerbate existing conditions, worsening health outcomes.

1

Understand and address the underlying conditions unique to rural affecting disaster vulnerability, response, and recovery

**We need a community prosperity approach that builds on each community's unique conditions.**

“

One piece I feel is missing from a lot of work with communities is the connection to the aunties and the grandmas, whoever those folks are in a particular community — the unofficial leaders who will stick with the people through recovery and as they prepare for the next disaster.



**Samantha Estabrook**  
*Planner,  
Headwaters Economics*

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2

## Advance worldviews that restore balance and relationships among rural communities and natural systems

**We need to shift our worldviews to accommodate a full and balanced picture of the reciprocal relationships between human beings and the natural world.**

“

“I think it’s really important to listen to the people who have lived on the land the longest; listen to these communities and value the knowledge they have about what works and what doesn’t work in their community. More importantly, we have to be very respectful of Mother Nature and should stop planning practices/strategies that put people in harm’s way.

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**Sharon Reilly**  
*Planning and Development Director,  
Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council*

3

## Use disaster response to advance equity and increase regional prosperity

To mitigate and address inequities, those most affected must be part of the leadership in planning, response, and recovery.

“

“The big problem with a lot of very small communities is they might have access to funds, but every big city is also eligible, including Houston, Austin, and San Antonio. The little communities don't get enough resources to recover.

”



**Harold Hunter**  
*Texas State Lead,  
Communities Unlimited*

# 4

## Build local and regional capacity to address disasters

It is crucial to build systems and structures at both the local and regional levels that have the capacity to respond, communicate, collaborate, and coordinate.

“

There are just so many hoops to jump through for programs that look really great on paper, but in actuality, resources never get to the places where they're most needed.

”



**Karen Affeld**

*Executive Director, North Olympic Peninsula  
Resource Conservation & Development Council*

5

## Provide flexible and responsive funding for disaster preparation, response, and recovery

Practitioners expressed fear around engaging with federal funding, given the high stakes involved with potentially making a mistake in project administration or reporting.

“

I think there is a big role for philanthropy to not only invest in more capacity for communities through programs but also help provide accountability for federal funds from FEMA.



**Astrid Caldas**  
*Senior Climate Scientist for  
Community Resilience, Union of  
Concerned Scientists*

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# Community Strategies Group

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This work is supported by the Robert  
Wood Johnson Foundation & the  
Ford Foundation



