

Assessing the Roles and Responsibilities of Public Housing Authorities in State-Level Disaster Plans



Amber S Khan, MPH¹; Andrew Aurand, PhD²; Sara Hamideh, PhD³; Jamie Vickery, PhD¹; Rebecca J Walter, PhD⁴; Nicole A Errett, PhD¹

¹Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, University of Washington; ²National Low Income Housing Coalition; ³School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, Stony Brook University; ⁴Runstad Department of Real Estate, University of Washington

Background

- > United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) subsidized housing units are often older housing located in high hazard risk areas, increasing disaster risk for low-income renters.¹⁻³
- > Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) are responsible for maintaining these housing units, yet their roles and responsibilities in state-level disaster plans have not been assessed.

Objective

This study aims to identify if and how state-level disaster plans integrate PHA roles and responsibilities into disaster preparedness, response, and recovery planning.

Methods

Data Collection

- > Collected 85 disaster plans from state websites, including:
 - Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs)
 - Emergency Support Functions (ESF) #6 (Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing and Human Services)
 - ESF #14 (Long-term Recovery) and Recovery Plans
 - Disaster Housing plans

Data Analysis

- > Plans were coded (Table 1) using qualitative content analysis techniques.
- > The proportion of plans with content aligned with each code was summarized.

Results

Figure 1: Geographical distribution of collected disaster plans by U.S. states

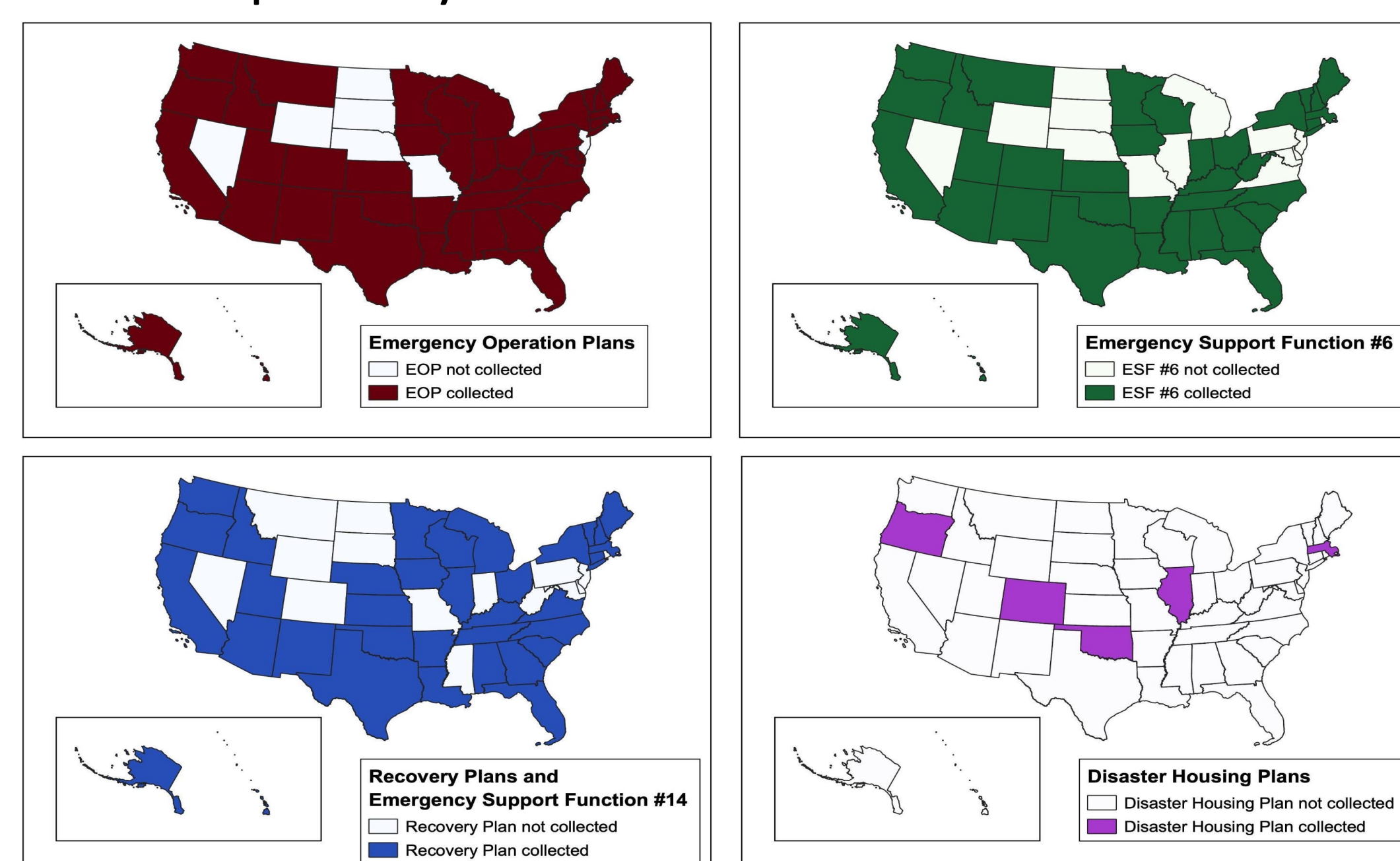


Table 1: Proportion of plans aligning with each code, by plan type

	All types of plans	Emergency Operations Plan	Recovery Plan and ESF #14	ESF #6	Disaster Housing Plan
N	119*	43	35	36	5
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
PHA pre-disaster activities and strategies	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
PHA pre-disaster partnerships and coordination	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
PHA post-disaster activities and strategies	4.2% (5)	0 (0)	8.6% (3)	2.8% (1)	20% (1)
PHA post-disaster partnerships and coordination	2.5% (3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	60% (3)
Other agency roles and responsibilities	29.4% (35)	11.6% (5)	48.6% (17)	27.8% (10)	60% (3)
Other agency roles and responsibilities: PHA collaboration	15.1% (18)	2.3% (1)	28.6% (10)	11.1% (4)	60% (3)
Access and functional needs populations	79.8% (95)	90.7% (39)	57.1% (20)	86.1% (31)	100% (5)

*While 85 plans were collected in total, some EOPs included ESF #6 or #14 and thus the total count in Table 1 is higher than the original number of collected plans

Discussion

- > PHAs are not sufficiently engaged in state-level disaster plans.
- > There are few roles and responsibilities assigned to PHAs. Assigned roles solely focus on post-disaster activities, partnerships, and coordination.
- > Roles mainly revolve around providing housing recovery resources to residents and amending housing waitlists to prioritize residents affected by disasters.

Recommendations:

- > Future state disaster plans should incorporate standardized PHA roles and responsibilities based on HUD guidelines.⁴
- > Future research is necessary to identify what resources PHAs can use to implement disaster planning strategies, including through qualitative interviews with PHA leaders and other housing experts.
- > Disaster Housing Plans or other types of plans specific to housing recovery should be considered by state agencies to prepare for disaster-specific housing needs with housing providers, including PHAs.

References

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- ² The Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation & The National Low Income Housing Coalition. *Taking Stock: Natural Hazards and Federally Assisted Housing*; 2021. <https://preservationdatabase.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Taking-Stock.pdf>.
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- ⁴ HUD. *Public Housing Agency Disaster Readiness, Response, and Recovery Guidebook*. 2022. https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/PHA-D3R_Guidebook.pdf.

