

## **Restore Louisiana Task Force approves using Homeowners HUD grants as Seed Money for State mitigation projects**

Just \$10,000,000 more from the Restore Louisiana Homeowners Assistance Program. That's all I need, \$10 million in Seed Money. You can understand, HUD pays slow, we need to get the engineers working on what to do with the Comite Diversion Canal.

**Just \$10 million more and I'm Out of your Hair!!**



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Many never heard it coming, others actually knew since July of 2018 that the program that was once designed to help homeowners would be used to fund state mitigation projects directly or indirectly. This time its direct, state asks for SEED Money!

Dear Congressman Graves,

We read that HUD awarded the state of Louisiana \$1,213,917,000 out of the \$28 billion of long term disaster recovery funds from HUD CDBG-DR. Correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't the \$1,213,917,000 only for state projects that also include your Comite Diversion Canal project?

I am sure we need it, you have the public support on it, but did you have to have the state of Louisiana OCD-DRU ask for "Seed Money" to kick off your projects?

We understand that HUD is slow to pay, and we can tell you from our experiences with the Louisiana Restore program as a Solution 2 household we totally understand "Slow Payers." Basically 63% of all Solution 2 homeowners can say the same.

So why is it we hear the Director of the OCD-DRU Patrick Forbes asking for seed money, \$10 million to be moved from the Restore Louisiana Homeowners Program to cover and "kick start" the Comite Diversion Canal Project and other watershed programs the state has announced with it's special HUD grant. To take our

program's money as seed money to kick start your program when your program is fully funded shows me someone isn't interested in the homeowners. Let's keep things in focus, if we have to wait for our HUD funds I feel the state should wait for theirs. Moving \$10 million over to the only company the task force has ever wanted to hire for "Data Modeling" is really insulting. The NFP group has always taken a bite out of our recovery programs. Let your watershed programs feed off of what HUD offered you and stop bottom feeding our funds.

From the Task Force Meeting Feb. 15, 2019

"And moving additional money into watershed planning. We had been moving very fast, we have on top of that a delay in the federal register notice for the \$1.2 billion dollars which subsequently delays our access to those funds which means we need to seed some more of this money into our preliminary efforts so we have everything sitting in place. We can have modeling contracts, we can have data gathering contracts and engagement pieces around the state all working while we are waiting on the funds available from the \$1.2 billion. So this is an investment in being ready so when we get access to the \$1.2 billion." -- Patrick Forbes  
OCD-DRU Director

It's time you wait for your HUD Grant of \$1,213,917,000 !!!

### **FROM Action Plan Amendment 11:**

**Program Summary:** The 2016 floods made communities and agencies in the State of Louisiana aware of the need to reevaluate and better coordinate current floodplain management practices demonstrating how water moves across jurisdictional boundaries and how this could be influenced by community or agency actions. For example, projects and development activities in one area of a watershed can change the shape of the floodplain in other areas, deepen or increase the speed of floodwaters, or reduce the flow of water, all of which can exacerbate flood risk in existing floodplains and have devastating effects on neighboring communities. These interdependencies often occur within a watershed and extend to the natural and beneficial functions of the watershed, including those that support water quality, habitat condition, and economic vitality.

In Louisiana, there are a variety of federal, state, and local programs with overlapping authorities that could similarly benefit from increased coordination. Nationwide, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) administered by FEMA is one of the primary governance frameworks for floodplain management, which combines federal standards and requirements with local incentives. In addition to the NFIP framework, there are other plans and programs that can impact flood risk. These include local drainage plans and upgrades, hazard mitigation plans, land use planning and zoning, flood control programs and other capital investment programs, as well as natural resource and water quality protections.

Currently, Louisiana's floodplains are managed within political jurisdictions, without mechanisms to coordinate activities between political boundaries, the authorities discussed, or levels of government. Given the degree to which communities within a watershed are connected through the flow of water, efforts related to mitigating against flood risk and ensuring recovery projects are most impactful can only be done if land use, policy and infrastructure needs are able to be considered and coordinated at the watershed level. As part of the Louisiana Watershed Initiative, participating state agencies conducted a Statewide Listening Tour in the Fall of 2018. During this Tour-which targeted local elected officials, planners, policy makers, engineers and data professionals-participants identified multiple gaps associated within the ability to organize and coordinate activities around watershed boundaries. Specifically, local governments and regional organizations across the state often are fully utilizing their existing staff in multiple functions; therefore, they face a lack of resources for educating key stakeholders and/or resources or expertise needed to coordinate, develop and implement flood-risk-reducing plans across traditional political boundaries. The Regional Capacity Building Grant seeks to fill gaps in existing staff capacity related to watershed-based floodplain management and flood risk reduction by providing additional staff, technical assistance and training to local

and/or regional entities. Given the different stages of organization and/or varying technical capacities in different regions of the state, applicants may define their organizational and capacity needs differently.

Eligible Activity	Planning; HCDA Section 105 (a)(12)
National Objective	N/A
Program Budget	\$3,200,000

**Administering Entity:** The State of Louisiana and/or its subrecipients.

**Proposed Use of Funds:** In order to be able to deliberately coordinate around watersheds, local and/or regional entities may require the ability to do one or more of the following:

- Understand the parameters within which they are currently operating (e.g. existing ordinances, laws, etc.);
- Identify, research and coordinate policies that can reduce flood risk for the communities within a watershed;
- Develop partnerships, including but not limited to formal and/or legal partnerships with all stakeholders, especially the parishes and municipalities that make up each watershed;
- Understand the flood related issues that each local jurisdiction is facing; ■ Develop regional, issue-specific steering and/or action committees;
- Educate local jurisdictions about challenges and opportunities related to floodplain management and flood risk reduction;
- Work with relevant jurisdictions to review their existing regulatory program(s); and/or
- Engage with the Louisiana Watershed Initiative to inform and coordinate state, local and/or regional efforts.

The goal of the **Regional Capacity Building Grant** is to address existing local capability and capacity gaps associated with the ability to organize and coordinate activities around watershed boundaries. The program's staff will engage in watershed-based floodplain management through efforts aimed at: coordinating and facilitating the formation of watershed-based coalitions; developing regional steering committees; providing education and technical assistance to municipalities and parishes within the watershed; and engaging with the state and regional partners in the development and implementation of a comprehensive watershed planning process.

**Eligible Applicants:** Eligible applicants must be local and/or regional entities with the capacity to undertake the development and adoption of watershed based plans, followed by the collaborative development of an implementation strategy. Thus, applicants may be a local government acting on behalf of other governments, regional nonprofit, regional planning commissions, or similar group affiliated with one or more of the watershed districts identified by the Louisiana Watershed Initiative. Eligible applicants must represent no fewer than four contiguous parishes within the same watershed.

**Geographic Eligibility:** Must align within one of the watersheds impacted during the 2016 Severe Storms and Flooding. Local governments not located in one of the 56 Presidentially-declared parishes are not eligible for funding under this program.

**Criteria for Selection:** The Regional Capacity Building Grant is designed to enhance the capability and capacity of regional entities to organize and coordinate activities around watershed boundaries, which will support improved floodplain management in a manner that reduces flood risk. Applicants will identify gaps in regional watershed planning in response to the program's Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). Gaps can be updated over the course of the planning effort and outcomes will be assessed regularly to ensure performance metrics are achieved.

**Method of Distribution:** The state agencies comprising the Council on Watershed Management will be ready to launch a NOFA in Q2 or Q3 2019. The application period will be open for a defined period of time, which will be clearly announced through the NOFA. Grants will be awarded to applicants that exhibit coordination across their own watershed and neighboring watersheds. Grants will be distributed over a three year period, subject to continual review for achieving benchmarks and region-specific deliverables.

**Maximum Award:** Each watershed region will be eligible for a maximum award of \$400,000 provided over a three year period. Awards may be pro-rated, reduced and/or clustered into larger areas, subject to program demand, feasibility and projected outcomes.

**Resources:**

- [HUD Press Release \\$28 billion to state mitigation projects.](#)
- State of Louisiana HUD OCD-DRU Executive Director tells task force to use Homeowners Grant Funds as Seed Money for state projects. [Video resource: Feb 15, 09:00 AM HCR-6 RESTORE LA.](#)
- [Restore Louisiana Task Force Action Plan Amendment 11 Watershed Seed Money](#)
- [Email to Restore Louisiana Task Force asking task force members to read the letter Congressman Graves sent to Governor Edwards.](#) The Task Force discussed the letter and was tasked to explore "Creative" ways to fund the Comite Diversion Canal.

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