

## **Public Service Program Recommendation**

### **Budget Revision Proposal:**

<b>Program Area</b>	<b>Current Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Revised Budget</b>
<b>Administration</b>	\$66,278,880	(\$8,000,000)	\$58,278,880
<b>Public Services Program</b>	\$0	\$8,000,000	\$8,000,000

**Proposal:** OCD-DRU is recommending the approval of a Public Service Program totaling \$8 million under Restore Louisiana. This proposed program will assist First Responders across the 10 most impacted parishes by providing funding for these entities to maintain operations that were impacted by the 2016 Great Flooding and Storm Events due to a reduction in revenue received from ad valorem taxes. OCD-DRU is recommending the funds for this program come from designated OCD-DRU administrative funds.

**Tie to the disaster:** Properties are assessed at least every four years by the assessor's offices to determine property value. The last statewide assessment that was conducted prior to the 2016 floods occurred in the 2012 tax year. A reassessment of properties took place after the flood. The value of the reassessed properties greatly reduced due to the damaged state of the properties affected by the floods. As a result, the budgets of some of these entities were impacted negatively due to 2017 fiscal year budgets being partially based on projected revenue that would be received from ad valorem taxes.

**Assessment of Unmet Need:** OCD-DRU issued a survey questionnaire on February 6, 2018 to Sheriff Departments of the 10 most impacted and distressed (as defined by HUD) parishes to determine how greatly these entities were affected financially, and to determine the type of impacts the reduced ad valorem revenue had on their operations. The deadline to submit the completed questionnaire was March 8, 2018. Four out of the ten parishes identified an unmet need due to reduced ad valorem tax revenue for the 2017 fiscal year. Those parishes include East Baton Rouge, Livingston, Ouachita and Vermilion. The questionnaire showed that the reduction in revenue affected the implementation of some Sheriff Departments' services, purchasing of essential equipment, training of employees and resulted in a reduction of employees.

**Eligible Uses of Assistance:** The proposed program would provide grant assistance to First Responders (Sheriff Departments, Fire Districts, EMS) of the 10 most impacted parishes to return to pre-flood levels of operations and assist in areas/services that were impacted due to the reduced revenue. Use of funds could include payment of salaries and benefits, purchasing equipment, implementation of training and other identified eligible uses. CDBG-DR assistance is proposed for one year.

### **The next steps for this program are:**

- Recommendation and decision from Task Force at April 13<sup>th</sup> meeting
- Drafting and submission of an Action Plan Amendment to submit to HUD
- Creation of program guidelines