

May 30, 2023

Administrator Deanne Criswell  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C St SW  
Washington, DC 20024

RE: Appointment of community representatives on FEMA's National Advisory Council

Dear Administrator Criswell,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and signatories, we urge you to use your authority as Administrator to **appoint non-governmental community representatives to FEMA's National Advisory Council (NAC)**, including at least two such representatives as part of the current application cycle. We also recommend prioritizing applicants from overburdened communities impacted by disasters for discipline-specific positions, where possible.

The NAC plays an essential role in advising FEMA on all aspects of the agency's mission. In addition to recruiting those with learned expertise, members of impacted communities have essential lived expertise that should be prioritized on the NAC. This expertise is particularly relevant to FEMA's commitment to instill equity as a foundation of emergency management and promote resilience for underserved individuals and communities as part of the agency's current Strategic Plan.

The appointment of non-governmental community representatives will ensure that the important input and analysis provided by the NAC will contain the voices of those communities directly impacted by disasters and served by FEMA programs. The lived experience of disaster survivors can and should be highlighted and utilized to improve the utility and pertinence of the NAC's advice. As dictated within FEMA's Whole Community approach, all aspects of a community have expertise and perspectives that can contribute to the overall resilience of a community. By ensuring that low-income and disaster impacted communities are represented within the NAC, the council's discussions can be similarly benefited.

In line with this emphasis on equity and the importance of the NAC, we urge you to appoint non-governmental community representatives to the Council. Furthermore, if FEMA has not received sufficient applications from community representatives seeking to serve on the NAC, we hope you will consider reopening the application period.

Signatories (\* organization for affiliation purposes only):

Ariadna Godreau Aubert  
Founder and Executive Director  
Ayuda Legal Puerto Rico

Veronica Beaty  
Director of Policy & Research  
California Coalition for Rural Housing

Ingrid Alvarez  
Vice President, Policy & Strategic Engagement  
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Andrew Bradley  
Policy Director  
Indiana Association for Community Economic  
Development (d/b/a Prosperity Indiana)

Adrienne S. Bush  
Executive Director  
Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky

Amy Laura Cahn  
Legal Director  
Taproot Earth

Alys Cohen  
Senior Attorney  
National Consumer Law Center

Yesenia Cuello  
Executive Director  
NC FIELD, Inc.

Anita Cunningham  
Project Director  
NC Disaster Resilience & Response Network

Dr. Bambi Hayes-Brown  
President and CEO  
Georgia Advancing Communities Together, Inc.

Megan Haberle  
Senior Director of Policy  
National Community Reinvestment Coalition

Holly Honig  
Policy Director  
Empower Missouri

Beverly Kegley, Co-Chair  
Franklin County Interfaith Council

Jovita Lee  
Program Director  
North Carolina Black Alliance

Meryl A. Lieberman, Phd.  
Board Co-Chair  
New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness

Reese May  
Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer  
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Natalie N. Maxwell  
Managing Attorney  
National Housing Law Project

Ashon Nesbitt  
Chief Executive Officer  
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Chrishelle Palay  
Executive Director  
Houston Organizing Movement for Equity  
(HOME) Coalition

Germán Parodi  
CoChair  
Consortium of Constituents with Disabilities  
Emergency Management Task Force

Kristina J Peterson  
Facilitator Director  
Lowlander Center

Hannah Perls  
Senior Staff Attorney  
Harvard Environmental & Energy Law Program  
(EELP)\*

Andrew Loeb Shoenig  
Program Director, Facilitator  
MDC Inc., NC Inclusive Disaster Recovery  
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Madison Sloan  
Director, Disaster Recovery & Fair Housing  
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Shaylin Sluzalis  
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Diane Yentel  
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Anna Weber  
Senior Policy Analyst  
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)