

March 14, 2023

Re: Public Feedback on Achieving Equitable Recovery: A Post Disaster Guide for Local Officials

Thank you for inviting public comment on the Post Disaster Guide for Local Officials. After reviewing, we notice that there is an important priority population missing. While it's fantastic to see FEMA prioritizing equity in disaster recovery planning, the guide **neglects to mention babies even once**, let alone naming infant nutrition security.

Infants and young children are especially vulnerable during emergencies when various exposures can lead to illness and infection. Emergencies can create challenges for breastfeeding families and feeding challenges for any family. The U.S. Breastfeeding Committee-affiliated Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies Constellation released a [Joint Statement on Infant and Young Child Feeding in the Context of the Infant Formula Crisis and Ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic](#), published May 2022. This statement was crafted with an equity lens, and was developed and signed by a national collaborative of IYCFE experts standing ready to support FEMA at local, state, territorial, and national levels.

In addition, CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (DNPAO) released an [Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies \(IYCF-E\) Toolkit](#). This toolkit provides information and resources for emergency preparedness and response personnel, families, and the public to ensure that infants and toddlers are fed safely when natural disasters strike, such as hurricanes, floods, wildfires, earthquakes, and tornadoes. This toolkit focuses on IYCF-E preparedness and response efforts specific to the U.S. and its territories.

The purpose of the IYCF-E toolkit is to optimize emergency preparedness efforts to address the nutrition and feeding needs of young children and their families before, during, and after a natural disaster. This toolkit expands DNPAO's current efforts to support breastfeeding and healthy and safe infant and toddler nutrition. You can learn more about DNPAO's breastfeeding work [here](#), and infant and child nutrition work [here](#).

In June of 2022, Amelia Psmythe Seger, Deputy Director of the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee, released a statement outlining the [Four Pillars of Infant Nutrition Security in the U.S.](#) That statement outlines the importance of Parents, Programs, Policies and having a cohesive and comprehensive Plan for infant nutrition security. Now, on the one-year anniversary of the infant formula recall and shortage, that statement will imminently be updated to reflect the importance of Partnerships.

It would be great if FEMA can work in collaboration with the CDC, and perhaps also the USBC IYCF-E Constellation to create an inclusive and comprehensive plan for future emergencies to ensure breastfeeding is not an afterthought but an integral piece of the overall plan.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. Please reach out with any questions to our team at officeATusbreastfeeding.org.