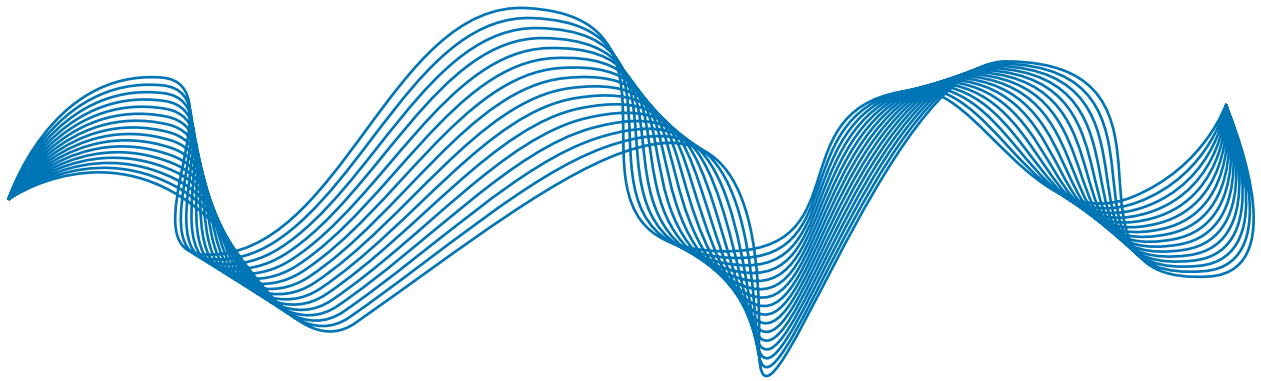


From the Voices of Communities, Local Governments, and Academics: Assessing Preparedness and Recovery for Socially Marginalized Communities Impacted by Hazards *Year 8 Findings*



Cassandra R. Davis, Ph.D., Evan Johnson, Ph.D., Philip Berke, Ph.D.,
Simona Goldin, Ph.D., April Peck, M.P.P., Ruth Fetaw, B.A.,
Nathan Dollar, Ph.D., Megan R. Griffard, Ph.D.

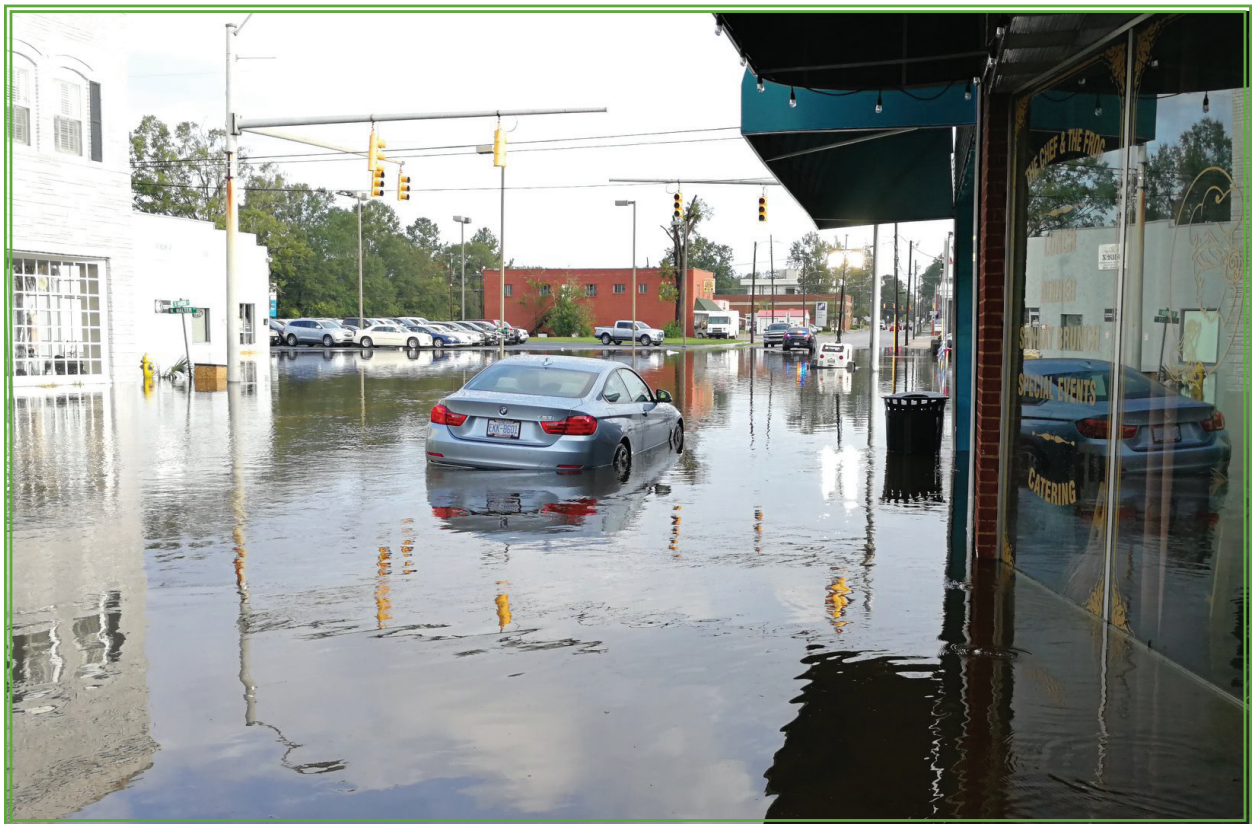
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All images used in this report illustrate recent hazards in eastern North Carolina.

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Executive Summary

Federal agencies have noted the increase in hazards related to climate change, particularly wildfires, hurricanes, and flooding (DHS, 2012; FEMA 2021; NOAA, 2021; NASA, 2021). Recent work shows that continual and repeated disruption disproportionately harms marginalized communities. Emerging evidence suggests that current disaster management systems have failed to build trust and awareness of needs among disadvantaged communities after a hazardous event (Berke et al., 2011; Findholt, 2013), making them less likely to recover fully (Beaver et al., 2005; Davis et al., 2021). These results suggest a need for research to inform federal agencies and communities on building trust around disaster mitigation and recovery.

A research team from the Coastal Resilience Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill received continued funding for July 2022 to June 2023 to explore to what extent community members and local government officials provide equitable support to marginalized groups and how relationships and trust are built between community and governmental organizations. These findings have been used to develop policy recommendations to improve disaster recovery.

The purpose of this report is to share the perspective of a representative sample of non-governmental organization (NGO) employees and local government officials from across the nation, as it pertains to improving the provision of support to historically and socially marginalized groups before, during, and after a hazard. To capture this information, the research team administered a survey to personnel from NGOs and local governments situated in communities impacted by hazards. Our intended outcomes focus on building, repairing, and helping to maintain a sustainable bridge between community members and federal agencies, where the knowledge and expertise of both is valued, incorporated, and positioned as vital to the partnership.

Emerging evidence suggests that current disaster management systems have failed to build trust and awareness of needs among disadvantaged communities after a hazardous event, making them less likely to recover fully.

Results from the study will assist in providing actionable steps for federal agencies and national organizations to address inequity and create foundational conversations around recovery and justice, specifically for marginalized groups. This report focuses on five overarching research goals:

- 1** Identify a representative group of NGOs that are supporting communities throughout a hazardous event.
- 2** Examine how marginalized groups are impacted by hazards from the perspective of the NGOs and local government officials.
- 3** Assess the accessibility of support for marginalized groups and the organizations that serve them throughout a hazardous event.
- 4** Explore how NGOs and local government organizations build trust and maintain relations with community members.
- 5** Summarize the study findings, identify barriers, and provide policy recommendations based on the feedback from survey respondents.

Methods

This study is in its third year of application. The team deployed a participatory action research (PAR) design to help guide the study that depended on the voices of respondents who support marginalized populations subjected to hazards. PAR allowed for the re-evaluation of terms (e.g., “solutions”) and provided a space for respondents to name instances of injustice around hazards and link them to oppression and racism. The team validated the survey used in the previous year and administered the tool to 5,174 purposefully random sampled organizations nationwide. Lastly, the team summarized survey findings to identify barriers and develop policy recommendations around support and trust-building throughout a hazardous event.



Summary of findings

A total of 234 individuals representing all fifty U.S. states responded to the online survey. The following is a summary of major themes that emerged from the survey.

- 1 Non-profits may intentionally support marginalized communities throughout a hazardous event, but this does not include racial and ethnic groups.** Our findings revealed that many organizations intentionally aim to serve marginalized groups. These groups represented women, children, the elderly, unhoused persons, immigrants, LGBTQIA+ individuals, persons and households with low incomes, people experiencing a physical or mental disability, urban or rural residents, and veterans. However, when asked to identify the racial or ethnic groups they supported throughout a hazard, most respondents agreed that they were not purposefully targeting support to such marginalized groups. Most indicated providing services to all racial or ethnic groups, regardless of their identity.
- 2 Marginalized groups are disproportionately impacted by events and have limited access to supplies.** Results showed that survey respondents agreed that socially marginalized and historically marginalized groups are disproportionately impacted by hazards. Respondents noted the difference in access to resources and the ability to recover following an event, based on marginalization and lack of privilege.
- 3 Building and maintaining intentional relationships with community members is important.** Almost half of respondents (43.8 percent) agreed that their organization works to build trust with the community that they serve. Respondents asserted that building these relationships made it possible for them to do their job effectively and meet more needs. Survey respondents also identified community members as “family,” “partners,” and as an “integral part” of their organization. Respondents also stated that they maintain relationships by attending community events such as fairs, religious events, and neighborhood parties. They also ensure that community members sit on advisory committees and have an open line of communication to their organization.
- 4 Organizations reported difficulties in meeting needs.** Respondents indicated that staffing shortages, reduced levels of volunteerism, and limited federal funding options resulted in difficulty meeting needs of marginalized groups through a hazard. Roughly one-third of

Marginalized groups are disproportionately impacted by events and have limited access to supplies.

respondents (34 percent) indicated that they experienced a staffing shortage in large part due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, 27.3 percent of respondents believed the pandemic had a negative impact on their organizations’ ability to serve marginalized groups. Of the seven respondents who cited being aware of FEMA’s mitigation assistance program, Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC), only one had applied for support. Survey respondents explained that federal support programs proved to be too difficult to navigate, and having limited staff prevented them from applying to such initiatives.

Recommended policies and practices

- 1 Provide intentional, targeted support to marginalized groups.** These groups could represent individuals based on race, social class, language, or age, to list a few characteristics. Most survey respondents agreed that their organization did not target specific groups; however, individuals also stated that their organization was committed to addressing inequity for marginalized groups. To tackle issues of inequity, organizations must seek to provide targeted assistance that accounts for differences in supports, opportunities, and privileges.
- 2 Provide funding to support NGOs working with marginalized groups.** Organizations continue to feel hampered by effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some mentioned a drop in staffing, while others indicated a significant reduction in volunteerism—all of which have made it difficult to provide vital support to marginalized groups through a hazardous event. Respondents from NGOs indicated being aware of various federal funding programs but did not have the capacity or internal resources to apply to them. NGO personnel recommended a more direct and simplified method for organizations to receive financial support.
- 3 Build trust through encouraging co-creation.** Our findings indicate that NGOs need improved messaging and trust-building among governmental agencies. To build trust, service providers should cultivate cultural understanding of the community, be transparent and accountable, and stay consistently involved in working with community members. Emphasis should be placed on co-creation of programs and plans that account for the lived experiences and perspectives of marginalized people.

Future direction

This project focused on capturing the voices of community members and local government officials through an online survey. This report documents that process and the results, which reflect a more representative group of community members and local government agencies based on region and type of hazard impacted. We aim to expand this work further in 2023–24 by increasing our sample and collecting information from a greater number of local government officials. Additionally, we will extract and analyze information from organizations' web pages and social media accounts related to organizational responses to hazards in marginalized communities.

To build trust, service providers should cultivate cultural understanding of the community, be transparent and accountable, and stay consistently involved in working with community members.

Introduction

Federal agencies have noted the increase in hazards related to climate change, particularly wildfires, hurricanes, and flooding (DHS, 2012; FEMA, 2021; NOAA, 2021; NASA, 2021; EPA, 2021). Continual and repeated disruptions make full recovery especially difficult for marginalized communities.¹ Emerging evidence suggests that current disaster management systems have failed to build trust and awareness of needs among disadvantaged communities after a hazardous event (Berke et al., 2011; Findholt, 2013), making those communities less likely to recover fully (Beaver et al., 2005; Davis et al., 2021). These results suggest a need for research to inform federal agencies and communities about building trust around disaster mitigation and recovery. In this report, we share findings related to how NGOs and local government agencies offer support to marginalized communities before, during, and after an event, and the resources they call upon to do so.

This report has three overarching purposes: (1) detail how NGOs and government agencies receive and provide aid to marginalized communities in the face of a hazard, (2) highlight how organizations are building trust and maintaining relationships with community members, and (3) investigate the types of barriers these organizations and agencies face when providing support to groups in need.

To fulfill these objectives, we began by obtaining a nationwide list of non-profits using IRS bulk data. We then extracted a large representative sample and generated random samples of NGOs that may aid socially marginalized groups responding to hazards. We then collected contact information for these NGOs and invited them to participate in an online survey. The purpose of the survey was to understand organizations' perspectives as we examine how local governments and organizations can improve their ability to provide support to marginalized groups before, during, and after hazards, as well as to build trust and relationships. This is in alignment with the purpose of the research study, which is to gather relevant information on best practices to reduce inequities and support marginalized groups that face hazards. We collected survey responses from our random sample in all fifty U.S. states and extrapolated findings across the nation.

In this report, we illustrate our findings in six sections: (1) demographics of respondents, (2) serving marginalized groups, (3) organizational concern, (4) building trust, (5) barriers to support, and (6) seeking organizational support. Following a summary of our findings, we conclude with policy recommendations based on respondents' interpretations and outline the next steps for further research.

¹ For this report, we define marginalized populations as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), individuals from low-wealth communities, undocumented immigrants, children, women, the elderly, individuals from rural populations, and unhoused individuals. This is not a complete list, but see Davis et al., 2021 for details regarding each grouping.

Methodology

To generate a list of organizations to participate in the survey, the team used IRS bulk data²—the most reliable list of tax-exempt organizations across the nation—composed of 1,773,510 organizations. The types of organizations included 501(c)(3) non-profits, local governments, faith-based and philanthropic groups, educational institutions, business leagues, etc. Using these data, we determined that the best way to generate a representative sample of non-profit organizations that are most likely to support the long- and short-term needs of marginalized groups after an event would be via the variable National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities Code (NTEE). Organizations with NTEE codes in Table 1 aligned most closely with the target population for this project.



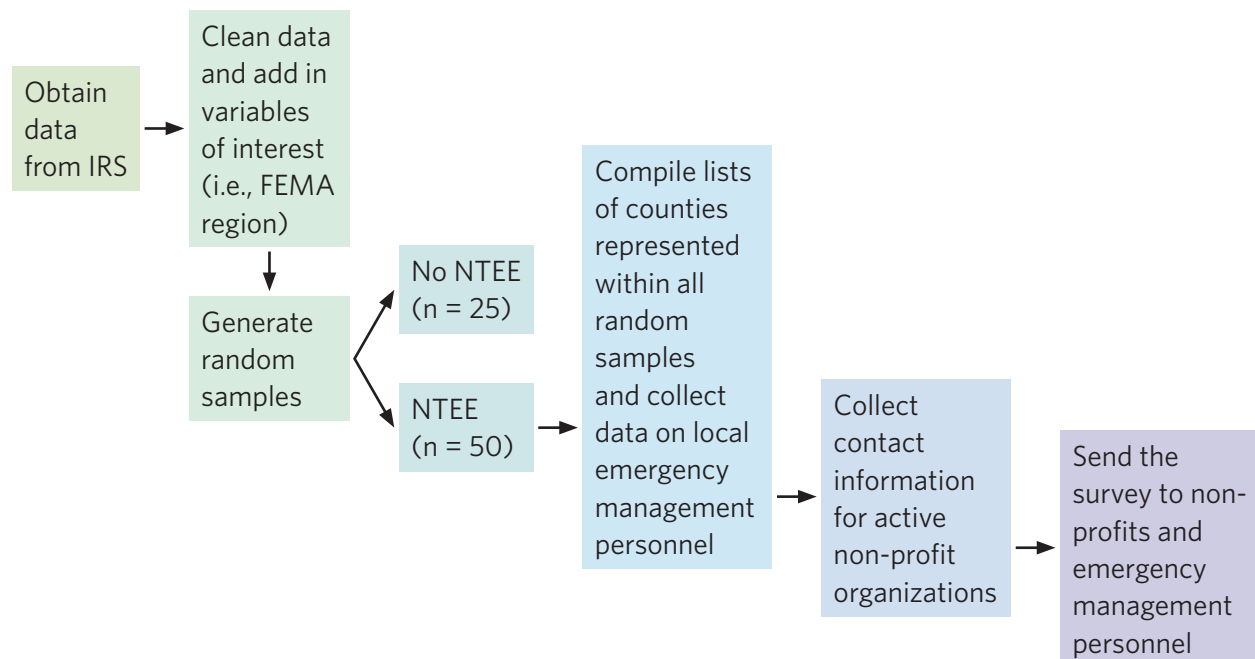
Table 1. IRS NTEE codes and descriptors of interest

Code	Code Descriptor
E	Health – General and Rehabilitative
F	Mental Health, Crisis Intervention
K	Food, Agriculture and Nutrition
L	Housing, Shelter
M	Public Safety, Disaster Preparedness and Relief
P	Human Services – Multipurpose and Other
W	Public, Society Benefit – Multipurpose and Other
X	Religion-Related, Spiritual Development

² <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/tax-exempt-organization-search-bulk-data-downloads>

To ensure that the sample would not exclude organizations that are key actors in providing support and relief to marginalized groups, the team included organizations with and without an NTEE code. The two broad sampling groups were NTEE (i.e., the organization had an NTEE code above) and No-NTEE (i.e., the organization did not have an NTEE code). Random samples were generated, consisting of NTEE and No-NTEE organizations, where N=50 for NTEE and N=25 for No-NTEE. The research team continued to generate small random samples and assigned them to data collectors. We drew as many samples as our collectors could finish in our allotted time period of four months. A total of 2,800 No-NTEE and 5,550 NTEE organizations were sampled. Our goal was to select between 3,000 and 5,000 organizations. We trained a small team of individual researchers to hand-code each organization in the random samples. These data collectors did manual web searches to determine whether contact information was available, extracting email addresses and social media handles and indicating the quality of each contact. From an initial sample of 5,000 organizations, we identified contact information for 1,996 NTEE organizations and 1,255 No-NTEE organizations. We compiled this information into a database and added purposive samples with contact information for additional groups. These organizations and groups were then invited to complete the online survey. Figure 1 below details our data collection methodology.

Figure 1. Year 8 sampling methodology



Participatory Action Research (PAR)

The team used participatory action research (PAR) as a foundation and overarching guide for data collection and analysis in our study. These data sources gave the team in-depth knowledge about how marginalized groups are affected and supported through an event. PAR is based on the idea that researchers must have cultural competence and awareness of the diverse cultures, perspectives, and beliefs of those they are working with (Kelman et al., 2011). Furthermore, researchers should seek to engage participants in constructing knowledge and objectives (Trajber et al., 2019), and these two concepts should be considered equally important throughout the research cycle (McCall & Peters-Guarin, 2012). Researchers and their approaches should focus on strengths rather than deficits (Wang, 1999), and the research outcomes should be approved by stakeholders (Meyer et al., 2018). When used in studies, PAR unites researchers and participants, whose voices and perspectives are considered equally important. Studies are planned and executed by members of both groups to generate lasting improvement for the participants and their communities.

Building on work from Year 7 (Davis et al., 2022), we maintained a PAR framework in designing our study for Year 8. Our work in Year 7 (2021–22) featured extensive focus group research, resulting in community-driven insights used to design and modify the survey for years 7 and 8 (2021–22 and 2022–23). The team developed the survey using these insights, ensuring alignment among the survey items, existing literature, and community voices. The team then partnered with survey validation expert Montana Cain, Ph.D., to support the development and validation of the PAR survey instrument. During this process, Dr. Cain assessed the Flesch Kincade readability and Flesch Kincade grade level, in addition to the accessibility and user experience, of the instrument. Please see Appendix A for a copy of the survey and Appendix B for a summary of the validation procedure.

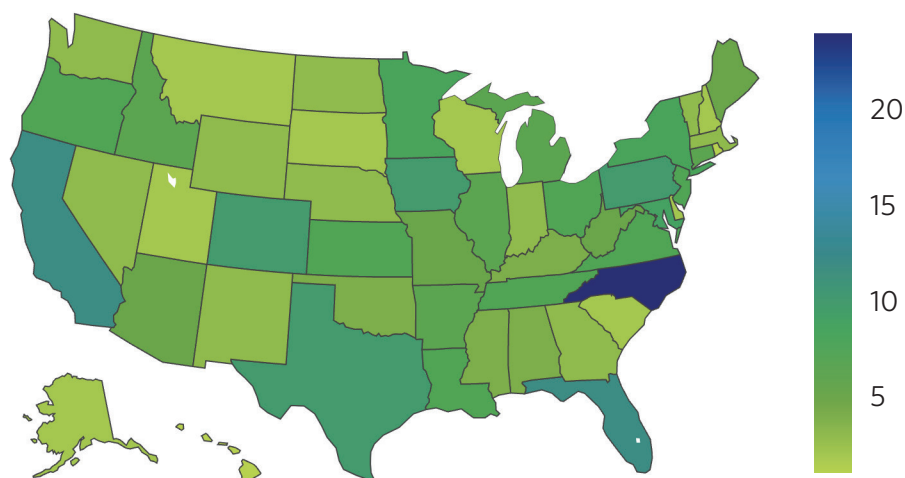


Findings

The following section summarizes the overall findings from the online survey. The research team sought to learn how NGOs and government agencies receive and provide support to marginalized communities in the face of hazards as well as assess how they build trust with community members. We were also interested in the types of barriers these organizations and agencies face in their efforts to engage marginalized groups. Ultimately, the results can help inform decision makers about how to leverage relationships and improve strategies for disaster mitigation and recovery for marginalized groups.

The online survey was distributed to 5,174 organizations across all fifty U.S. states. Figure 2 illustrates the geographic distribution of the sample, where the lightest color (i.e., yellow) represents a larger responding sample compared to the darkest color (i.e., purple) representing a smaller responding sample. The state of North Carolina is overrepresented in the sample due to our intentional over-sampling and purposive sample of Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs) and county emergency managers. The largest group of survey respondents were executive directors within their organization (22 percent), followed by administrators (17 percent), owing in large part to the targeting of such roles in the manual extraction of email addresses used to distribute the survey.

Figure 2. Geographic distribution of sample of non-profit organizations



A total of 234 individuals responded to the online survey (Table 2). The response rate was the highest among organizations with an NTEE code. As a reminder, organizations with an NTEE code were the ones that we believed were most likely to support the long- and short-term needs of marginalized communities.

Table 2. Sample groups and corresponding response rates

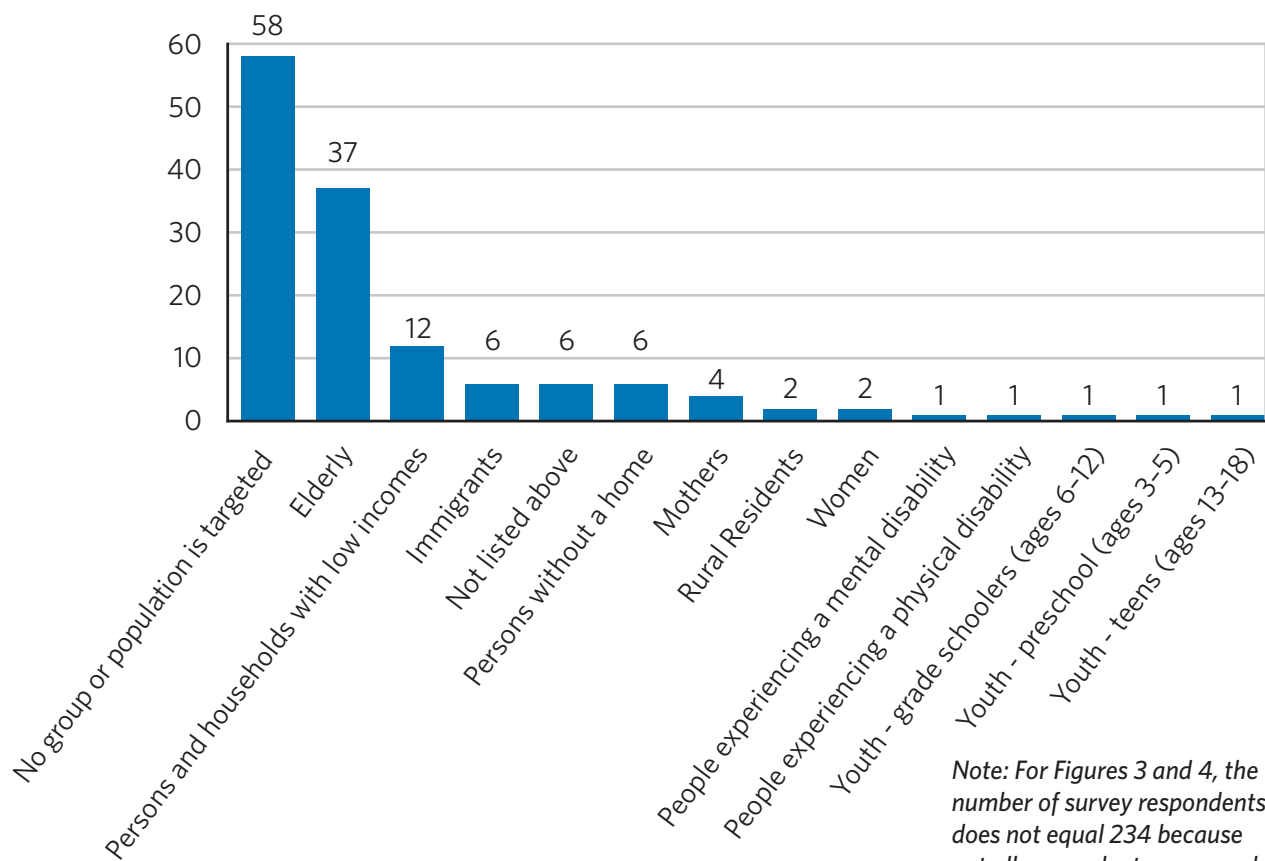
Sample Group	Total Responses
(1) NTEE 501(c)3	88
(2) No-NTEE 501(c)3	25
(3) Emergency Manager	69
(4) VOAD	32
(5) Select 501(c)3 from Year 7	20
All	234

Serving Marginalized Groups

Survey respondents were asked if their organization intentionally served specific marginalized groups. Most respondents to this question indicated that their organization did not target a specific group or population (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Serving marginalized groups

Does your organization intentionally aim to serve any of the groups listed below?

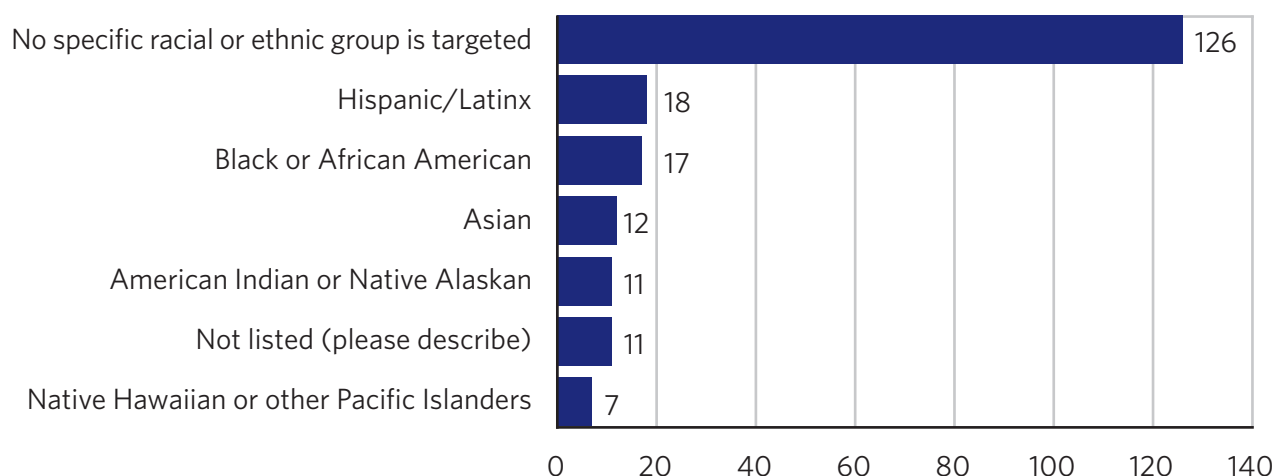


Note: For Figures 3 and 4, the number of survey respondents does not equal 234 because not all respondents answered every question.

Our survey results also showed that most organizations in our sample did not aim to serve a specific racial or ethnic group (Figure 4). Of the organizations that do support individuals of a specific racial or ethnic group, the most prevalent responses were Hispanic/Latinx groups at 7.56 percent and Black or African American groups at 7.14 percent. Approximately 4.6 percent of organizations reported serving a specific group that was not listed.

Figure 4. Serving specific racial or ethnic groups

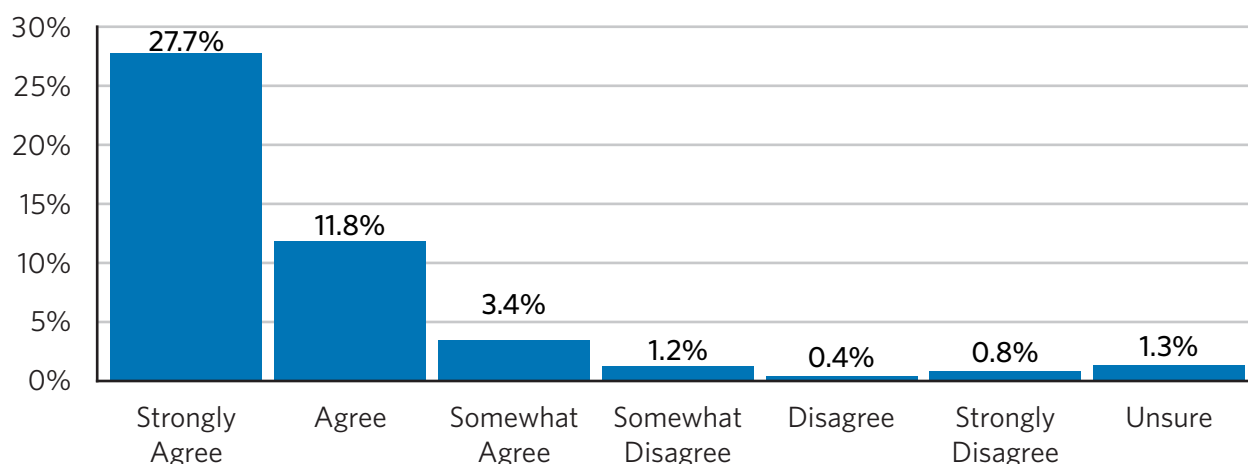
Does your group intentionally aim to serve specific racial or ethnic groups?



We found variation among respondents regarding whether they purposefully serve racial or ethnic groups. Some participants viewed serving specific marginalized groups as a priority, while others viewed the idea as unethical and counter to their mission. Although most respondents (62.4 percent) indicated their groups did not focus on specific racial or ethnic populations, over 40 percent of participants agreed that their organization is committed to addressing inequities experienced by marginalized groups (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Addressing inequities experienced by marginalized groups

My organization is committed to addressing the inequities that are experienced by marginalized groups.



Note: For Figures 5-12, percentages do not total 100 because not all survey respondents answered every question.

The juxtaposition of these findings is informative. NGOs and governmental agencies may nominally support marginalized communities, though that does not necessarily translate into prioritization of those communities most in need. This may be partly due to different conceptualizations of terms such as “marginalized” and “equity” in various parts of the United States.



NGOs and governmental agencies may nominally support marginalized communities, though that does not necessarily translate into prioritization of those communities most in need.

Organizational Concern: Disproportionate Access and Impact

While survey respondents indicated that their organization was less likely to provide targeted support to marginalized groups, respondents agreed that such groups are disproportionately impacted by hazards. Figures 6 and 7 show a sizable degree of concern regarding disparities in access to resources during hazards. Approximately 32.8 percent of organizations surveyed believe that certain groups do not get access to essential resources simply because of their identity. For instance, an unhoused person may have limited access to support such as food and shelter during a hazard, simply because of their status of being unhoused.

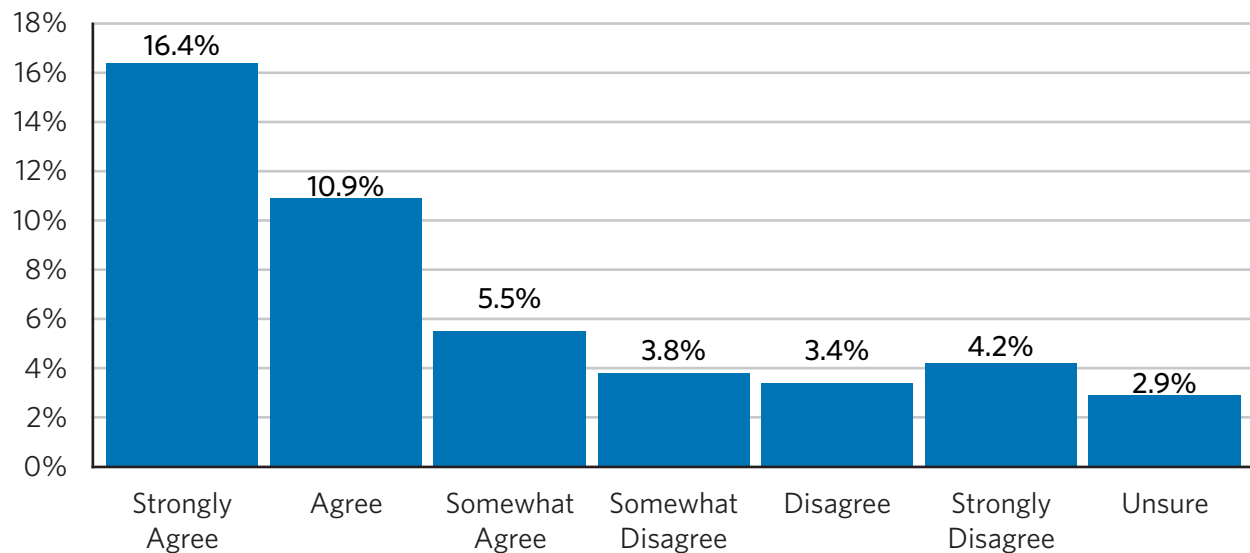
“

The population we could do a better job of serving in our community are the unhoused. There are individuals who are seen on the streets, as well as those who are not seen... Our borough actually opened a shelter during a severe storm that allowed those displaced from their homes to stay, but not those who were already unhoused.

”

Figure 6. Disproportionate access to resources due to identity

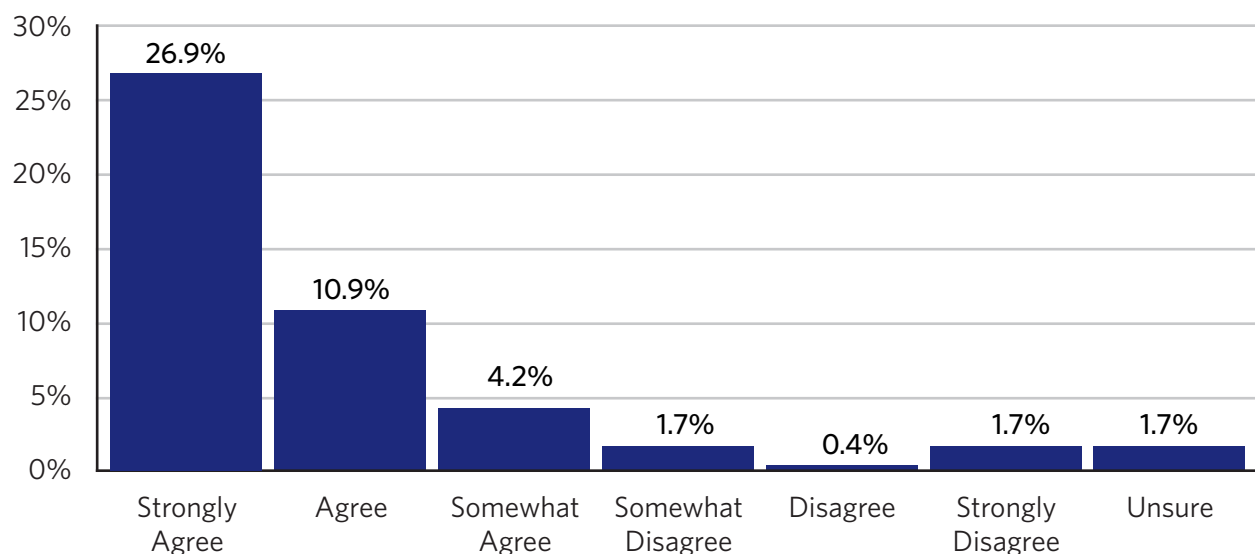
There are certain groups of people who, because of their identity, do not have access to the resources they need.



Almost half of respondents (42 percent) agreed that certain groups within the local community are more likely to be negatively impacted by hazards (Figure 7). It is not clear how respondents define such groups or whether they associate these disparities with instances of prejudice or oppression.

Figure 7. Disproportionate impact on certain groups in the community

There are certain groups of people in my community who are more likely than others to be negatively impacted.



Building Trust

Almost half of respondents (43.8 percent) stated that they work to build trust with the communities they serve (Figure 8), while very few organizations (<2 percent) indicated that they do not engage in such efforts. Overall, survey respondents described the communities they serve with these terms: “family,” “integral part,” “alliances,” and “partners.” Individuals also strive to create a working atmosphere that “empowers” and is “inclusive”; these responses highlight the importance of building a bridge with community members in a way that is uplifting and celebratory.

“

We are very close to the communities we serve; we participate regularly in community meetings and events, [and we] have stakeholder groups we work with to receive input and advocate together. We view that we are here for the community’s needs.

”

At least one respondent talked about using networks to improve their relationships with community members.

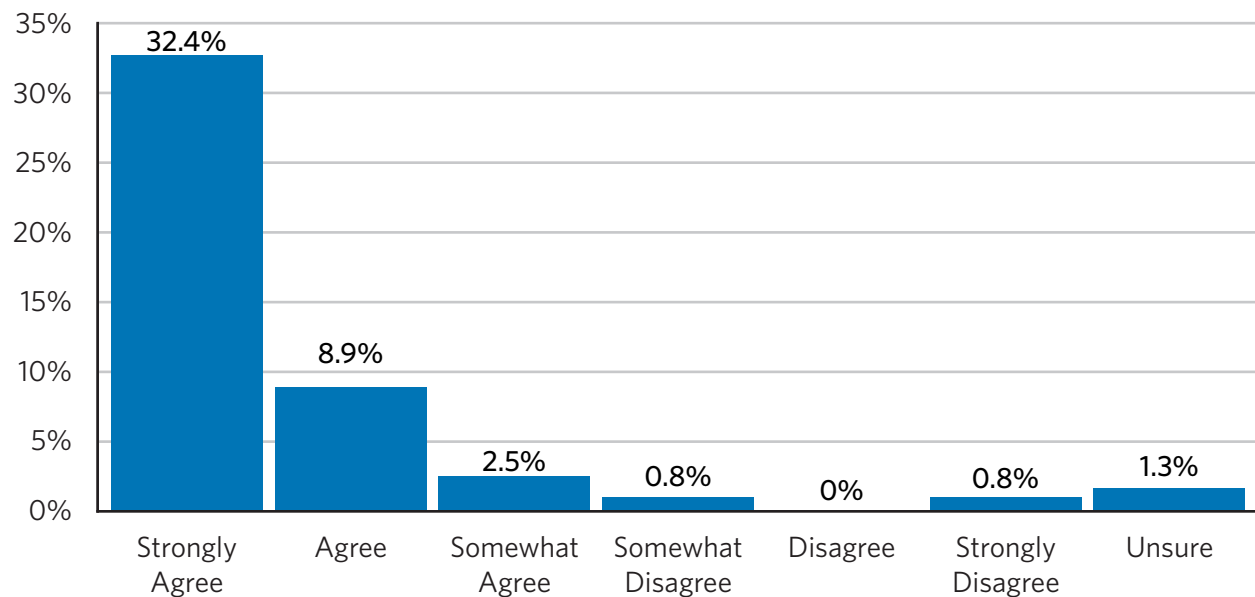
“

There remain community members [in] need who are not aware of us or how to access our services. We are working with county agencies that assist with emergency housing to increase awareness.

”

Figure 8. Building trust within the community

My organization works to build trust within the communities that we serve.



When asked how their organization has built trust in the communities they serve, respondents provided the following examples, among others: attending community events, being present, being involved and engaged, engaging in open communications, providing workshops, collaborating, and providing consistent services of care.

“

We focus on meeting people where they are, physically and figuratively. We focus on listening. We focus on providing clear communication and setting realistic expectations. We focus on saying what we are going to do, and actually doing what we said we would [do]. We realize trust is gained in drops and lost in buckets, and we work daily to build trust through excellence in service and a high level of professionalism.

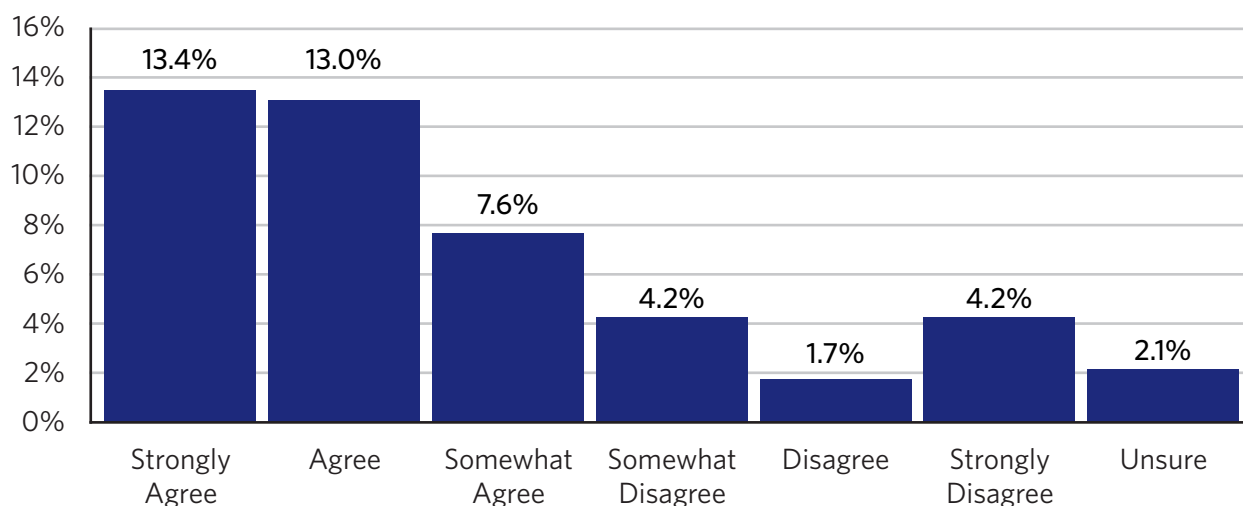
”

Barriers to Support: Limited Human Resources

Survey respondents referenced a decline in human resources, in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as a barrier to providing support. Respondents reported issues with staffing shortages and volunteerism, which negatively affected their organizational success (Figures 9 and 10) and hindered their ability to support the communities they serve (Figure 11). Thirty-four percent of survey respondents agreed that their organization is facing staffing shortages, and of those, 13.4 percent strongly agreed, which aligns with similar concerns that emerged from focus groups in the Year 7 report.

Figure 9. Challenges with staffing shortages

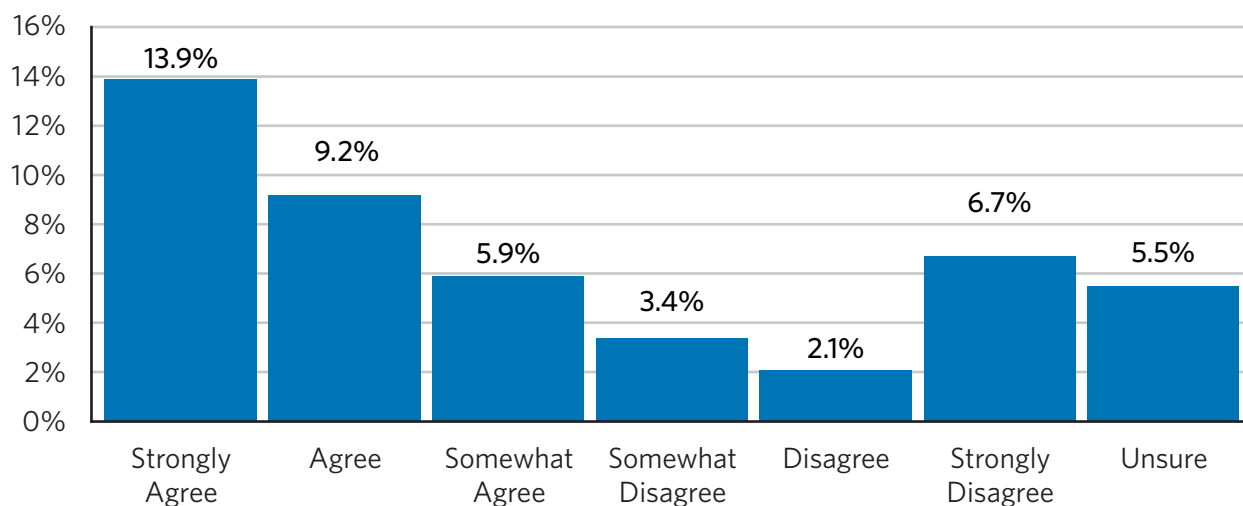
Staffing shortages are a major problem for my organization.



Similarly, 29 percent of respondents indicated that declines in volunteerism have hurt their organization (Figure 10). Nearly 14 percent of respondents strongly agreed with that sentiment, compared to 6.7 percent who strongly disagreed.

Figure 10. Challenges with volunteerism

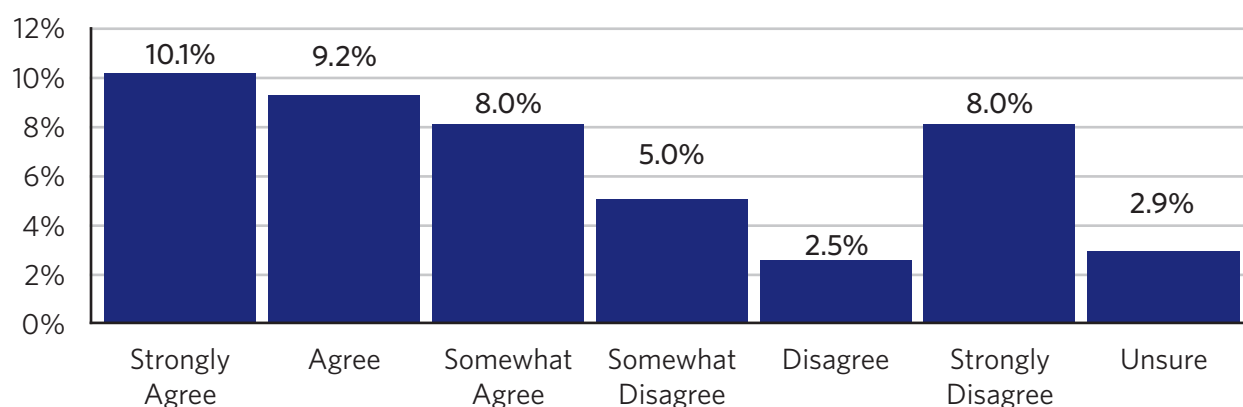
Declines in volunteerism have hurt my organization.



Staffing and volunteer shortages in the wake of the pandemic have hampered NGOs and government agencies nationwide. Our survey results indicate that these shortages directly affect marginalized populations (Figure 11). Nearly one-third of survey respondents (27.3 percent) agreed that the pandemic has had a negative impact on their organization's ability to serve marginalized communities. In contrast, about 15.5 percent noted that the pandemic has not negatively affected their ability to serve such groups.

Figure 11. Impact of the pandemic on serving marginalized communities

The pandemic has had a negative impact on my organization's ability to serve marginalized communities.

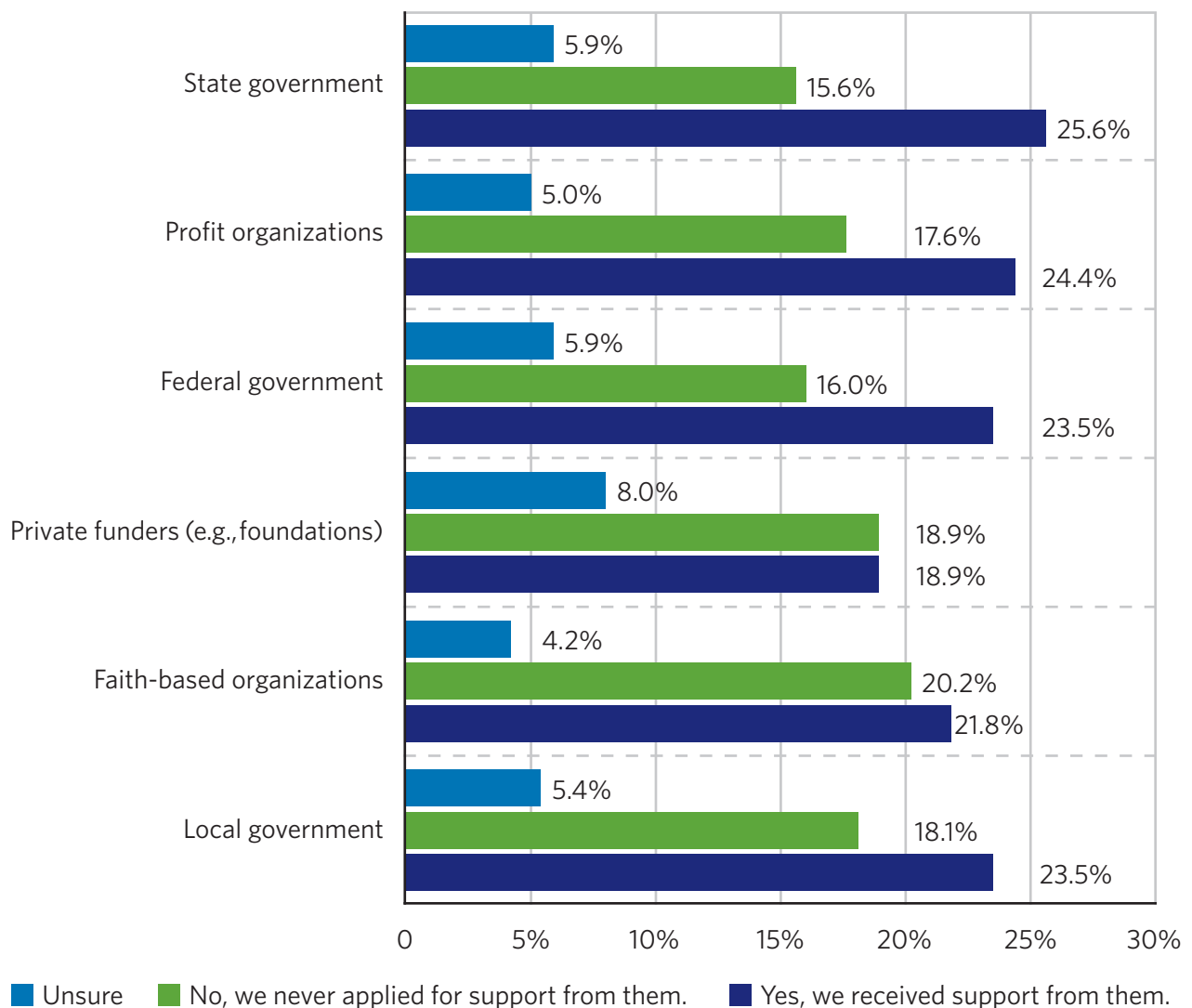


Seeking Out Organizational Support

One of the primary aims of our study is to measure the extent to which NGOs use available resources to assist marginalized populations before, during, and after a hazard. To this end, we asked survey respondents whether they received support from local governments, faith-based organizations, private funders, the federal government, non-profit organizations, or state governments. Figure 12 reports percentages of our total sample receiving support from various sources. Accounting for organizations that declined to answer the question, the proportions of NGOs receiving local, state, and federal support are 23.5, 25.6, and 23.5 percent, respectively.

Figure 12. Receipt of support

Has your organization received support from...?



Additional qualitative responses indicate several reasons that organizations do not utilize support, particularly from federal sources. These reasons included confusion around the types of available applications, a lack of awareness, and a shortage of staff to complete the application process. Several respondents requested a “one-stop shop” that would house information about resources for organizations that support populations in need.

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“

Federal funds would need to not have barriers on people that are undocumented, as we serve many in that case. Quick, easy application [and] quick results so funding can be deployed easily, with as few restrictions as possible, so that organizations can use as they see fit.

”

Most respondents were unaware of FEMA grants through the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) initiative. Of the seven respondents who were aware of BRIC, only one had applied for assistance. Individuals reported not having the capacity or internal resources to apply for such support. One respondent stated, “I would need financial support and help navigating the grant application. Also, I may need some human capital as well.” Further, several respondents lamented a lack of eligibility for smaller and more rural organizations. Our research in Year 7 also indicated a pronounced lack of awareness of federal resources, including grants and networks.



Policy Recommendations

We used the participatory action research (PAR) framework to draw recommendations from the advisory members, literature, and survey respondents. The following three policy recommendations are based on respondents' perceptions and the culmination of our research.

1 *Provide intentional, targeted support for marginalized groups.*

Respondents were quick to claim that they observed principles of inclusion and equity but differed as to what those terms meant in the context of their mission and vision for serving their communities. Most organizations stated that they did not target specific groups based on differences in identity, race, or ethnicity. Indeed, many reported in their open-ended responses that they believe such targeting to be decidedly unethical and that they seek to support community members equally. At the far end of this spectrum are organizational leaders and respondents who exhibited resentment at the very idea of targeting racial or ethnic groups for special support.

To tackle issues of inequity, organizations and governmental agencies must seek to provide targeted support that accounts for the differences based on opportunities and privileges. To simplify all groups into one monolithic body negates the concept of equity and further perpetuates strategies that support privilege and harm the oppressed. Our recommendation is a strong one: move past notions of equality and push toward equity by providing tailored support to various groups in need, especially those that are historically and socially marginalized.

2 *Provide funding to support NGOs working with marginalized groups.*

Our results demonstrate a widespread lack of resources among non-profits seeking to deal with hazards. Declining levels of staffing and volunteerism have hurt organizations' capacity to serve populations most in need. Some of this decline may be addressed through improved awareness and access to government and private sector resources, as indicated by the relatively low percentage of organizations using such supports. Other structural barriers may be more difficult to address.

Many respondents who were engaged and aware of BRIC initiatives and other federal resources stated that they could not coordinate with FEMA or meet eligibility requirements, given their small size and lack of access to communication networks. Our survey results suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic and related declines in volunteers have exacerbated these issues.

3 *Build trust through encouraging co-creation.*

Our findings suggest a need for improved messaging and trust-building among NGOs and governmental agencies in order to develop a shared framework for prioritizing those most in need before, during, and after hazardous events. Non-profit and community groups are critical conduits for accessing government resources, particularly for marginalized communities, which are often systematically more likely to be deprived of support.

Next Steps for Research

This project focused on validating and administering the online survey to a nationally representative sample of more than 5,000 NGO and government personnel. The stratified random sample of NGOs stemmed from a comprehensive sampling frame comprising all tax-exempt organizations registered with the IRS (>1.7 million organizations). A total of 234 individuals responded to the online survey.

In Year 9, the team will expand and administer the validated survey to additional local government officials to increase this sample size. In addition, we will gather information from websites and social media accounts impacted by a federally declared disaster. This approach addresses survey non-response concerns by examining a more comprehensive sample from publicly available data. Content analysis and topic modeling tools will provide detailed information about how organizations respond to hazardous events. The team will use specialized software to analyze website content and social media profiles to learn how NGOs and local governments are discussing preparedness, response, and recovery. The research team will share its findings through a presentation to community members and local government officials.



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Appendix A – Survey Tool

[Page 1: Introduction]

We would like to hear from organizations about how they are supporting their communities through disasters and what resources they need to better support their community.

Purpose

There is growing recognition that current federal disaster relief efforts prevent certain communities from equitably receiving resources for hazard mitigation and recovering from disasters, such as hurricanes, earthquakes, etc. These groups are referred to as marginalized and include (but are not limited to) Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), undocumented immigrants, rural populations, children, and low-income households. A research team from the Coastal Resilience Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to help government agencies learn how they can provide more equitable support.

Who Should Complete the Survey

We would like to hear from organizations (1) located in the United States and (2) that provide hands-on, resource, or administrative support to communities through a disaster (e.g., flooding, snowstorms, extreme heat, tropical storms, COVID, etc.). The person completing the survey should be familiar with the coordination and administration of resources and relief efforts to community members.

About the Survey

The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. Your information is confidential and will not be shared outside of the research team. It will be summarized across all responses. You are not required to answer every question. You may skip any question that makes you feel uncomfortable.

Below is a preview of the topics:

- About My Organization
- About the Communities We Serve
- Impact of Disasters on Marginalized Communities
- Disaster Support for Marginalized Communities
- Disaster Support for Organizations
- Improving Support for Marginalized Communities

Benefits of Participation

Your insight will help community leaders, policy, and federal agencies. You may not benefit personally from participating in the survey. Some potential risks include emotional distress and embarrassment. Please click the link below for more information about the study.

[<<Details about the study & IRB >>](#)

By clicking next, you agree that you read the information above and agree to participate. If you do not wish to participate, you may exit the survey now.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and your time.
[NEXT]

[PAGE BREAK]

[Section 2: About My Organization]

Please tell us a little about you and your organization.

1. Which of the following describes your organization? Select all that apply.
 1. Business league
 2. Educational institution (e.g., college, university, etc.)
 3. Faith-based organization
 4. Local government
 5. Non-profit [501(c)(3)]
 6. Philanthropic
 7. Political organization
 8. Public charity
 9. Not listed above, please specify:
2. Which best describes your role within the organization?
 1. Administrator
 2. Case Manager
 3. Executive Director
 4. Grants/Financial Manager
 5. Outreach coordinator
 6. Program manager
 7. Not listed above, please describe:
3. Where is your organization physically located?
4. In which county is your organization physically located?
5. At what level does your organization mainly work? Select all that apply.
 1. Neighborhood/ ZIP-code specific
 2. Tribe
 3. City
 4. County
 5. Regional
 6. State-level
 7. Federal (including Puerto Rico and U.S. Territories)
 8. International
 9. Not listed above, please specify:

[PAGE BREAK]

[Section 3: About the Communities We Serve]

In this section, we would like to learn more about the communities that your organization serves.
[insert definition of community and the role of marginalization]

6. Does your organization intentionally aim to serve specific racial or ethnic groups?
Select all that apply.
 1. Asian
 2. Black or African American
 3. American Indian or Native Alaskan
 4. Hispanic/Latinx
 5. Native Hawaiian or others Pacific Islander
 6. We do not target a specific racial or ethnic group
 7. Not listed above, please describe:

7. Does your organization intentionally aim to serve any of the groups listed below?
Select all that apply.
 1. Elderly
 2. Immigrants
 3. LGBTQIA+
 4. Mothers
 5. Persons without a home
 6. Persons and households with low incomes
 7. People experiencing a physical disability
 8. People experiencing a mental disability
 9. Rural Residents
 10. Urban Residents
 11. Veterans
 12. Women
 13. Youth - early childhood (birth through 3)
 14. Youth - preschool (ages 3 -5)
 15. Youth - grade schoolers (ages 6 - 12)
 16. Youth - teens (ages 13 - 18)
 17. Young adults (ages 19 - 21)
 18. No group or population is targeted
 19. A group not listed above, please specify.

8. How does your organization ensure that important information reaches the people it serves?
Select all that apply.
 1. Electronic materials (e.g., flyers, newsletter, memos, etc.)
 2. Printed materials (e.g., flyers, newsletters, memos, etc.)
 3. Share at informal community events such as a block party
 4. Share at a formal community even such as a public hearing
 5. Social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

6. Radio announcements
7. Television announcements
8. Newspaper or other print media (e.g., magazine)
9. Through community members
10. Through community leaders
11. Through elected officials
12. Through other organizations
13. Other (please specify)

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[Section 4: Impact of Disasters on Marginalized Communities]

In this section, we would like to learn more about your community's experience with disasters.

9. Including this year, how long have you been with the organization?
 1. [drop-down menu 1 - more than 20]
10. In your time working with the organization, has your community experienced a disaster?
 1. No
 2. Yes
11. Thinking about the community that you currently serve, which of the disasters listed have they experienced within the last 5 years?
 1. Drought
 2. Earthquake
 3. Extreme temperatures
 4. Flood
 5. Hurricane
 6. Tornado
 7. Wildfire
 8. Not listed above, please describe:
12. Reflecting on the last disaster experienced by your community, which of the following groups were (or are typically) needing the most support/resources after a disaster. Select all that apply.
 1. Elderly
 2. Immigrants
 3. LGBTQIA+
 4. Mothers
 5. Persons without a home
 6. Persons and households with low incomes
 7. People experiencing a physical disability
 8. People experiencing a mental disability
 9. Rural Residents
 10. Urban Residents
 11. Veterans

12. Women
13. Youth - early childhood (birth through 3)
14. Youth - preschool (ages 3 -5)
15. Youth - grade schoolers (ages 6 - 12)
16. Youth - teens (ages 13 - 18)
17. Young adults (ages 19 - 21)
18. No group or population is targeted
19. A group not listed above, please specify.

[PAGE BREAK]

[Section 5: Disaster Support for Marginalized Communities]

In this section, we would like to learn more about the support that you currently provide to the communities that you serve.

13. Some organization's mission is to provide disaster relief and others provide disaster relief in response to the needs of their community. Is the primary purpose of your organization to provide disaster relief?
 1. No
 2. Yes
 3. Unsure

14. What types of relief services does your organization provide and when are they provided in relation to a disaster?

	Before a disaster	During a disaster	After a disaster	Not provided at all
Administrative support (e.g., referrals to agencies)				
Case management (e.g., identification of needs and the coordination of resources)				
Educational services (e.g., training, tutoring, etc.)				
Financial assistance (e.g., gift cards, payment for bills)				
Food and water				
Physical health services (e.g., emergency medical services, follow-up care)				
Mental health support				
Medical supplies				
Personal supplies (e.g., clothing, toiletries, etc.)				
Shelter or housing				
Transportation				
Recovery (e.g., post-disaster home repairs and rebuilding)				
Not listed above, please specify:				

[PAGE BREAK]

15. Reflect on the support that your organization has provided in the past. Would you like to decrease, increase, or continue the amount of support provided to marginalized communities?

	Would like to decrease	Keep the same	Would like to increase	Unsure
Before a disaster				
During a disaster				
After a disaster				

16. Please explain your response to the question above.

[PAGE BREAK]

[Section 6: Disaster Support for Our Organization]

In this section, we would like to learn more about your organization's awareness of and access to resources that support marginalized communities through a disaster.

17. Are you aware of FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program?

1. No
2. Yes - we applied for the grant
3. Yes - we did not apply for the grant
4. I am not sure

18. Thinking about your community, are you aware of organizations that provide programs, grants, or fellowships that your organization can use to support communities with disaster relief.

	No, as far as I am aware, these organizations do not provide support.	Yes, as far as I am aware, these organizations do provide support	I am not sure
Faith-based organizations (e.g., church, mosque, synagogues)			
Local government agencies			
State government			
Non-profit organizations			
Federal government			
Private funders (e.g., foundations, philanthropists)			

[PAGE BREAK]

19. In the last 5 years, has your organization received support from the organizations listed below to support disaster relief for marginalized groups.

	No, we never applied for support from them.	No, we applied for support but were not awarded.	Yes, we received support from them.	Unsure
Faith-based organizations (e.g., church, mosque, synagogues)				
Local government agencies				
State government				
Non-profit organizations				
Federal government				
Private funders (e.g., foundations, philanthropists)				

[PAGE BREAK]

20. If awarded, did your organization use the funds for any of the **organizational supports** listed below **in the last 5 years?** Check all that apply.

- ☐ Administrative costs (e.g., support current staff)
- ☐ Hardware (e.g., phone, computer, printers, etc.)
- ☐ Human resources (e.g., hire staff)
- ☐ Professional development trainings for staff
- ☐ Supplies for organization
- ☐ Supplies for repair and building
- ☐ Technology services (e.g., internet, phone service, etc.)
- ☐ Not listed, please specify _____

21. If awarded, did your organization use the funds for any of the **community supports** listed below **in the last 5 years?** Check all that apply.

- ☐ Educational services (e.g., tutoring)
- ☐ Financial Assistance (e.g., gift cards, payment for bills)
- ☐ Food and water
- ☐ Physical health services (e.g., emergency medical services, follow-up care)
- ☐ Home repair and rebuilding
- ☐ Housing/Shelter
- ☐ Job placement
- ☐ Medical supplies

- ☐ Mental health services
- ☐ Personal supplies (e.g., clothing, toiletries, etc.)
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Not listed, please specify _____

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22. If you had all the resources you needed, how would you have liked to address the needs of the marginalized groups in your community? Check all that apply.

1. Educational services for young people (e.g., tutoring)
2. Financial assistance (e.g., gift cards, payment for bills)
3. Food and water
4. Health services (e.g., emergency medical services, follow-up care, mental health support)
5. Home repair and rebuilding
6. Housing/Shelter
7. Job placement
8. Medical supplies
9. Personal supplies (e.g., clothing, toiletries, etc.)
10. Transportation
11. Workforce development (e.g., professional training)
12. Not listed, please specify _____

23. What barriers, if any, have you encountered when applying for funding?

1. Confusing language
2. Difficulty navigating the website
3. Insufficient funding
4. Lack of access to information
5. Lack of support and/or assistance from my organization
6. Lack of support and/or assistance from funder
7. Timing of application
8. Timing of award
9. Restrictions
10. Requirements to apply
11. We have not experienced any barriers
12. Not listed, please specify: _____

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[Section 7: Improving Support for Marginalized Communities]

In this section we would like to know what is needed to improve support for marginalized communities.

24. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	SD	D	SD	SA	A	SA	Unsure
There are certain groups of people, who because of their identity, do not have access to the resources they need.							
There are certain groups of people in my community who are more likely than others to be negatively impacted by disasters.							
My organization is committed to addressing the inequities that are experienced by marginalized groups.							
My organization is an equitable and inclusive workplace.							
My organization works to build trust within the communities that we serve.							

[PAGE BREAK]

25. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	SD	D	SD	SA	A	SA	Unsure
My organization does all it can to pursue funding opportunities from local, state, federal, and other sources.							
My organization has the capacity to apply for and manage federal grants.							
My organization does all that it can to reach marginalized communities.							
My organization lacks key resources that are needed to help serve marginalized communities.							
Staffing shortages are a major problem for my organization.							
Declines in volunteerism have hurt my organization.							
The pandemic has had a negative impact on my organization's ability to serve marginalized communities.							

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26. If you could imagine **a coordinated system of federal, state, and local organizations** to support your community, especially the most marginalized, before, during, and after a disaster, what would it look like? What resources and supports would you need? When? For whom?
27. What would make it easier to secure federal funding to support marginalized communities?
28. How would you describe your organization's relationship with the communities that it serves?
29. What, if anything, has your organization done to build trust in the communities that you serve?
30. The purpose of this survey is to help the federal government better understand how they can strengthen their support for marginalized groups. Is there anything else that you would like to share or expand on?

Appendix B – Survey Validation Procedure

Description of Methodology

Dr. J. Montana Cain was commissioned by the research team to review the existing survey to establish evidence of validity and to ensure that the best practices in survey methodology would be employed. The overall process was iterative and prioritized collaboration. At the end of each step, the research team met with Dr. Cain to discuss findings and next steps.

First, a background document review was conducted to ensure a full understanding of the context and purpose of the survey. Documents included project reports, external presentations, and a literature review titled *Support Strategies for Socially Marginalized Neighborhoods Likely Impacted by Natural Hazards*, written by members of the research team. This step also included a meeting between Dr. Cain and a member of the research team to verify the team's understanding of reviewed materials.

Second, the existing survey and responses from the pilot administration were reviewed to understand the extent to which the items, as written, would yield the information intended and to ensure that the experience would be favorable for respondents. The review included examining question order, representation among options, item context effects, and adherence to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. An assessment of the survey instrument's readability was conducted using the Flesch Kincaid Reading Ease assessment, which measures readability based on the number of words in a sentence and the number of syllables in a word. The scores range from 0 (difficult to read) to 100 (easy to read). The goal is a score of 60 or higher. In addition, the Flesch-Kincaid grade level was also assessed. The grade level is consistent with the U.S. educational system, where scores indicate the respondents' minimum grade level required for comprehension. Following the review, the initial survey was revised. An analysis of the quality and consistency of responses was conducted on the raw data from the 83 respondents who accessed the survey instrument during the pilot phase. The findings were shared with the research team, which incorporated the feedback into the next revision.

The third and final step was to revise the survey based on feedback from the Advisory Board. The survey was shared with all members of the board, and they were invited to attend a meeting to review the survey as a group and provide feedback collectively.

Findings

Below is a brief overview of the findings:

Step 1 - Background Document Review

Based on the review, it was concluded that the research builds off the premise that socially marginalized communities have inequitable access to resources. This access is often mitigated by organizations that are able to build trust with marginalized communities within their service range. Thus the aim of the survey instrument is to identify barriers to support, how resources received are used, and whether there are systematic differences by organization characteristics (e.g., mission, location, community demographics, etc.).

Step 2 - Initial Review of Survey and Survey Findings

Based on the initial findings, the pilot survey was revised to be less academic, thereby making it accessible to a wider audience. Revisions were made to maintain the integrity of the survey goal, to balance research needs (both qualitative and quantitative) and respondent burden, to attend to the potential emotional triggers of responding to a survey about communities experiencing marginalization and disaster, and to improve respondent experience through increased clarity of role and survey content.

At the time of the review, our team was unable to access the web-based version of the survey to review the user experience in the Qualtrics platform. The review was based on an analysis of the survey instrument as a Word document and the raw data from the Qualtrics export. A member of our team also met with Dr. Evan Johnson to better understand the survey and its intended purpose.

An assessment of the survey instrument's readability indicated that there were opportunities to increase the ease of the survey. As explained above, the Flesch Kincaid Reading Ease assessment measures readability based on the number of words in a sentence and the number of syllables in a word. The pilot version of the PAR National Survey scored a 44, indicating that the language was a bit difficult to understand. In addition to the reading ease, the Flesch-Kincaid grade level was also assessed. The PAR National Survey Instrument required a grade level of 9.8, which is above the recommended level of grade 8.

An analysis of the quality and consistency of responses was conducted on the raw data from the 83 respondents who accessed the survey instrument during the pilot phase. This count includes two that were labeled preview. Of those 83 respondents, the PAR team noted that 49 completed the survey. There were significant break-offs as the survey progressed:

- After the introduction, the number of responses dropped from 80 to 66.
- There was another drop with the questions about strategies and resources to 56.
- The remainder of the responses hovered around the high 40s.

What follows are high-level suggestions that were made to improve the performance and interpretation of the survey instrument at the survey-level and the item-level.

Survey-Level Suggestions

- Overall, language should be revised to be less academic and more accessible to a wider audience. This is most common within the descriptions and introduction.
- To ease the survey navigation and user experience, more explicit section headers should be used (examples listed below). The goal is to start broad and then get more specific. This helps with framing and priming the respondent. The section headers should also be included in the survey introduction to give the respondents a sense of the survey content ahead of time.
 - About My Organization
 - About the Communities We Serve
 - Impact of Disasters on Marginalized Communities
 - Support For Marginalized Communities in Disaster
 - Support for Organizations to Respond to Disasters
 - Improving Support for Marginalized Communities

- Include instructions and clarity about who should respond to the survey and then add items to capture that information, such as what is your role, are you completing this as a team, how long have you been at the organization? This will give you a sense of how familiar the respondents are with the context and the organization. With data on who is responding, the team will be better able to target those roles/titles in future administrations.
- Include screener questions to ensure that you are capturing information from organizations that you are most interested in. Examples can include whether they serve marginalized communities or provide PAR services, etc.
- The phrase “marginalized communities” is used throughout the survey. Is this necessary? There is an item that indicates the communities that they serve, so it might be less deficit-based to focus on the communities they serve as opposed to continually labeling them as marginalized. Also, if they serve those that are not experiencing marginalization, then the expectation is that supports are differentiated. If this is the case, then this should be explicitly asked. Assuming the support is consistent, asking whom they serve and then asking about their communities might improve the experience and make the items easier. Another option would be to include a note that reminds the respondent that they are answering for marginalized communities and include the list.

Item-Level Suggestions

- Items should be listed in a logical order such as alphabetical, numerical, least to greatest favorable, etc. Otherwise, the order encourages selection bias and unintentional prioritization, such as listing White first or leading with favorable responses.
- Replace “other” with “not listed.” Best practices discourage “othering,” which labels the respondent. “Not listed” places the responsibility on the survey developer.
- The agree likert scale should be five options: SD, D, A, SA. The expanded scale is a bit more ambiguous, especially without anchors to guide the respondent in selecting an answer. There may be various interpretations of the numbers within the range. Lesser options are also easier for respondents. This scale may increase the cognitive burden on respondents.
- The survey asks about barriers and challenges, but there are more conversations happening in the non-profit and philanthropic sectors around dreaming. Instead of asking about the barriers, the survey could ask about the vision for PAR support for your community and what is needed to achieve that vision.
- Building off the premise that there is inequitable access to resources, there is an implicit assumption that these organizations intentionally support marginalized communities or intentionally seek to support them. It may be helpful to ask a question to gauge that, such as to what extent are you able to reach those communities?
- Add an item for organizations to indicate which types of disasters they have experienced. As the team considers systematic differences, it is possible that disaster type (which is also regional) can be a factor.
- Add an item about budget size. Many non-profits that serve communities of color are often underfunded. Budget size can be a factor in support received and sought.

Step 3 - Final Review with input from Advisory Board

Advisory Board members responded favorably to the revised survey. Among the suggestions made were to be more inclusive of organizations that support communities without resources specialized around hazards. The committee also suggested that the research team provide more support around language used such as racial and ethnic categories and the term “marginalization.”

On November 15, 2022, Dr. Cain met with four advisory board members. All members were provided with a copy of the revised survey in advance. During the meeting, the group reviewed the survey together and discussed their feedback. Members who were unable to attend the meeting were invited to provide written feedback.

The following major changes were made:

- Revised introduction to be more inclusive of organizations that support without resources
- Updated communication channels (Q8)
- Disaggregated physical and mental health
- Updated organizational supports to include hardware and technical infrastructure
- Added this question: “How would you describe your organization’s relationship with the communities that it serves?”
- In Q1, “Public charity” was eliminated as a possible response as it is not a mutually exclusive option

Below are suggestions that emerged from our conversation:

- Add census descriptions of racial and ethnic categories to help respondents
- Provide a definition of “marginalized” throughout the survey and offer synonyms

Readability Assessment

An assessment of the revised survey instrument’s readability, using the Flesch Kincaide Reading Ease assessment, indicated no substantial change. The revised version of the PAR National Survey score increased from 44 to 45, indicating that the language could still be a bit difficult to understand. In addition, the Flesch-Kincaid grade level was also assessed. The revised survey instrument required a grade level of 10 (up from 9.8 with the pilot survey), which is above the recommended level of grade 8. The research team reviewed the survey once more to identify opportunities for additional revisions, which included shortening some sentences and replacing passive voice with active voice where feasible. However, the team concluded that the nature of the content may require higher-level language for clarity. Despite the findings from the readability assessment, the feedback from the Advisory Board was positive, and the team made the decision to move forward with the survey.

About the Authors



Cassandra R. Davis, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the Department of Public Policy at UNC-Chapel Hill. Her research focuses on environmental disruptions to schooling communities, specifically low-income communities of color.



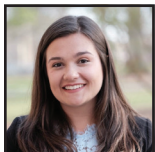
Evan Johnson, Ph.D., is a research assistant professor at UNC-Chapel Hill. His research focuses on innovation and public policy, with specific foci including energy innovation, climate stabilization, and the impacts of federal R&D funding on firms.



Philip Berke, Ph.D., is a research professor in the Department of City & Regional Planning and the director of the Center for Resilient Communities and Environment at UNC-Chapel Hill.



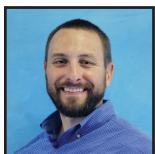
Simona Goldin, Ph.D., is a research associate professor in the Department of Public Policy at UNC-Chapel Hill. Her work focuses on issues of equity and access in U.S. public schools, drawing from her training in the social foundations of education, sociology, and public policy.



April Peck, M.A., is a former graduate student in the Department of Public Policy at UNC-Chapel Hill. Her research includes advocating for marginalized populations with respect to health and wellness.



Ruth Fetaw, B.A., is a research assistant in the Coastal Resilience Center at UNC-Chapel Hill. Her research includes public policy, global health, community preparedness, and disaster management.



Nathan Dollar, Ph.D., is a research associate in the Carolina Population Center at UNC-Chapel Hill. His research lies at the intersection of migration, labor, and population health.



Megan R. Griffard, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the School of Education at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Her research focuses on principal leadership during disruptions to schooling, including natural disasters and COVID-19.