

Fall 2025 Virtual Seminar Series

“CAPACITY AND COMMUNITY: EXPLORING THE COMPLEXITIES OF DISASTER RECOVERY THROUGH THE LENS OF HUD CDBG-DR FUNDING”

[ASHLEY ROSS](#)

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3:30 PM EST

[ZOOM LINK](#)

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Abstract

Since 2001, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has allocated nearly \$100 billion through the Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program to support unmet needs in disaster recovery. Yet, recovery outcomes often remain slow, uneven, and challenging—particularly for low-income and minority households. Research suggests that funding distribution can unintentionally favor wealthier, predominantly white communities, raising important questions about equity and effectiveness (Howell & Elliott, 2018; 2019). While reforms have aimed to improve oversight and resilience, recent evaluations continue to highlight issues such as administrative delays, limited oversight, and barriers to access for renters and vulnerable populations (Government Accountability Office, 2022; Martin et al., 2019). This seminar introduces research from the HUD Center of Excellence in Capacity-building for Resilient Housing (CECREH) focused on understanding the role of government capacity in disaster recovery, with a particular emphasis on housing. Using Hurricane Harvey (2017) in Texas as a case study, the seminar explores the CDBG-DR process, the actors involved, and the challenges encountered. It also outlines planned next steps including interviews and funding analyses, which will inform ongoing work of CECREH.

Biography

Dr. Ashley D. Ross is an Associate Professor at Texas A&M University’s College of Marine Sciences and Maritime Studies, located in Galveston. Her research focuses on the governance of coastal environmental hazards. She has published over 30 articles and 2 books on community resilience to disasters, emergency management, risk communication, and the individual factors associated with public policy support related to environmental and disaster issues. She serves as the Associate Director of the [Department of Housing and Urban Development Center of Excellence in Capacity-building for Resilient Housing](#) and is a faculty member with the [Institute for a Disaster Resilient Texas](#).

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