



Strengthening CARE's Partnership with OFDA

As a result of the recent restructuring in CARE USA, the Emergency and Humanitarian Assistance Team (EHAT) will now serve as the key relationship manager with OFDA Washington and will provide grant proposal development and management support to COs with OFDA funding.

The [Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance \(OFDA\)](#) is the office within USAID responsible for facilitating and coordinating U.S. Government emergency assistance overseas. As part of USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA), OFDA provides humanitarian assistance to save lives, alleviate human suffering, and reduce the social and economic impact of humanitarian emergencies worldwide. OFDA responds to all types of natural disasters, including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, cyclones, floods, droughts, fires, pest infestations, and disease outbreaks. OFDA also provides assistance when lives or livelihoods are threatened by catastrophes such as civil conflict, acts of terrorism, or industrial accidents. In addition to emergency assistance, OFDA funds mitigation activities to reduce the impact of recurrent natural hazards and provides training to build local capacity for disaster management and response.

EHAT will work with country offices to strengthen and maintain a good relationship with OFDA in order to increase funding for CARE's humanitarian work allowing us to reach more people in times of crisis. By establishing systems for better communication, proposal development, grants management and compliance, we will work towards enhancing CARE's reputation with OFDA and other USAID/DCHA offices.

Some immediate steps CARE can take to achieve this are to:

- ❖ Increase visibility of CARE in OFDA field offices and in Washington
- ❖ Improve quality of proposals and programs
- ❖ Improve HQ grant management and program oversight

Increase visibility of CARE in OFDA field offices and Washington

EHAT will maintain regular contact with the OFDA team in Washington and encourage CARE field staff to do the same with OFDA regional and country offices. Country Office staff, visiting HQ staff, Regional Emergency Coordinators (RECs) and RMU staff should communicate regularly with regional advisors and other OFDA representatives in the appropriate field office (see list below). And if possible, when visiting the US, CO staff should plan to visit Washington along with EHAT staff. Face to face visits are strongly encouraged. Our aim is to keep OFDA informed about CARE projects including our Disaster Risk Reduction programs and strategies. We want to highlight CARE's capacity to respond effectively to disasters and enhance communities' resilience to disasters.

To improve timeliness of interventions, contact OFDA's regional or country representative immediately after a disaster occurs. Let them know if and how CARE plans to respond and be sure to stay in touch with Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DART)/ US mission teams. Prepare and submit a concept note as soon as possible, preferably within 48 hours of the disaster being declared by OFDA. If we wait too long to contact OFDA, it creates the impression that we are slow responders or do not prioritize them as a partner. This may also cause CARE to miss a funding opportunity as OFDA's funds for a particular disaster may have already been fully allocated. Also note that it may take a few weeks for an award to be processed so it is very important to start the process early.

Improve Quality of Proposals and Programs

A clear, well formulated and technically sound proposal is essential for obtaining OFDA funding. This can sometimes be challenging in emergency situations so here are a few tips for developing OFDA proposals.

- Involve EHAT staff at the very beginning of the proposal development process.
- Get to know OFDA's regional strategies. Identify ways that CARE can contribute to these strategies and develop proposals that are well aligned with regional priorities.
- Familiarize yourselves with the [OFDA Guidelines for Unsolicited Proposals and Reporting](#).
- Attend OFDA proposal guidelines training as well as trainings in technical areas such as Protection and Economic Recovery (EHAT will inform COs of upcoming trainings).
- Try to avoid using "CARE speak" (e.g. Program Approach) in proposals. OFDA proposal reviewers may not be familiar with these terms.
- Ensure that all interventions lead to the achievement of OFDA's impact indicators.
- When creating budgets for, remember to include costs for security, staff wellness, evaluation, and HQ support.
- Proposed activities must be based on assessed needs and not assumed needs. So be sure to conduct a needs assessment or to reference assessments carried out by recognized sources (such as the U.N)
- Make sure that proposals adhere to the [Sphere Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#).

EHAT is available to support COs with proposal development and guide COs through the submission and negotiation process. Contact Camille Davis in EHAT for templates and sample proposals.

OFDA occasionally releases Annual Program Statements (APs) which are used to generate competition for new awards where OFDA intends to support specific activities. CARE COs eligible to apply are encouraged to check the solicitation for alignment with the CO's priorities and apply if it is determined that the CO has adequate capacity.

Once a program has begun, periodically update regional advisors and EHAT staff on program progress and always remember to seek OFDA's approval of any changes in program activities. Avoid spending before a contract is signed or a Pre Authorization Letter has been issued.

Improve HQ Grant Management and Program Oversight

As CARE strives for better accountability to donors and beneficiaries of humanitarian resources stewarded by CARE, EHAT is working towards a unified/ centralized approach throughout the life cycle of OFDA grants– proposal development, submission, grants management, finance and tracking and relationship management.

OFDA in Washington is keen to continue to have points of contacts in the US to facilitate rapid review of proposals and resolution of grant implementation issues, so within EHAT, the new points of contact are David Gazashvili (ECARMU, MERMU, WASH Rapid Assessment Team project), Camille Davis (LARMU, SARMU) and Bob Laprade (ARMU, WARMU).

Country offices are encouraged to notify the appropriate EHAT point person of its intention to pursue OFDA funding and remain in close communication throughout the proposal development process.

In order to improve accountability, quarterly reports must be submitted to CARE USA to be reviewed one week before due to OFDA. Be sure to adhere to the reporting schedule. OFDA reports are typically due within 30 days of every calendar quarter.

To provide better technical support, and to be able to effectively resolve any issues that might come up with OFDA, EHAT will be making an effort to know all of CARE's OFDA funded projects. This means regular correspondence with the implementing CO, including more frequent visits to projects for monitoring and evaluation.

Special Reporting Conditions

FY12 OFDA funding agreements with CARE include special reporting conditions to demonstrate to OFDA that we are addressing our A133 audit corrective actions across the organization. This special reporting condition requires that CARE provides OFDA with monthly reporting on compliance with CARE USA's implementation of A133 corrective actions plans, and support visits related to improving areas of A 133 non-compliance.

In order for CARE to comply with this requirement, all COs who receive OFDA funding are asked to submit a monthly report of visitors from C/USA HQ or RMU who are working with the country office on support, monitoring and oversight of compliance and audit corrective actions in the areas identified in the A133 audits.

Special conditions reports should be sent to the Donor Compliance Assurance team at dcau@care.org with a copy to Camille Davis, EHAT at cdavis@care.org and copy to your RMU.

As always, EHAT is available to support Country Offices as they pursue OFDA funding and implement disaster response and risk reduction projects. Feel free to contact us with any questions you have regarding OFDA partnership.

The Emergency and Humanitarian Assistance Team, CARE USA

OFDA Regional Advisors

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

Tim Callaghan, Principal Regional Advisor (San Jose, Costa Rica)

Europe Middle East and Central Asia (EMCA)

Jack Myer, Principal Regional Advisor

Andy Barak, Sr. Advisor Iraq and Yemen

Dennis Johnson, Regional Advisor, Middle East (based in Cairo)

Marci Michaud, Regional Advisor, Central Asia (based in Kazakhstan)

South, West and North Africa (SWAN)

Southern Africa - Harlan Hale, Principal Regional Advisor (Pretoria), other RA position vacant

West Africa- Dakar – Principal Regional Advisor position vacant, other RA is Victor Bushamuka

Asia

Al Dwyer, Principal Regional Advisor (Bangkok)

East Asia and Pacific Regional Advisors

Brian Hyde (South East Asia)

Ben Hemingway (Pacific Island Nations)

Bill Berger (Japan)

South Asia Regional Advisors:

Andrea Tracy, SA Regional Advisor

Rob Friedman, SA Regional Advisor

Mark Adams (Islamabad)

Stacey Ballou (Islamabad)

Vacant position (Jakarta)

Stephanie Sobol, Sr. Humanitarian Advisor based in Kabul, Afghanistan (Note: As of October 1, Afghanistan falls under South Asia and no longer Central Asia)

East and Central Africa

Giorgianna Platt, Principal Regional Advisor (Nairobi)