“It is generally agreed that the government should help disaster victims in times of need, but it is debatable whether the fiscal responsibility resides primarily with the federal or the state government.”

Congressional Research Service 2017
Relocation has happened & is happening. We want to do better.

How is climate-induced relocation different from other types of movement?

Does it matter?
Stafford Act
1700s & 1800s
Primary responsibility local

Long Point Cape Cod 1850s

Brighton Beach Hotel 1888 Coney Island New York

Federal Role Minimal/None: Ignore request to move post office for 5 months

Niobrara, Nebraska
“The Town Too Tough to Stay Put”
(Nebraska Historical Society)
**1700s & 1800s**
Primary responsibility local
“Acts of God” Laissez-faire

**early 1900s**
Responsibility starts to shift
1926 Euclid Zoning (Police Power)
1927 Mississippi River Flood
1928 Flood Control Act

**1920s**
1926 Euclid Zoning (Police Power)
1927 Mississippi River Flood
1928 Flood Control Act

**1950s**
1950 Disaster Relief Act (public aid)
Highways, Social Security, Housing
1958 Civil Defense 50-50 share

**The Stafford Act**
Robert T. Stafford
Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as Amended

@sidersadapts
The Stafford Act

Robert T. Stafford
Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as Amended

1970s
Informal / ad hoc funding
1977-79 Soldiers Grove

1980s & 90s
1989 FEMA buyout program
1990s Midwest town relocations
Individual property acquisitions (rivers)

Soldiers Grove WI
Soldiers Grove WI
Pattonsburg MO – St. Joseph Press Photo
Valmeyer IL
@sidersadapts
**FEMA-funded property acquisitions, Mach et al. 2019**

- **2000s & '10s**
  - More, smaller buyouts (individual)
  - Fewer community relocations (exception: Tribal communities)

- **Current**
  - Government as barrier
  - Solution: more federal control? Or less?

FEMA-Funded Property Acquisitions

Winslow NE 2019, Photo by NE

Number of bought-out properties, 1989-2017
- Mach et al., Science Advances, 2019
1700s & 1800s
Primary responsibility local “Acts of God” Laissez-faire
- 1926 Euclid Zoning (Police Power)
- 1927 Mississippi River Flood
- 1928 Flood Control Act

1900s
Responsibility starts to shift
- 1926 Euclid Zoning (Police Power)
- 1927 Mississippi River Flood
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1920s
- 1926 Euclid Zoning (Police Power)
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1960s & 70s
- 1968 National Flood Insurance Program
- 1979 Federal Emergency Mgmt Agency
- 1979 Soldiers Grove

1970s
- 1968 National Flood Insurance Program
- 1979 Federal Emergency Mgmt Agency
- 1979 Soldiers Grove

1980s & 90s
- 1988 Stafford Disaster Relief & Emergency Assistance Act (“Integrated Em Mgmt”)
- 1989 FEMA approves funding for buyouts
- 1990s Midwest relocations

2000s
# presidential disaster declarations triples
- Local authority reduced (resist land use control)

Current
Equity Debate over more or less federal role

@sidersadapts
“It is generally agreed that the government should help disaster victims in times of need, but it is debatable whether the fiscal responsibility resides primarily with the federal or the state government.”

Congressional Research Service 2017
~43k households helped

64,101 NEW repetitive loss properties (2009-2018)

Households still at risk
Congressional Reporting System, using FEMA data 2017,
https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R42702.html

Average 18.6 per year 1960-1969
Average 57.1 per year 2000-2009

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INCREASE FEDERAL ROLE

- More federal funding
  - to state & local govs
  - to individuals
- Centralized federal framework to support relocation
  - where? who leads?
- Address wider range of hazards (and climate change)
  - e.g., coastal erosion, drought
- Lack of local & state capacity

DECREASE FEDERAL ROLE

- Increase local & state government responsibility
  - raise federal cost share
  - raise ‘disaster’ threshold
  - disaster deductible
- Increased role private sector?
- Authority-funding mismatch
  - new development in coastal counties growing
  - lack of flood risk disclosure masks market signals
  - does increased federal responsibility come with authority? Not yet...
# THINGS GOVERNMENT DOES*

*(Bardach, *Practical Guide to Policy Analysis)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TAXES</strong></td>
<td>• Shared lessons on alternatives to property tax revenue models for local governments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>• Rebuilding restrictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Federal infrastructure siting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Wetlands &amp; open space protection</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                   | • Communities of practice | Shared lessons learned | Evaluation
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WAG
WILD AMBITIOUS GOAL

what would wildly ambitious adaptation / hazard mitigation look like?