

A Cross-Case Comparison of CDBG-DR Program Implementation after the 2017 Disasters in California, Florida, and Texas

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INTRODUCTION

- Following major disasters, state governments must translate recovery plans into programs that deliver assistance to affected households.
- CDBG-DR gives grantees flexibility to address locally defined unmet needs, but implementation depends on how well Action Plans align program design with delivery capacity.
- Housing recovery is especially complex because it combines applicant intake, eligibility review, environmental compliance, construction management, and reimbursement.
- This study compares how California, Florida, and Texas implemented housing-related CDBG-DR programs after the 2017 disasters.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVE

Objective: Compare how disaster context shaped housing-program priorities and implementation across California, Florida, and Texas after the 2017 disasters.

Program categories:

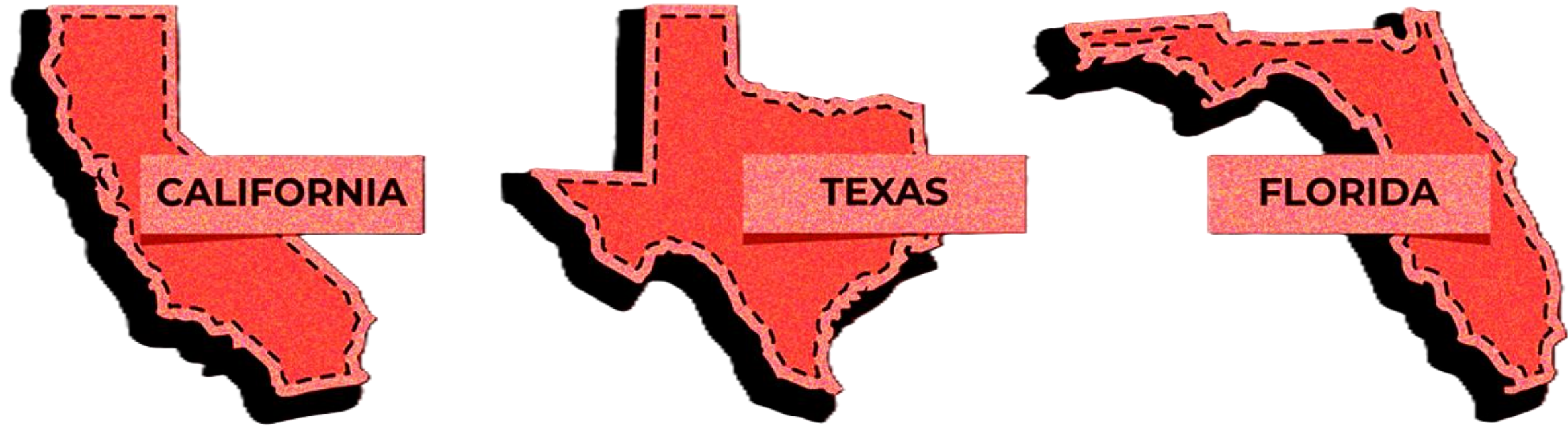
- Housing Rehabilitation and Reconstruction
- New Housing Construction

Research questions:

- How did allocations differ by disaster context?
- Which program category converted obligations into expenditures faster?
- What do these patterns imply for Action Plan design and delivery capacity?

Data and Methods

- Comparative case study: California, Florida, and Texas were selected because each received major 2017 CDBG-DR allocations but faced different housing-damage patterns.
- Data sources: State Action Plans, substantial amendments, and Quarterly Performance Reports (QPRs).
- Program classification: program lines were grouped into (a) Housing Rehabilitation and Reconstruction and (b) New Housing Construction.
- Implementation metrics: obligated, expended, and disbursed funds tracked over time.
- Multi-purpose budgets were disaggregated when possible; portions that could not be assigned reliably were excluded from the category-level comparison.



KEY FINDINGS

- Rehabilitation and reconstruction programs generally moved from obligation to expenditure faster than new housing construction.
- New housing construction advanced later across all three states; in Texas, obligations also dropped after a 2021 Action Plan amendment.

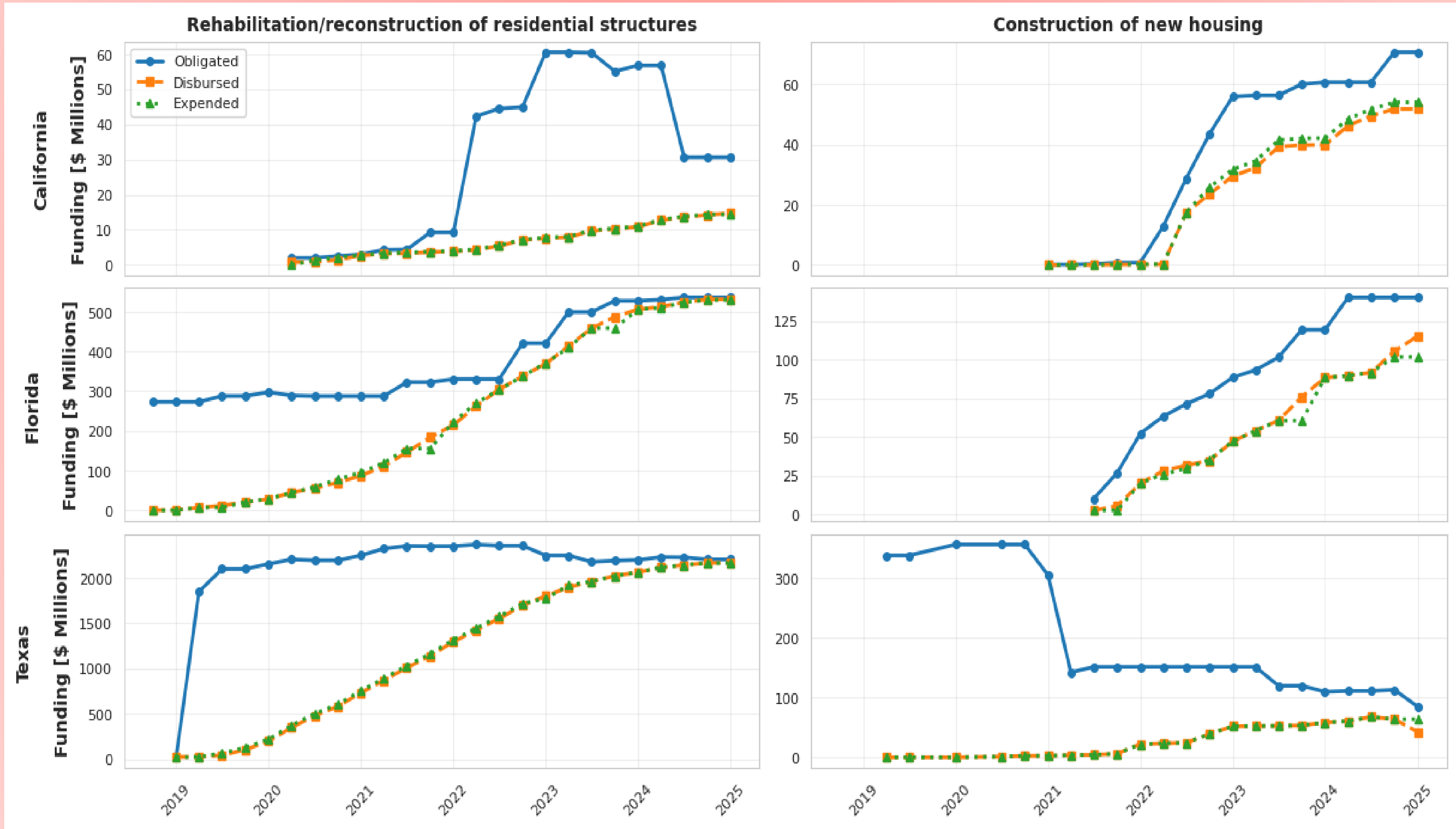
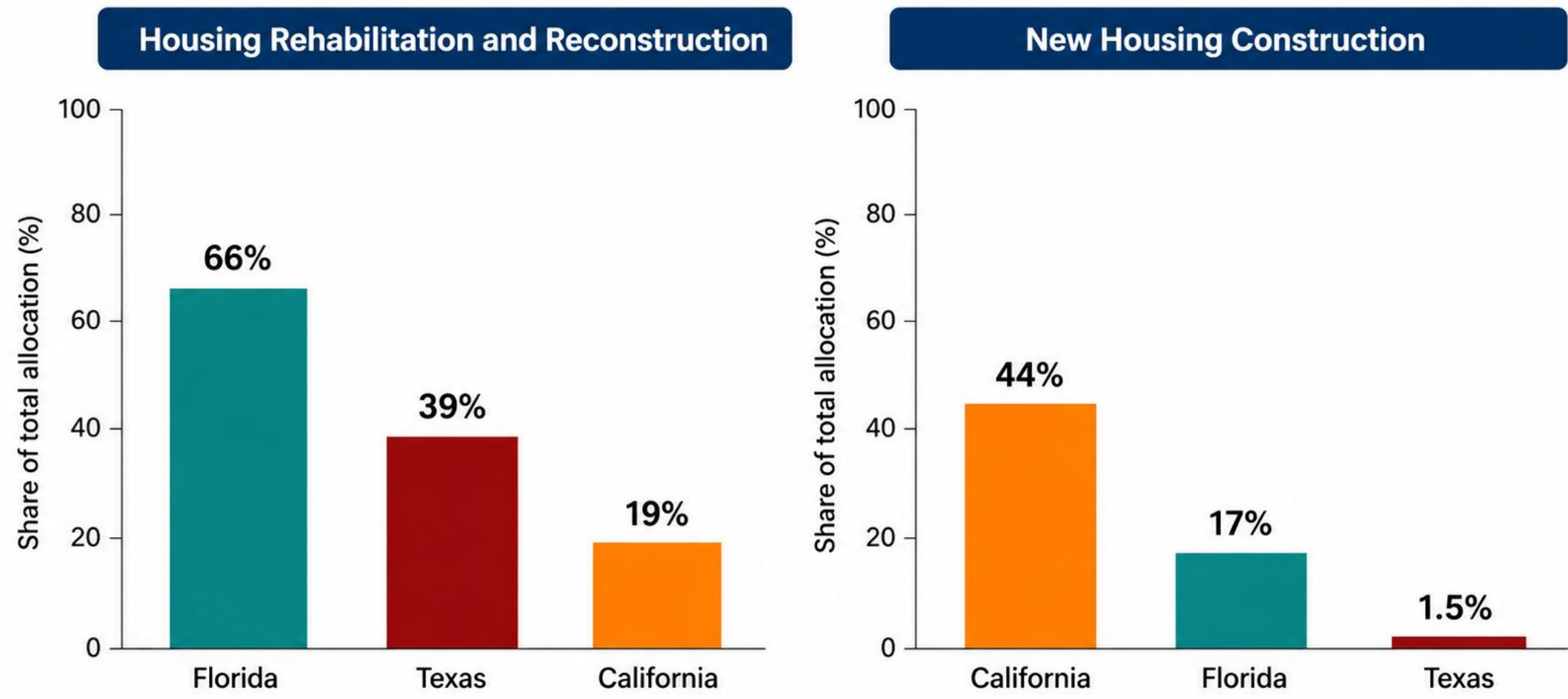


Figure 1. Funding over time for housing reconstruction and rehabilitation, and new housing construction by state.

Program Allocation by State

Share of total CDBG-DR allocation (%)



CONCLUSIONS & PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

- There is no one-size-fits-all housing-recovery strategy; program design should reflect the local damage pattern and housing need.
- Action Plans should be designed around realistic delivery capacity and timelines, not only unmet need.
- Administrative resources should be calibrated to program complexity, especially for new housing construction.
- Streamlining applicant intake and construction management and sequencing infrastructure investments can shorten time to benefit for affected households.

DISCUSSION

- The three states adopted clearly different housing-recovery strategies, and these differences are consistent with the type of damage produced by the 2017 disasters.
- California's greater emphasis on new construction aligns with wildfire damage that destroyed large numbers of homes and left less housing stock available for rehabilitation.
- Florida and Texas emphasized rehabilitation and reconstruction because hurricane-related wind and flood damage often left homes damaged but repairable.
- Program type influenced pace: rehabilitation generally moved from obligation to expenditure faster, while new construction required longer permitting, procurement, environmental review, site preparation, and construction-management processes.

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