

# The US Cash Working Group

## Terms of Reference

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April 29, 2016

### 1 PURPOSE

While evidence confirms that in-kind assistance is often not the most appropriate or cost-efficient response option, in 2014, in-kind assistance represented more than 90% of global humanitarian assistance.<sup>1</sup>

**The US Cash Working Group (CWG)**, established in 2016 with the support of the Cash Learning Partnership and through funding of the US Agency for International Development’s Office of Food for Peace, **is an information exchange or interest group that aims to enhance the scale, quality, timeliness, appropriateness and beneficiary accountability of cash-based interventions globally, across all sectors and particularly in preparedness, emergency response, and early recovery.** The CWG is one of the ways in which the US cash Community of Practice (CoP) interacts and expresses itself.

The specific objectives of the CWG are:

- To form a network of implementers and advisors interested in learning about and improving the use of cash transfers
- To strengthen capacity of individuals and institutions based in the US through sharing best practices and experience with respect to cash-based interventions
- To promote partnership and synergy among CWG members
- To promote coordination and information sharing across sectors; among emergency and development actors and between implementers of foreign assistance, donors, researchers, UN, networks and the private sector
- To link global experience and best practice from national and regional levels to US headquarters levels, thereby facilitating dissemination through members’ internal structures the strategies, learning initiatives, and research from the US to regional and national levels
- To advocate with US donors, the US Congress, and in global fora regarding issues important to increasing the scale, quality, and timeliness of cash-based interventions.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2014, only 5-6% of all humanitarian assistance was given directly to beneficiaries in the form of cash or vouchers. “If sectors where cash is often less appropriate (health, water and sanitation) and not appropriate at all (mine action, coordination, security) are removed from the equation, then cash and vouchers were roughly 10% of the total.” [Doing Cash Differently: How cash transfers can transform humanitarian aid.](#) Report of the High Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers. Overseas Development Institute (ODI), 2015.

## 2 MEMBERSHIP

The CWG is **open to all** parties interested in respecting and promoting the objectives of the group. There are no restrictions to membership or barriers to entry into the CWG. However, the CWG is most relevant to US-based current or potential implementers of cash-based interventions and related donors, researchers, UN, networks and private sector actors (financial service providers--broadly defined, etc.).

## 3 WAYS OF WORKING

### 3.1 LEADERSHIP

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The CWG may identify up to 10 cash focal points from US-based institutions to comprise a Strategic Working Group or SWG to provide leadership to the CWG and linkages with the Link the activities of the CWG to the CaLP [Technical Advisory Group \(TAG\)](#) and vice-versa.

#### 3.1.1 SWG MEMBERSHIP

To be considered a member of the SWG, the institution/individual should meet the following criteria:

- Individual is a cash focal point for an institution with a US headquarters
- Individual's institution is represented on the CaLP TAG or is nominated by a member of the TAG
- Consistent participation in CWG meetings and engagement in agenda-setting and information sharing

The membership of the SWG will be reviewed annually by the CWG, allowing individuals and organizations to gradually share leadership responsibilities over time. The CWG will determine the review process. The CWG will:

- Retain at least two-thirds of the SWG membership from one year to the next to ensure leadership continuity
- Ensure representation of multiple sectors in the SWG, not limited to food security/livelihoods
- Limit SWG membership to not more than 10 individuals for ease of management.

#### 3.1.2 SWG PURPOSE

The SWG may provide leadership and direction with and for the CWG and the SWG, including:

- Link the activities of the CWG to the CaLP [Technical Advisory Group \(TAG\)](#) and vice-versa.
- Develop shared vision and common objectives, to include capacity building, research and advocacy goals. An illustrative list of objectives could include:
  - Enhance US cash community of practice capacity through training and the exchange of information and experience
  - Document lessons learned and best practices for:
    - Simultaneous multi-modality programming (under what conditions is it appropriate? and how to do it?)

- How to design and activate trigger indicators for modality switching
- Building “better” vouchers more sensitive to markets
- How different organizations make progress towards institutionalizing or mainstreaming cash-based programming and preparedness
- Monitoring, evaluation, and accountability with respect to cash-based interventions
- Comparison of losses and diversion for in-kind vs. vouchers vs. cash
- Comparing the cost of preparing for in-kind responses vs. cash responses
- Achieve equal treatment by US donors and US organizations of cash, voucher, and in-kind assistance
- More equal, diverse EFSP recipients
- Increase in joint (multi-sector) programming between OFDA and FFP
- Improved response analysis and documentation within the CoP
- Define roles and responsibilities; encourage all members to contribute and add value to the collaboration
- Establish a system for mutual accountability within the CWG, and, if possible, of measurement of results and achievements towards objectives
- Define a structure and process for coordination and communication

### 3.2 CWG LINKS WITH OTHER GROUPS

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The CWG’s closest ties will be to the SWG and the Cash Learning Partnership’s Technical Advisory Group (TAG) with the following general breakdown of responsibilities and engagement:

- CWG: information sharing, support to objectives as able
- SWG: leadership, agenda-setting, joint research and advocacy for US-specific issues
- TAG: global technical guidance and leadership on thematic areas

The breakdown is further elaborated in the following table:

Info flow	CWG-outgoing	SWG-outgoing	TAG-outgoing
CWG-incoming	Share information (may be more informal)	Leadership, agenda-setting	Share information (may be more formal)
SWG-incoming	Inform joint research and advocacy for US-specific issues	Joint advocacy outside cash CoP	Coordinate agendas with other regional/national CWGs
TAG-incoming	Inform joint research and advocacy globally	Leadership, agenda-setting	--

### **3.3 CWG ACTIVITIES**

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#### **3.3.1 MEETINGS**

The CWG may engage its members or external actors in many ways, but the core activity of the group will be to exchange updates and learning through regular meetings. These meetings will be held in person in Washington, D.C., and will be open to call-ins, video conferencing, or webinar format as available. Meetings may be recorded. Meetings will take place every 2-3 months and will last between 1-3 hours depending on the agenda. Responsibility for organizing, hosting, and moderating meetings currently sits with the Cash Learning Partnership but may be shared in whole or in part with other members of the SWG or CWG as appropriate. Meeting themes, dates and times will generally be established for the next meeting at the conclusion of the current meeting based on suggestions of the SWG or the CWG. Unless otherwise determined at the outset of the meeting, the meeting host is responsible for sharing the minutes of the meeting.

#### **3.3.2 OTHER ACTIVITIES**

The CWG may be asked to engage in various research or advocacy initiatives of the SWG. Regardless of the level of engagement through the CWG as a whole, through sub-groups, or through individual organizations, plans and progress towards these activities should be shared with the CWG during its regular meetings.

#### **3.3.3 SUB-GROUPS**

The CWG may organize sub-groups, like the SWG, to complete specific tasks or to coordinate on specific thematic or geographic issues as needed. The purpose, composition, and ways of working of the sub-groups will be defined as sub-groups are constituted. The CWG will ensure that these sub-groups do not duplicate or undermine working groups existing within the CaLP TAG.

### **3.4 REACHING OUT TO NEW POTENTIAL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**

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All participants in the CWG are encouraged to invite new members to the CWG. CaLP will facilitate assimilation of new members by allowing them to signal their interest from the CaLP website.

CaLP will update its contact lists with new members as they arrive and will complete an in-depth review of contact lists annually.

### **3.5 COMMUNICATION**

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CaLP will host a collaborative platform for sharing notes and documents on Samepage for the SWG and on its website for the CWG. The website address is [will be]: [www.cashlearning.org/coordination/northamerica-regional-cash-working-group](http://www.cashlearning.org/coordination/northamerica-regional-cash-working-group). The website will share CWG events and updates, agendas, meeting presentations, contact information for CWG leadership (currently CaLP North America Regional Focal Point), the opportunity to join the CWG mailing list, etc.

## 4 ACCOUNTABILITY, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

### 4.1 ACCOUNTABILITY

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Participants in the CWG are accountable to each other and to the broader community of practice to:

- Act as cash champions within their organizations. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Share learning from the CWG within their own organization
  - Share learning from their own organization (or others) with the CWG
  - Ensure regular updates of the Cash Atlas (<http://www.cash-atlas.org/>) from their organization
  - Encourage newcomers within their sector or organization to join CWG meetings
- Promote the uptake of cash-based interventions with quality and at scale both within their organization, by their donors and through sectoral coordination groups
- Contribute as able to longer-term research, advocacy, and capacity building goals of the CWG
- Raise technical or policy concerns and questions about cash-based interventions with the CWG for treatment in subsequent meetings
- Respond to technical or policy concerns raised to the CWG

### 4.2 MONITORING

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The SWG will regularly monitor the progress of the CWG to meeting its proposed goals. Monitoring indicators may include, but are not limited to:

- Number of new members joining the group
- Attendance at CWG meetings (both in-person and remote, as well as remote locations)
- Group members reporting value of CWG activities to their work
- Progress against work plans for any advocacy or research objectives
- Number and subject area of updates and experiences presented
- Number of members reporting updates to Cash Atlas

### 4.3 EVALUATION

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The SWG will evaluate and report on monitoring indicators to the CWG bi-annually at minimum. At this time, the CWG will consider any changes needed to plans, engagement strategies or these terms of reference. Proposed changes should be validated by the CWG.

## 5 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The CWG will consider **cash-based interventions** or **cash transfers** as all programs or projects where cash (or vouchers for goods or services) is directly provided to beneficiaries. In the context of humanitarian assistance the term is used to refer to the provision of cash or vouchers given to individuals, household or community recipients, not to governments or other state actors. CBI covers all modalities of cash-based assistance, including vouchers. This excludes remittances and microfinance in humanitarian interventions

(although microfinance and money transfer institutions may be used for the actual delivery of cash). The term can be used interchangeably with Cash Based Transfers (CBT) and Cash Transfer Programming (CTP).<sup>2</sup>

**Communities of Practice** are “groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in the area by interacting on an ongoing basis. – Etienne Wenger”<sup>3</sup>

An **information exchange** or **interest group** “is dedicated to information exchange around a particular topic or technical area. People may share promising practices, have discussions, ask questions, and share articles, relevant publications and other news around this topic.”<sup>4</sup>

A **working group** is a group of “practitioners with similar skills [seeking] to accomplish a series of tasks over an extended period. Strong leadership is important in this type of group to accomplish goals efficiently and keep momentum going over a longer timeframe and multiple activities.”<sup>5</sup>

**Samepage** (<https://www.samepage.io>) is a free, online collaboration platform that allows for free sharing of documents, links, photos, calendars, and other resources.

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<sup>2</sup> *Glossary of Cash transfer Programme Terminology*. The Cash Learning Partnership. <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/calp-updated-glossary-03.16.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> *Supporting Communities of Practice: A TOPS Quick Guide to Linking Development Practitioners* (Version 2). The Technical and Operational Performance Support (TOPS) Program. 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.