



FEMA

Date: Aug 28, 2008
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Fact Sheet

DISASTER ASSISTANCE DIRECTORATE

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has always regarded the protection and preservation of life and property as our top priority. Accordingly, the Disaster Assistance Directorate (DAD) focuses their maximum effort on ensuring the timely and effective provision of critical financial and technical assistance to disaster-impacted individuals, households and communities available under FEMA's Stafford Act authorities.

New initiatives, partnerships and collaborations define the changes and improvements that have taken place within the DAD. In 2007, DAD issued more than 30 policy documents establishing, updating or clarifying key programs. Nearly two and half years after the most devastating storm in the history of the nation, many of the lessons we learned have been adopted, institutionalized and are being standardized and implemented nationwide. While we have faced innumerable challenges, DAD continues to marshal the efforts and expertise of the community of federal, tribal, state and voluntary emergency managers to aggressively and compassionately address the needs of individuals, families and communities devastated by disasters.

Significant Initiatives Include:

Disaster Housing Assistance Program

In 2007, FEMA partnered with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to create and pilot the new Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP). On July 26, 2007, FEMA and HUD completed an Interagency Agreement establishing the DHAP, a temporary housing rental assistance and case management program for eligible individuals and households displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This ground-breaking new program is being administered by HUD through their existing national network of Public Housing Agencies (PHAs).

Local PHAs throughout the nation were awarded grants from FEMA to provide rent subsidies to eligible families for a period not to exceed 16 months, beginning December 1, 2007, and ending March 1, 2009. Each PHA also will provide case management services, to include a needs assessment and individual development plan for each family. The goal of the HUD case management effort is to promote self-sufficiency for the participating family. Approximately 28,000 eligible residents displaced by the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes will continue to have their rent paid through this collaborative partnership with HUD.

Since this partnership began, HUD and FEMA have been working together to ensure that the transition of responsibility from one agency to another is completed as smoothly as possible. In addition, HUD and their PHAs have been aggressively reaching out to those families eligible for assistance, to include sending letters, knocking on doors, and calling households to verify information and help ensure that no individual or household falls through the cracks. HUD also has deployed staff members to those cities hosting the largest numbers of displaced families. Outreach has been aggressive, as demonstrated by HUD's recent public media campaign, which utilized radio and newspapers to locate and encourage eligible families to register for DHAP. FEMA and HUD continue to work together to ensure that all eligible individuals and families are contacted and transitioned into the new program as seamlessly as possible.

Changes to Emergency Support Function #6 - Mass Care, Housing, Human Services and Emergency Assistance

FEMA recently coordinated, in conjunction with our federal, tribal, state and voluntary agency partners, a major revision of the ESF #6 Annex to the newly released National Response Framework (NRF). Many of the improvements made to the Annex originated from the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 (PKEMRA), which expanded the federal role in ESF #6 by designating FEMA as the sole primary agency, and added additional authorities and responsibilities for evacuation (Sec 512, 632, 681); tracking and family relocation (689b, 689c); pet rescue and shelter considerations [403(a)(3)]; and medical (403(a)(3) and specialized accommodations for sheltering (689). In a large mass care operation requiring federal support to a state, FEMA will direct and coordinate the provision of necessary support from federal partner agencies (such as Department of Defense, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture - Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Health and Human Services (HHS), HUD, Veterans Administration, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and others), as well as with our longstanding American Red Cross partners.

FEMA continues to work with federal, tribal, state, and voluntary partners to build a robust system for evacuation, sheltering and housing that involves national planning and includes national standards. A key initiative is FEMA's collaboration with the American Red Cross to implement the National Shelter System (NSS). The NSS is a database that currently lists and provided key information about more than 46,500 shelters across the country, to include sheltering type and capacity. Outreach and training to federal, tribal, state and local authorities using the system is ongoing, and the data is continuously verified and updated. As part of enhanced mass care collaboration, the American Red Cross has embedded full-time staff in FEMA regional offices to coordinate on mass care guidance and plans. FEMA Logistics Management Directorate and ESF #6 representatives meet regularly with their American Red Cross partners to ensure uninterrupted commodity delivery and distribution, and to pre-identify potential support requirements.

Additional information on specific ESF #6 accomplishments in the areas of mass care, housing, human services, and emergency assistance are as follows:

Mass Care

ESF #6 - National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System

Following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, Congress authorized the establishment of the National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System (NEFRLS) to facilitate the expeditious

reunification of families separated after a presidentially-declared emergency or major disaster. NEFRLS is a web-based system which, when activated, enables FEMA to provide a nationally accessible system that allows adults, displaced from their homes or pre-incident location, to voluntarily register and share specific information on their post-disaster well-being or location with specified family members or friends. Adults may register with NEFRLS via a toll-free telephone number or the internet. Adults registering or searching for a displaced child under the age of 21 will be directed via an internet link to the National Emergency Child Locator Center (NECLC) or through a referral to the NECLC 800 number. Medical patients that have been displaced due to a major disaster or emergency will have access to and can voluntarily register in the system.

FEMA's NEFRLS toll-free number for displaced individuals of disasters can be used anywhere, including medical facilities. The NEFRLS toll-free number allows disaster victims without access to the Internet to register or search the system on their own or with the help of NEFRLS call center staff. In the absence of a presidentially-declared disaster, the NEFRLS posts a recorded message that refers callers to appropriate local authorities, the American Red Cross, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children or the National Emergency Child Locator Center for further assistance.

ESF #6 - Establishment of National Emergency Child Locator Center

The National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System works in conjunction with the National Emergency Child Locator Center to help reunite families that have become separated as a result of a presidentially declared disaster. By calling the Family Registry and Locator System, people who have been separated from their families and friends can provide information about themselves and where they can be found. At the same time, families looking for lost family members are urged to call the toll-free number as they search for them.

Registration is voluntary, and displaced persons are asked to identify individuals to whom they want to provide information about their location and other personal matters. The call center is capable of handling calls in Spanish and uses a relay system for communicating with people who are hard of hearing. Upon activation, the call center is operational 24-hours a day. The Center can be activated in times of active disasters. Call center operations are managed by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, with support from FEMA.

FEMA also has a memorandum of understanding with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to facilitate the activation and deployment of teams to disaster affected areas to facilitate state efforts to locate and reunite missing children with their families.

ESF #6 - Volunteer and Donations Management Support Annex

FEMA recently adjudicated federal, tribal, state and voluntary agency comments to improve the Volunteer and Donations Management Support Annex in time for the newly released NRF. A critical donations management initiative under this annex is the implementation of the Aidmatrix network.

Launched in 2007, the Aidmatrix network is a web-based system that can be established on a state-by-state basis as a partnership between public and private sectors to assist nonprofits, in utilizing the business concept of supply chain technology for humanitarian aid. The system is being developed in cooperation with the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (NVOAD) the primary non-profit coalition that organizes disaster work among the many agencies engaged in those efforts.

With the Aidmatrix system, donors can make their offer through either the national or state portal; however, each offer will then be directed to the state portal(s). The state Donations Coordination Team (DCT) assembled by the state, identifies the non-profit organizations that will participate in the system and the DCT will also designate a coordinator who can review and share the offers of donations being received. Within this system, cash donations can be made at the state level to the state NVOAD affiliates and other non-profits designated by the state.

ESF #6 - Pet Policy and Guidance:

On October 6, 2006, the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006 (PETS Act) was signed into law (Public Law No: 109-308), amending the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. This Act requires FEMA to ensure that state and local emergency plans address the needs of individuals with household pets and service animals prior to, during and following an emergency or major disaster declaration. The Act also authorizes FEMA to study and develop plans that take into account the needs of individuals with pets and service animals prior to, during, and following disasters.

In October 2007, FEMA released Disaster Assistance Policy 9523.19, “Eligible Costs Related to Pet Evacuations and Sheltering” to identify emergency pet evacuation and sheltering expenses for which state and local governments may be reimbursed once an emergency or major disaster is declared.

Also, in a joint venture between the Department of the Army and DHS, FEMA recently developed a series of three DVDs to assist the public in planning for animal evacuation and sheltering. The DVD set includes; “Animals in Emergencies: What Planners Need to Know”, “Animals in Emergencies: What Owners Need to Know”, and “Animales en Emergencias”, the Spanish-language translation of the owner’s DVD. Each DVD contains a video presentation on pet preparedness as well as supplemental material designed to assist in planning. This effort was funded through FEMA’s Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program. This series was shared with congressional members, state and local governments, and is available on the FEMA web-site.

Human Services

ESF #6 - Interagency Agreement with HHS for Pilot Case Management Program

FEMA and HHS’s Administration for Children and Families (ACF) have entered into an interagency agreement to develop and pilot a Disaster Case Management program. The goal of the program is to enhance federal, tribal, state and local response to emergencies by helping to connect disaster victims to a full array of disaster and other support services, including human, social, employment, legal, mental health and medical services.

The program is in the early development stage, with input being gathered from partner governmental, non-governmental and voluntary agencies. The pilot program is expected to be launched this calendar year.

Housing

ESF #6 - Development of the National Disaster Housing Strategy

The PKEMRA requires FEMA to develop a National Disaster Housing Strategy (NDHS). The NDHS will convey national guidance and a vision for providing disaster housing assistance. It will

define the roles, programs, authorities, and responsibilities of all entities, detailing shared responsibilities and emphasizing the cooperative efforts required to provide disaster housing assistance. The NDHS will outline the most efficient and cost-effective options for meeting disaster housing needs, and serve as the basis for pre-event planning by all organizations with roles or responsibilities in disaster housing.

The NDHS describes and will address how disaster victims typically move through the continuum of disaster housing as they work to achieve a permanent housing solution. While sheltering options are generally available to all affected persons, government-funded interim and permanent housing programs have specific eligibility criteria; therefore, not all disaster victims will be eligible for all housing programs. However, the range of program options and alternatives identified within the NDHS ensure a comprehensive range of viable, available solutions for essential, disaster-related housing needs.

A number of the program options and alternatives presented in the NDHS address special needs and low-income populations, ensuring that all affected individuals will be provided the services required to meet their disaster housing needs.

ESF #6 - Joint Housing Solutions Group

FEMA's Joint Housing Solutions Group (JHSG) initiative is a multi-year effort to develop a systematic process to evaluate and rate various and innovative disaster housing options, identify viable alternatives to FEMA travel trailers and manufactured homes, and recommend improvements to disaster housing operations. The JHSG is guided by a steering committee consisting of FEMA staff with considerable experience in disaster housing operations. FEMA also has secured the support of the National Institute of Building Sciences to provide direct technical guidance and services, and to promote linkage to relevant partner organizations. Current key milestones for the JHSG efforts include conducting research and outreach to the housing community, developing evaluation criteria for alternate housing, a testing process, and a housing assessment tool, as well as evaluating FEMA travel trailers and mobile homes to establish a baseline. Future milestones include testing and rating alternative housing options, and developing a housing option "compendium" for matching specific disaster conditions to viable housing options. The JHSG has identified seven action items that FEMA should consider implementing to maintain the momentum of the JHSG initiative and leverage the lessons and knowledge gained from the assessments to strengthen its temporary housing mission. They include:

- Development of Alternative Housing Options Strategy – This strategy would pull together the housing stakeholders in a coherent and structured way and establish concrete alternative housing options objectives and lay out a plan for choosing alternative housing options, exploiting or creating new alternative housing opportunities, and operating within the context of the National Disaster Housing Strategy;
- Continued identification and assessment of potential alternative housing units;
- Pilot of most promising alternative housing unit(s);
- Development of performance specifications for new alternative housing units (other than travel trailers, park models and manufactured homes);
- Procurement plan for pilot and full implementation of alternative units;
- Increased coordination between JHSG and Alternative Housing Pilot Program (AHPP);
- Public information and outreach

Through collaborative partnerships between the federal, tribal, state and local governments, and voluntary agencies, we developed a comprehensive housing plan that includes identifying the most heavily impacted areas, on-the-spot registration of shelter populations, analyzing shelter and mass care operations, transitioning applicants to temporary housing, individual case management for applicants with major damage to their primary residences, identifying available rental resources, assessing and assisting special need populations, and working with local voluntary agencies to identify additional assistance resources available to residents.

Alternative Housing Pilot Program

In 2006, Congress provided \$400 million for FEMA to conduct an Alternative Housing Pilot Program (AHPP) to identify, develop and evaluate alternatives to FEMA travel trailers and mobile homes. This program also was intended to provide housing to people with on-going housing needs as a result of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. FEMA selected pilot projects in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas for grant awards.

In April 2007, FEMA awarded \$275,427,730 to the State of Mississippi for the Park Model and Mississippi Cottage project. Mississippi has started installing these units and moving families into the new housing alternatives. The projects include state-of-the-art engineering standards, designed to maximize energy efficiency with environmentally sound materials. Once tested and proven, these models could potentially be used in response to future major disasters.

In August, FEMA awarded \$15,667,293 to the State of Alabama for the City of Bayou La Batre project. The City of Bayou La Batre will build two new housing communities, for approximately 100-120 households who lost their homes due to the storm surge and flooding caused by Hurricane Katrina. The AHPP sites will include recreational areas for both children and adults, community spaces, and support services (e.g., homeownership counseling, psycho-social support) for disaster-affected households.

In September 2007, FEMA awarded \$74,542,370 to the State of Louisiana to fund the Louisiana Katrina Cottage and Carpet Cottage project. The Katrina Cottage is a single family manufactured home with a porch with options of two and three bedroom layouts, which can be expanded as a family's needs change. The Carpet Cottage is a one story multi-family unit that offers one, two and four bedroom layouts. The housing units have been adapted to resemble historic Louisiana architectural styles. Neither housing model requires heavy machinery or a large workforce to construct. The Katrina Cottage can be assembled on-site, and the Carpet Cottage frames will be assembled in local facilities and will be transported to the home site. Both units are designed to be used in any setting, including individual lots, as well as commercial, private, and group sites. The Louisiana project will create over 400 homes in "transitional communities," located within Jackson Barracks, Lake Charles, Treme/Lafitte and Abbeville. The "transitional community" model anticipates utilizing site planning according to smart growth principles to establish a sustainable mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhood that fits into the fabric of the wider community. FEMA is currently working the State of Texas to finalize their grant award to the Heston Group for \$16,471,725.00.

We look forward to learning from the pilot projects, and anticipate that it will provide valuable housing options for use in future disasters.

Developed Program Management Office for the Disaster Assistance Improvement Plan

In August 2006, the President signed an Executive Order titled *Improving Assistance for Disaster Victims*, charging the interagency, led by DHS, with the responsibility to improve and simplify the application process for federal disaster assistance to individuals. FEMA participated in an interagency task force responsible for developing and delivering a Disaster Assistance Improvement Plan (DAIP), outlining a coordinated, actionable strategy to implement a consolidated and unified disaster application by December 31, 2008. The President approved this Plan in September 2007.

In support of the DAIP, FEMA established and obtained funding for a DAIP Program Management Office (PMO), led by FEMA's Office of Information Technology. The Disaster Assistance Directorate provides program support to the PMO.

Public Assistance Streamlining

FEMA has undertaken many initiatives to improve implementation of the Public Assistance Program. We have established a Public Assistance Steering Committee comprised of senior public assistance staff in each of our ten regions and ten state representatives. The purpose of the committee is to serve as the Board of Directors for the Public Assistance Program. The steering committee will develop the vision, strategies and policies to ensure efficient, effective and consistent implementation of the program.

Public Assistance Pilot Program:

The 2007 DHS Appropriations Act (Public Law 109-295) also provided FEMA the opportunity to conduct a Public Assistance Pilot Program to speed needed assistance to affected communities by making grants to states based on estimates, and providing incentives to states for ensuring good stewardship over taxpayer dollars by developing debris removal plans and pre-qualifying debris contractors. This initiative also provides states with debris recycling incentives, and straight-time for staff performing debris-related activities. FEMA's Public Assistance Division conducted outreach and training to regional and state stakeholders to ensure a smooth roll-out; 26 outreach or training sessions were offered to over 800 attendees. Participation in the pilot is voluntary and is open to tribal, state and local governments that elect to participate in the pilot. The pilot has been implemented in 13 disasters. A total of 325 Pilot Project Worksheets have been written for 251 applicants; and about 75 percent of these Project Worksheets are for force account labor performing debris-related activities.

Implementation of the Emergency Management Mission Integrated Environment

The Emergency Management Mission Integrated Environment (EMMIE) system creates an automated, enterprise-wide grants management system capable of supporting multiple types and instances of grant applications, including disaster operations, in use by FEMA or FEMA customers.

EMMIE allows tribal, state and local applicants to electronically apply for, and report on the use of funds, by streamlining and providing federal financial assistance in a way that is timely, complete and conforms to federal reporting requirements.

FACT SHEET – DISASTER ASSISTANCE DIRECTORATE

FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.