



FEMA

2008 Disaster Housing Plan

This 2008 Disaster Housing Plan describes FEMA's approach to working with Federal partners, States, territories, local communities, and individual disaster victims to meet disaster housing needs during the 2008 hurricane season. This Plan is based on key concepts that are further defined in the *National Disaster Housing Strategy*.

Overview

In the aftermath of a declared disaster, FEMA's initial actions will focus on supporting State efforts to ensure that all disaster victims are harbored in safe and secure shelters, with access to food and other necessary life-sustaining commodities and resources. As the situation stabilizes, FEMA will reorient its efforts, in support of and in coordination with States, to transition shelter residents back into their pre-disaster dwellings or, if those dwellings cannot be re-inhabited, temporary housing.

For most incidents, individuals are generally able to return to their homes within hours or days of the incident. However, for more serious declared disasters, where numerous dwellings have been destroyed or rendered uninhabitable for an extended period, additional housing assistance will be required. The type of housing assistance provided during the intermediate period (generally up to 18 months) that covers the gap between *sheltering* and securing *permanent housing* is referred to as *interim housing*.

Finding and providing the actual structures to house displaced disaster victims during this interim housing period is the most tangible challenge that emergency management officials, at all levels of government, face. Options vary greatly, depending on the nature of the event. When the local infrastructure is not badly damaged and the number of individuals with needs is manageable, housing options typically center around the use of rental properties. However, if the damage to the community's infrastructure is more significant and rental property is insufficient or unavailable, other options must be considered, thus increasing the complexity as more levels of government and the private sector become involved.

FEMA's approach is to provide safe, flexible interim housing assistance that can be adjusted to the range of requirements generated by a disaster. This 2008 Disaster Housing Plan can expand to employ the full range of interim housing options and capabilities. FEMA may, in close coordination and collaboration with by the State, provide *interim housing* to eligible disaster victims when they are either unable to quickly return to their pre-disaster dwellings, or are unable to quickly secure permanent housing. FEMA's prioritized approach to interim housing is as follows:

First: *Maximize Available Housing Resources*

Second: *Use Traditional Forms of Interim Housing*

Third: *Employ Innovative Forms of Interim Housing*

Fourth: *Authorize Permanent Construction*

Disaster Housing Response Actions

1st

Maximize Available Housing Resources

- ***Implement Immediate Temporary Repairs.*** FEMA will provide tarps or coordinate, through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, installation of plastic sheeting to limit further damage to homes and make them habitable until permanent repairs can be made.
- ***Provide Repair and Replacement Assistance.*** Following inspection and verification of damages, FEMA will provide eligible homeowners up to \$28,800 for repairs to make their home habitable, or to replace a destroyed or condemned home.
- ***Implement Financial Rental Assistance.*** If a damaged home is destroyed or cannot be repaired quickly and disaster victims are eligible for assistance, FEMA will provide financial assistance. This assistance, which is based on the Fair Market Rent, can be used to rent an apartment or other temporary housing while repairs are underway or disaster victims look for permanent housing.
- ***Cataloguing Vacant Rental Properties.*** FEMA will work with community groups and other government agencies to catalogue available rental property throughout the affected area, and begin providing that information to disaster victims seeking affordable rental housing. Cataloguing of available rental properties will also identify information regarding the availability of fully-accessible units and units with accessible features usable by persons with a disability. This information should also be available in communication formats that are accessible to and usable by persons with a disability.
- ***Use Transitional Shelters.*** If emergency shelters are overwhelmed and/or FEMA determines that shelter residents and evacuees will not be able to return to their homes for an extended period of time, FEMA may authorize eligible disaster victims to receive temporary hotel-motel funding assistance under the *Transitional Shelter Protocol*. Under this protocol, FEMA will authorize and fund the use of hotels/motels as transitional shelters using authorization codes. Transitional sheltering is funded under the Public

Assistance Program, Category B, Emergency Protective Measures. The initial period of subsidy will be established by FEMA, but may not exceed 30 days.

- ***Host-State Housing Protocol.*** If significant numbers of disaster victims have been displaced to other States, FEMA may implement the *Host-State Housing Protocol*. This protocol enables FEMA to coordinate rental assistance payments, at or based on Fair Market Rent, directly to property owners through Federal partners or a contract agent. This assistance can be provided for up to 18 months for evacuees who are eligible. While this protocol is designed for use in situations where States are hosting large numbers of evacuees from another State for an extended period of time, it may also be employed within the affected home State. Under this protocol, States may *not* place disaster victims in apartments or other temporary housing for reimbursement through FEMA's Public Assistance Program.

2nd Use Traditional Forms of Interim Housing

- ***Provide Manufactured Housing Assistance.*** If no fixed apartments or other rentable/leasable properties are available at or based on the Fair Market Rent within a reasonable commuting distance, temporary housing units may be needed. When requested by a State, FEMA will provide a range of options for temporary housing units, which may include mobile homes, park models, or other alternative forms of acceptable temporary housing. Once the appropriate options are determined acceptable by the State, temporary housing can be located on an eligible victim's private property, on a pre-existing commercial pad, or as a last resort on a new group site approved by local officials and constructed and maintained by FEMA.
- ***Conduct Pre-Placement Interviews (PPIs).*** FEMA will immediately begin Pre-Placement Interviews with registered, eligible disaster victims to assess how long they will need interim housing assistance and identify their optimum solution.
- ***Catalogue Vacant Commercial Manufactured Housing Pads.*** FEMA will work with local officials to identify pad locations throughout the affected area and begin negotiations for lease of those pads.
- ***Identifying Prospective Group Site Locations.*** FEMA will work with local officials to identify and begin negotiations to obtain prospective sites for extended occupation.
- ***Identify Disaster Victims Able to Support On-Property Housing.*** Based on the Pre-Placement Interviews, FEMA will identify those individuals who are eligible for placement of a housing unit on their property. This could include a mobile home, park model, or other form of alternative housing.

- ***Transport Mobile Homes and Park Models from FEMA Inventory.*** FEMA will move quickly to transport housing units into the affected area and begin installing those pre-tested and State-cleared units on a prioritized basis as sites become available or are made ready for installation.
- ***Accelerate Production and Delivery of new Mobile Home and Park Model Contracts.*** When confronted with the potential for a demand that could exceed the number of on-hand housing units ready for dispatch, FEMA will accelerate deliveries on competitively awarded contracts to obtain sufficient housing units. These contracts include units that meet the needs of disaster victims with disabilities and comply with the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS).

Note: FEMA will test all temporary housing units (mobile homes, park models, or other alternative forms of acceptable temporary housing) for formaldehyde before deploying them. Each State will exercise its public health responsibility and determine whether that level is acceptable before any unit is provided to its residents.

With respect to mobile homes and park models manufactured for FEMA going forward, FEMA now requires, by contract, such units to have indoor air levels of formaldehyde less than 0.016 parts per million.

FEMA will no longer enter into contracts for the manufacture of travel trailers, and FEMA will not normally consider travel trailers for interim housing in declared disasters. FEMA will only consider use of travel trailers at the request of the State in extraordinary disaster conditions as a last resort, when no other form of interim housing is available. Further, in these extraordinary conditions, FEMA will authorize travel trailers for use ONLY on private property (i.e., not in group sites); ONLY for a maximum of six months' occupancy (i.e., when the level of damage to the occupant's pre-disaster dwelling can be repaired in less than six months); and ONLY after the State has determined for itself the acceptable level of formaldehyde.

3rd Employ Innovative Forms of Interim Housing

- ***Identify Alternative Forms of Direct Housing.*** FEMA will work with States to fairly and equitably identify eligible households for alternative housing. In general, the priority for such housing will be private site applicants whose property is too small to accommodate a mobile home or park model, but may accommodate an alternative form of housing.
- ***Leverage Lessons Learned from the Joint Housing Solutions Group and the Alternative Housing Pilot Program (AHPP),*** where feasible and appropriate, to produce additional pilot units (e.g., "Katrina Cottages") proven to be provisionally effective in the AHPP.

4th Authorize Permanent Construction

- In coordination with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), search for cost-effective opportunities to conduct one or more multifamily apartment rehabilitation projects under the authority of the *IA Pilot Program*.
- In coordination with HUD and the affected State, authorize *Permanent Housing Construction* under Section 408 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, in those rare and unusual cases where preceding forms of interim housing are unavailable, infeasible, or not cost-effective.

Disaster Housing Support Actions

In support of the operational strategic assistance described above, FEMA and/or States will take the following catastrophic housing support actions:

Maximize Support and Outreach to Disaster Victims

- *Increase Capacity to Register Victims for Assistance.* FEMA will assign additional staff, surge its national call centers, and will request additional call center support from the Internal Revenue Service. FEMA will also use online registration systems and implement the Shelter Registration Protocol, allowing FEMA personnel to deploy to - and register disaster victims at large shelter facilities.
- *Accelerate Housing Inspections.* Because FEMA may not provide interim housing assistance to registered disaster victims until their pre-disaster dwellings have been inspected and their eligibility verified, FEMA will direct its Housing Inspection Contractors to accelerate the pace of inspections through surge staffing (while still maintaining the necessary high degree of accuracy).
- *Expand Public Dissemination of Housing Information to Disaster Victims.* FEMA will saturate all mediums of public communication with public service messages outlining sources of assistance, as well as dispatch teams to all affected jurisdictions to answer disaster victims' housing assistance questions.

Establish Common Housing Requirements Picture

- *Define and Characterize Interim Housing Requirements.* FEMA, in coordination with each affected State, will begin evaluating damage assessment, victim reporting, and housing inspection information to identify disaster housing requirements. At a minimum, disaster housing requirements must determine the number and locations of households requiring interim housing assistance and establish projections for what types and numbers of interim housing will be required.

Establish a Unified State/Federal Housing Solutions Task Force

- *Each State to Establish and Lead a Housing Solutions Task Force.* When the impact of the disaster may require the development of interim housing options, the State may choose to convene a Housing Solutions Task Force at the Joint Field Office to bring together State, Federal, non-governmental and private sector expertise to evaluate housing requirements, consider potential solutions and propose recommendations, some of which may require national-level concurrence or engagement. States may also want to include disability organizations and advocacy groups on the Task Force to provide advice regarding housing requirements for those with special needs or limited English proficiency.