



# FEMA

## 2009 Disaster Housing Plan

The 2009 Disaster Housing Plan describes FEMA's approach to working with Federal partners, States, territories, Tribes, local communities, and individual disaster survivors to meet disaster-related sheltering and temporary housing needs. This Plan is based on key concepts that are further defined in the *National Disaster Housing Strategy* and is intended to serve as an operational guide to FEMA's housing mission for 2009 disasters.

### Overview

In the aftermath of an event where the severity and magnitude warrants a declaration by the President, FEMA's initial actions will focus on supporting State efforts to ensure that all disaster survivors are sheltered safely and securely, with access to food and other necessary life-sustaining commodities and resources. As soon as possible FEMA and the State will begin assessing the impact to housing stock and initiate the planning for how to address the temporary housing needs should Individual Assistance be authorized by the President.

For most incidents, individuals are generally able to return to their homes within hours or days of the event. However, for more serious events, where numerous residential dwellings have been destroyed or rendered uninhabitable for an extended period, *interim housing assistance* will be required. Under the FEMA Individuals and Households Program (IHP) Temporary Housing component, interim housing is provided during the intermediate period (generally up to 18 months or the maximum amount of financial assistance available by law) between emergency *sheltering* and the securing of a *permanent housing* solution by the disaster survivor.

Options for interim housing vary greatly, depending on the nature and size of the event. If rental resources are available, and infrastructure is not badly damaged, rental properties will provide the bulk of the interim housing. However, if the damage to the community's infrastructure is more significant and there are not enough rental properties to meet the needs of the impacted population, other options must be considered. This, of course, increases the complexity of the housing mission, as more levels of government and the private sector become involved.

FEMA's approach is to provide safe, flexible interim housing options that are appropriate to the community and the disaster. The 2009 Disaster Housing Plan can expand to employ the full range of interim housing options and capabilities. FEMA may, in close coordination with the State and local communities, provide *interim housing* to eligible disaster survivors when they are 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 Manufactured and Alternative Interim Housing*

**Third:** *Employ Innovative Forms of Interim Housing*

**Fourth:** *Authorize Permanent Construction*

## ***Disaster Housing Response Actions***

**1st**

### **Maximize Available Housing Resources**

***Use Transitional Shelters.*** If emergency shelters are overwhelmed or FEMA determines that shelter residents and evacuees will not be able to return to their homes for an extended period of time, the State may request that FEMA authorize eligible disaster survivors to receive *Transitional Shelter Assistance (TSA)*. If TSA is authorized, FEMA will approve, fund and administer the use of hotels and motels as transitional shelters. TSA is funded under the Public Assistance Program, Section 403, Category B, Emergency Protective Measures. The initial period of assistance established by FEMA may be up to 30 days and can be extended by the Assistant Administrator for Disaster Assistance, when warranted by the situation and requested by the State.

***Implement Immediate Temporary Roof Repairs.*** At a State request, FEMA will provide tarps or, through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, coordinate installation of plastic sheeting to limit further damage to homes until permanent repairs can be made.

***Implement Financial Assistance for Rent.*** If a damaged home is destroyed or cannot be repaired quickly, FEMA or the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will provide financial assistance to eligible disaster survivors. This assistance, which is based on the Fair Market Rent in the affected locale, can be used to rent an apartment or other temporary housing while repairs are underway or disaster survivors look for permanent housing. When appropriate, FEMA may provide transportation assistance between the area of impact and the displaced populations.

***Provide Repair and Replacement Assistance.*** Following inspection and verification of damages, FEMA will provide eligible homeowners up to \$30,300 (for disasters declared between October 1, 2008 and September 31, 2009) for repairs to make their home habitable, or to replace a destroyed or condemned home.

***Catalogue Vacant Rental Properties.*** FEMA will work with community groups and other government agencies to catalogue available rental properties throughout the affected area, and will, via an online database, provide that information to disaster survivors seeking affordable rental housing. This housing data base will also identify fully- and partially-

accessible units available to persons with a disability. This information will also be made available in formats that are accessible to and usable by persons with a disability.

***Host-State Housing Protocol.*** If significant numbers of disaster survivors have been displaced to other States, FEMA may implement the Host-State Housing Protocol. This protocol enables FEMA to facilitate rental assistance payments, at or based on Fair Market Rent, directly to property owners, through Federal partners, or via a contract agent. This assistance can be provided for up to 18 months or up to \$30,300 (for disasters declared between October 1, 2008 and September 31, 2009) 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.

## **2nd** **Use Manufactured and Alternative Interim Housing**

***Provide Temporary Housing Units.*** If no fixed apartments or other rentable properties are available at or near 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 manufactured 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 family's private property, on a pre-existing commercial pad, or as a last resort on a new community site approved by local officials and constructed and maintained by FEMA. For this option, the affected State must identify an acceptable unoccupied formaldehyde level before FEMA will transport units to that State.

***Conduct Pre-Placement Interviews (PPIs).*** FEMA will immediately begin Pre-Placement Interviews with registered, eligible disaster survivors to estimate the need for manufactured housing units and identify their optimum solution.

***Catalogue Vacant Commercial Manufactured Housing Pads.*** FEMA will work with local officials to identify pad locations (including pads that may need minor repair) throughout the affected area and begin negotiations for lease of those pads.

***Identify Disaster Survivors Able to Support Private Site Housing.*** Based on the Pre-Placement Interviews, FEMA will determine if we can place a temporary housing unit (this could include a manufactured home, park model, or other form of alternative housing) on the applicant's private property (or that of a friend or relative).

***Identify Prospective Community Site Locations.*** When private and commercial site locations are not adequate to meet the need, FEMA will work with State and local officials to identify prospective sites for development, construction and extended occupation.

*Ensure qualified formaldehyde testing is conducted.* FEMA will ensure that qualified formaldehyde testing is conducted on each temporary housing unit prior to deployment. Each State will exercise its public health responsibility and establish an acceptable unoccupied formaldehyde level before FEMA will provide any unit to that State.

*Transport Housing Units 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 Temporary Housing Unit Contracts.* When the rate of installation is projected to exceed the number of on-hand housing units ready for dispatch, FEMA may accelerate deliveries on competitively awarded contracts. These contracts include units that meet the needs of disaster survivors with disabilities and comply with the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS). Additionally, FEMA now requires, by contract, newly constructed units to have indoor air levels of formaldehyde less than 0.016 parts per million. FEMA may still procure units from commercial sources, if required, but such units must be tested and meet State-established formaldehyde levels for unoccupied units and have air exchange controls that meet or exceed FEMA specifications.

*Note:* FEMA is pursuing the construction and procurement of new travel trailers specifically designed to improve air quality and provide air exchange. FEMA may authorize travel trailers for use as interim housing in declared disasters ONLY at the specific request of the State; ONLY on private property (i.e., not in group, community or cluster 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, as verified by the FCO and SCO); ONLY after the State has determined an acceptable level of formaldehyde for units PRIOR to occupation; and ONLY if such units have air exchange controls that meet or exceed FEMA specifications.

### **3rd** **Employ Innovative Forms of Interim Housing**

*Identify Alternative Forms of Direct Housing.* The diversity of individual and household needs, coupled with the range of geography, requires a variety of interim housing options. New materials and innovations in design have the potential to provide a much broader array of temporary housing options. FEMA will work with States to fairly and equitably identify households eligible for alternative housing.

*Leverage Lessons Learned from the Joint Housing Solutions Group (JHSG) 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 or through JHSG-evaluated field studies.

## 4th

### Authorize Semi-Permanent or Permanent Construction

In coordination with HUD and the affected State, authorize *Semi-Permanent or 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 can take the following catastrophic housing support actions:

#### Maximize Support and Outreach to Disaster Survivors

*Increase Capacity to Register Survivors for Assistance.* FEMA will assign additional staff, surge up personnel in its national call centers, request additional call center support from the Internal Revenue Service, and utilize contract support to augment if needed. FEMA will also use online registration systems and implement the Shelter Registration Protocol, allowing FEMA personnel to deploy to - and register disaster survivors at - large congregate shelter facilities.

*Accelerate Housing Inspections.* Because FEMA may not provide interim housing assistance to registered disaster survivors 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 Survivors.* 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 survivors' housing assistance questions.

*Critical Needs Assistance for Displaced Populations.* Critical Needs Assistance (CNA) may be implemented in declared disasters to help eligible displaced applicants meet their immediate and critical needs. CNA provides a limited amount of financial assistance to eligible applicants so they may buy life-sustaining items such as water, food, first aid, prescriptions, infant formula, diapers, personal hygiene items, and fuel for transportation. CNA may be implemented when FEMA and the State agree that the circumstances of extended displacement may create an unusual financial burden on individuals and households. CNA is funded under the Other Needs Assistance (ONA) provision of the Individuals and Households Program and is by law cost shared with the requesting State. The initial period of assistance is up to 60 days.



## **Establish Common Housing Requirements Picture**

*Define and Characterize Interim Housing Requirements.* FEMA, in coordination with each affected State, will begin evaluating damage assessments, survivor 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 State-Led Disaster Housing Task Force**

*Each State Should Establish and Lead a Disaster Housing Task Force.* States are encouraged to form a standing group of disaster housing experts, whose objective is to monitor the status of the housing market in advance of a disaster and be prepared to make informed recommendations in the event of a disaster requiring a housing mission. When the impact of the disaster requires the development of interim housing options, the State will be expected to convene a Disaster Housing Task Force as outlined in the *National Disaster Housing Strategy* to bring together State, Tribal, local, 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 are also encouraged 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.

## **Role of the National Disaster Housing Task Force in Disasters**

*The National Disaster Housing Task Force will Support State Efforts.* As outlined in the *National Disaster Housing Strategy*, the interagency National Disaster Housing Task Force will, during the response to a major incident that requires a significant housing effort, provide technical expertise and advice to the Joint Field Office and the State-led Disaster Housing Task Force. This assistance may include deploying liaisons or teams to affected States to help develop and tailor Federal disaster housing plans to meet the needs of the particular event. In this role, Federal representatives on the National Disaster Housing Task Force will work with and support established FEMA field operations and structures, as well as directly with State-led Disaster Housing Task Forces.