



# NEWS

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*  
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## **State housing agency to make available housing assistance to flood victims**

*Department board gives Section 8 priority to disaster areas, speeds assistance to low income households in disaster-stricken regions*

(AUSTIN) — Moving to help victims of flooding across the state, the Governing Board of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) today approved an emergency measure authorizing a preference for disaster assistance to low income households displaced by natural disasters.

As a result of today's action, TDHCA will be able to provide rent payment assistance to qualifying residents through the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program to households impacted by disasters. The emergency rule change institutes a preference for disaster recovery efforts, allowing TDHCA to immediately begin issuing vouchers to residents in cities or counties in which the Department operates the program. The Department administers the Section 8 Program in 46 cities or counties where there is no local housing program operator.

"The emergency rule change greatly speeds up our ability to respond to this disaster," said Michael Gerber, TDHCA Executive Director. "In working closely with the Governor's Office Division of Emergency Management and with local housing officials, we are well aware of the devastation that this flooding has caused the state. Our board's action today enables us to assist our fellow Texans in need."

The Section 8 Program provides low income individuals and families help with paying their rent, providing financial assistance for safe, decent housing that might otherwise be beyond their reach. Qualified households select the best available housing through direct negotiations with landlords, and TDHCA pays approved rent amounts directly to property owners.

For additional information on this rent payment assistance program and how to apply for a voucher, residents should contact TDHCA's Section 8 Program at (512) 475-2634 or toll free at (800) 525-0657, extension 52634.

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**About The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs**

*The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs is Texas' lead agency responsible for affordable housing, community and energy assistance programs, and colonia activities. The Department annually administers funds in excess of \$400 million, the majority of which is derived from mortgage revenue bond financing and refinancing, federal grants, and federal tax credits.*