

# FAQ: Direct Temporary Housing Assistance in Tennessee

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FEMA and the State of Tennessee are working to ensure that survivors of Tropical Storm Helene have safe, functional housing. Temporary housing solutions are becoming available to eligible households in Eastern Tennessee. The deadline to apply for FEMA disaster assistance is **Tuesday, Jan. 7**.

FEMA Direct Temporary Housing Assistance is available for eligible individuals and households where there is a lack of housing resources. This assistance is offered as an interim solution and is provided in three forms: Direct Lease, Multi-family Lease and Repair and Transportable Temporary Housing Units.

Survivors may be eligible for more than one type of FEMA housing assistance including:

- **Displacement Assistance:**

money that can be used to stay in a hotel, stay with family and friends or for other options while you look for temporary housing. It is a one-time payment.

- **Rental Assistance:** to help individuals pay for somewhere to live while home repairs are made or until a

permanent housing solution is identified. The initial payment for Rental Assistance may be up to \$10,000. Additional help can be requested.

The following are answers to frequently asked questions about Direct Temporary Housing:

## How do I qualify for FEMA Direct Temporary Housing Assistance?

Survivors may be considered for a temporary housing solution if FEMA determines their primary home is unlivable as a result of damage caused by Helene. If you meet the eligibility criteria, FEMA will contact you to discuss your options.



FEMA

housing needs.

To be considered for temporary housing, you're encouraged to apply for FEMA assistance. Go to [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.fema.gov/disaster/assistance); visit a Disaster Recovery Center or call the **FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362**. Lines are open from **7 a.m. to midnight ET**. If you use a relay service, captioned telephone or other service, you can give FEMA your number for that service. Specialists speak many languages.

## What types of Direct Temporary Housing Assistance are available to me?

Assistance may come in the form of Transportable Temporary Housing Units (e.g., travel trailers and manufactured homes), short-term or vacation rentals, apartments or duplexes. FEMA is providing three forms of Direct Temporary Housing Assistance to eligible applicants in **Carter, Cocke, Greene, Johnson, Unicoi, and Washington counties**.

- **Direct Lease** uses existing ready-for-occupancy residential property leased for use as temporary housing for eligible applicants. When needed, these units can be modified or improved to provide reasonable accommodations for eligible applicants and household members with a disability or access and functional needs.
- **Multi-family Lease and Repair** allows FEMA to enter into lease agreements with owners of multi-family rental properties and to make repairs or improvements to those properties to provide temporary housing to applicants.
- **Transportable Temporary Housing Units** are dwellings such as travel trailers or mobile homes. These dwellings are purchased by FEMA and provided to eligible applicants for use as temporary housing for a limited period.

## What types of Transportable Temporary Housing Units does FEMA provide?

Temporary housing units available to eligible Tennessee survivors are:

- **Travel Trailers:** These are small, flexible, easy to move and are the fastest option. They can be a good solution for an owner with a smaller lot. All FEMA



travel trailers are pull-away, and none is motorized. Keep in mind that travel trailers are not ideal for longer-term living.

- **Manufactured Housing Units:** These are regulated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development codes and are more suitable for longer-term living. They are larger than travel trailers and require more space and infrastructure. Manufactured housing units come in one-, two- and three-bedroom configurations. They are single-wide and lengths vary based on the number of bedrooms.

## **When will I get a Transportable Temporary Housing Unit?**

FEMA has temporary units in Tennessee and is contacting eligible survivors to assess their unique needs. Keep in mind, every installation is a construction project. Before moving into a temporary unit, the following will occur:

- Identify suitable sites for the placement of units.
- Complete site inspection, including gathering appropriate zoning permissions from local governments.
- Reviews for Environmental and Historic Preservation.
- Lot measurements to determine the fit for a unit.
- Proper utility hookups for water, sewer and electricity must be available and in working order.
- Installation of each unit then includes setting and leveling the unit, completing the utility hookup and completing the skirting, steps and ramps.

## **Do I need to move away from my home to get a Transportable Temporary Housing Unit?**

Where possible, FEMA may be able to place a housing unit on your property. To do so:

- FEMA must be able to access the site with a heavy unit.
- The site must have enough space for a unit.
- The site must be safe in terms of flood, landslide and other risks.
- The site must have functional water, sewer and electric.



## **Can FEMA place Transportable Temporary Housing Units on a site such as an RV or mobile home park?**

Yes, FEMA can deploy units in various locations permitted by state and local regulations. We collaborate with each survivor to identify the most suitable location for their recovery. A prime option for placing Temporary Housing Units is within an established commercial area, like an RV park, mobile home park, or campground.

Existing parks are great because FEMA can use existing infrastructure. If needed, FEMA can assist with debris clearance and utility repairs to make use of a park.

Commercial parks can take a little longer than private site placement because private placement requires securing land leases and may require some utility or site work to implement.

## **Does FEMA use available short-term or vacation rentals?**

Yes. You may be able to stay in a vacation rental such as Airbnb or “Vacation Rental By Owner” if you’re approved for Direct Lease.

Through FEMA's Direct Lease program, eligible applicants may be able to temporarily stay in vacation rentals. The Direct Lease program allows FEMA to quickly secure existing housing units on behalf of disaster survivors, without competing with them for available units. This can provide a faster housing solution compared to other options. Property owners or management companies interested in the Direct Lease program should contact FEMA.

## **Can FEMA pay or repair a hotel, dorm or other type of facility to serve as Direct Housing?**

FEMA may repair existing multi-family buildings (two or more units) in exchange for being able to use the units to house disaster survivors through the Multi-family Lease and Repair program. Multi-family Lease is not typically a primary Direct Housing solution, but a few large multi-family buildings can go a long way toward housing disaster survivors.



Owners of multi-family properties in need of repair that are interested in doing business with FEMA should register at [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov).

## Can FEMA repair a residence on behalf of a renter?

No. FEMA does not repair an individual renter's residence.

However, FEMA may repair or make improvements to existing multi-family rental/residential properties for the purpose of providing temporary housing to eligible FEMA applicants.

Properties must be available for a term of no less than 18 months from the date of the disaster declaration (Oct. 2), with the option of lease extension. They should be able to accommodate a considerable number of people in a single location. Each property must have been previously used as a multi-family housing complex and contain multiple rental units.

Hotels, hospitals, nursing homes, etc., are not considered residential properties and are not authorized for Multi-Family Lease and Repair. The site must be repairable to local, state and federal regulations within a four-month period and cannot be located in a floodway. Multi-Family Lease and Repair is not intended to repair or improve individual units to rehouse existing tenants.

## If I'm approved for Direct Temporary Housing Assistance, can I obtain other types of assistance from FEMA?

Yes. If you are a homeowner, you may be eligible to receive money for home repairs while staying in a temporary unit. Homeowners and renters may also be eligible for personal property losses, vehicle damage, funeral expenses and other disaster-related expenses.

You have several ways to apply. If you have a computer, go to [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.DisasterAssistance.gov). If not, visit a [Disaster Recovery Center](https://www.DisasterRecoveryCenter.gov) or call the **FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362**. Lines are open from **7 a.m. to midnight Eastern Time**. If you use a relay service, captioned telephone or other service, you can give FEMA your number for that service. Specialists speak many languages.

