

Permanent Housing Checklist

For survivors of Hurricane Harvey, finding permanent housing can be a major task in their recovery process. Here's a checklist to help create a plan of action and make finding permanent housing a reality.

1 Consider What Permanent Housing Means to You

Whether you are rebuilding an existing home or relocating to a new home or apartment, take the time to think about what you want from your new home. Think about location, cost and services like schools, shopping and neighborhood safety. Rank your priorities, and make a list of must-haves.

2 Create a To-do List

Prioritize what steps need to be taken to meet your goal of permanent housing. A list can also help you manage your time and insure you don't take on too many tasks at one time.

If you are looking for rental housing:

- Document all attempts to find a rental home. Every time you call a landlord, write it down.
- List the costs associated with renting like rental insurance, security deposits and utility payments.
- Identify your options for paying the costs to get into a rental home. Contact FEMA if you need assistance or referrals.

If you are a homeowner rebuilding your home:

- Make the necessary contacts and provide all required documentation to ensure timely processing of any insurance proceeds and/or assistance from available programs to repair or replace your home.
- Ensure that you have all required permits and find a reliable and reputable contractor. (FEMA does not certify contractors.)
- If you are unable to live in your disaster-damaged primary home while it is being repaired, you may be eligible for rental assistance to help you pay for temporary housing. Rental assistance may be used to rent a house, apartment, manufactured home, another dwelling, travel trailer or recreational vehicle.

If you have found temporary or permanent rental housing:

- Update your status with FEMA by visiting a Disaster Recovery Center or calling the helpline at (800) 621-3362 (voice, 711 or VRS) or (800) 462-7585 (TTY) 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week.
- FEMA needs to know of any changes in your housing situation.

If you applied for a low-interest disaster loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA):

- Check the status of your application. Call the SBA toll free at (800) 659-2955 (voice, 711 or VRS) or (800) 877-8339 (TTY)
- If you were denied an SBA loan, you may be eligible for other federal assistance. Call the FEMA helpline for more information.

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3 Find Reliable Helpers to Assist You

Use friends, family, community organizations and case managers to help you handle the workload and do some of the work needed to find stable permanent housing.

Volunteer Organization Active in Disaster can help you locate resources in your community and help you fill unmet needs. To find resources in your community call the FEMA Helpline at (800) 621-3362 (voice, 711 or VRS) or (800) 462-7585 (TTY) 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week or Texas 2-1-1.

4 Contact a Case Manager

Immediate Disaster Case Managers serve as personal advocates for disaster survivors and can provide information on a variety of resources and services, including: Drafting a recovery plan, resources available in your area, assistance with appeals and additional sources of financial assistance.

To meet with an immediate disaster case manager visit a State/FEMA Disaster Recovery Center (DRC). To find your nearest DRC, visit www.fema.gov/drc, or text the word DRC along with your zip code to 43362 (4FEMA). For case management by phone, call (855) 742-5989, leave a message and a case manager will contact you within 24 hours.

5 Create a Budget and Save Receipts

Decide what you can afford and make adjustments as needed to achieve your goal. Then begin saving so you can quickly act when you find a housing solution that fits your needs.

It's also important to document your recovery costs, especially if you've received grant money from FEMA. Make sure to save receipts for supplies, contractors and any other disaster-related expenses. This will help state, federal and voluntary agencies assess if you are eligible for additional assistance.

To find out more about creating a household budget, or for information for first time renters, visit <https://www.consumer.gov/section/managing-your-money>.

6 Document Important Information

Notebooks are an inexpensive tool that can be used to track your recovery. Write down important dates, resources, contacts and anticipated expenses. Keep all the information in one place.