



FEMA **DISASTER SPECIFIC GUIDANCE**

DISASTER ASSISTANCE DIRECTORATE

I. TITLE: **Hurricanes Katrina and Rita Relocation Assistance**

II. DATE: October 9, 2007

III. PURPOSE:

To establish guidance for providing relocation financial assistance for applicants to return to their home state, to relocate to alternate housing, or to move from a FEMA provided temporary housing unit.

IV. SCOPE AND AUDIENCE:

This Disaster Specific Guidance (DSG) applies to DR-1603-LA, DR-1604-MS, DR-1605-AL, DR-1606-TX, and DR-1607-LA. All personnel are directed to follow this guidance.

V. AUTHORITY:

Section 408 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 5174) and 44 CFR 206.119(b)(2)(ii) and (c)(2)(ii).

VI. DEFINITIONS:

A. **Eligible Applicant:** An individual or household who is eligible for Individuals and Households Program (IHP) assistance under DR-1603-LA, DR-1604-MS, DR-1605-AL, DR-1606-TX, or DR-1607-LA and has funds available under their IHP financial assistance cap.

B. **FEMA Housing Resource:** Housing that is subsidized by FEMA (e.g., financial assistance, direct rental payment, or FEMA applicants being housed under FEMA authority by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Veterans Affairs, or any other Federal agency, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture). For the purposes of this DSG, the FEMA Housing Resource cannot be a FEMA provided Travel Trailer or Park Model.

C. **Non-FEMA Housing Resource:** Housing that is NOT subsidized by FEMA. Non-FEMA Housing Resources can include subsidized housing offered by other Federal or State agencies under their own authorities.

D. **Primary Individuals and Households (IHP) Application:** The application of the individual who is the documented owner of the property or the individual who is the tenant on



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a lease or rental agreement and is financially responsible for the lease or rental agreement. If both applicants are owners or tenants on a lease, the first fully verified individual that applied for assistance.

E. **Relocation Assistance:** Financial assistance for transporting individuals and furnishings.

F. **Roommate:** Unrelated persons who are either joint tenants or subtenants on a lease or rental agreement and are financially responsible for the lease or rental agreement.

G. **Temporary Housing Unit:** Manufactured housing, recreational vehicle, or other readily fabricated dwelling (e.g., pre-fabricated dwelling).

VII. BACKGROUND:

The damage and destruction caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita resulted in the temporary relocation of many residents of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Texas (hereinafter "Gulf Coast States") to various locations within and outside each respective State. The Gulf Coast States' infrastructure, social services, and economy are increasingly able to support the return of displaced residents to their home State and their pre-disaster county/parish homes.

In support of the Gulf Coast States impacted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, FEMA has determined that relocation costs are eligible disaster-related expenses and that financial assistance can be made available using the authorities of the Stafford Act, as codified in the 44 CFR §§ 206.119 (b)(2)(ii), and 44 CFR §§ 206.119 (c)(2)(ii).

VIII. GUIDANCE:

A. **Period of Eligibility:** FEMA may provide relocation assistance through the "Other Needs" Assistance provision of the Individuals and Household Program for expenses incurred by eligible applicants between August 29, 2005 and February 29, 2008 for DR-1603-LA, DR-1604-MS, and DR-1605-AL and between September 24, 2005 and February 29, 2008 for DR-1606-TX and DR-1607-LA. The Associate Deputy Administrator for GCRO may extend the period of eligibility past February 29, 2008 when it is determined that doing so would be in the public interest.

1. For costs incurred before February 1, 2006, (approximate end date of FEMA's Facilitated Relocation Program) applicants will be required to provide receipts or



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documentation (i.e., credit card or bank statement) to be eligible for Relocation Assistance under this policy.

2. For costs incurred after February 1, 2006, an applicant may submit receipts and, in instances where receipts cannot be obtained, submit a statement of cost, which must include a summary of efforts taken to retrieve the lost receipts, to be eligible for Relocation Assistance under this policy. All payments based upon a statement of cost require the approval of the Associate Deputy Administrator of GCRO or designee.

3. For projected travel costs, the applicant must submit verifiable estimates, to include the potential travel date, in order to be eligible for an advance of Relocation Assistance under this policy. All payments based upon estimates require the approval of the Associate Deputy Administrator of GCRO or designee.

B. Amount of Assistance: Relocation Assistance will be based on receipts, statement of costs, or verifiable estimates not to exceed \$4,000 (per pre-disaster household).

1. Payments will be based on a one-time submission of receipts, statement of costs, and/or estimates for the entire household.

2. Applicants receiving assistance based on estimates must agree to retain and provide to FEMA if requested, transportation and moving expense receipts to show that the Relocation Assistance was used as specified.

3. To prevent duplication of benefits, an applicant is only eligible to receive Relocation Assistance under one disaster.

4. Notwithstanding any terms of this guidance, no applicant will receive financial assistance greater than the IHP maximum of \$26,200 (the maximum amount for the fiscal year of the declaration).

C. Eligibility Criteria for Assistance: FEMA may provide Relocation Assistance based on the applicant meeting the criteria of C1 and C2 below:

1. Applicant must meet all of the following:

i. Has moved from his/her primary residence located in one of the Gulf Coast States' declared counties or parishes; AND



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ii. Has been determined to be eligible for IHP Housing Assistance (excluding Expedited Assistance); AND

iii. Has available funding under the limit for the primary IHP application.

a. If an individual has previously met FEMA's criteria to receive assistance under the roommate exception, then the individual will be deemed to have met this criterion.

b. If an individual is not the applicant or co-applicant on the primary IHP application but is listed as an occupant in the application, the individual's contact information will be sent to the GCRO to determine if alternate assistance is available from another resource; AND

iv. Has not received funds from any other State or Federally subsidized travel home program (e.g., FEMA Facilitated Relocation Program, NOLA Bound) to cover the full cost of his/her relocation; AND

v. Has not received travel funds from a Voluntary Agency participating in a Long Term Recovery Committee for the Gulf Coast States (e.g., United Methodist Committee on Relief, American Red Cross) to cover the full cost of his/her relocation;

vi. Has incurred or will incur moving expenses within the Period of Eligibility.

2. Applicant must meet one of the following:

i. Has or will be moving from a FEMA Temporary Housing Unit to a FEMA Housing Resource or a Non-FEMA Housing Resource anywhere in the continental U.S; OR

ii. Has or will be moving from a FEMA Housing Resource to a verifiable Non-FEMA Housing Resource. If the applicant's current FEMA Housing Resource is within the state to which they wish to relocate, the distance between the current physical address and the proposed location to which they intend to relocate must be greater than 50 miles. The Non-FEMA Housing Resource where the applicant plans to relocate cannot be a hotel or motel; OR

iii. Has or will be moving from a Non-FEMA Housing Resource back to a verifiable Non-FEMA Housing Resource in their pre-disaster home state. If the applicant's current Non-FEMA Housing Resource is within the state to which they wish to relocate, the distance



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between the current physical address and the proposed location to which they intend to relocate must be greater than 50 miles. The Non-FEMA Housing Resource where the applicant plans to relocate can not be a hotel or motel.

D. Eligible Costs: Relocation Assistance will be limited to the approved costs associated with a single move as follows:

1. For applicants, the acceptable modes of transport are limited to:
 - i. Air (i.e., commercial airplane) – for economy class (or equivalent amount) only;
 - ii. Train or railway - for economy class (or equivalent amount) only;
 - iii. Motor coach (e.g., Greyhound Bus); AND
 - iv. Rental vehicle, including the costs for gasoline (receipts required), drop off fees (if any), liability insurance (when purchased from the rental company) and taxes;
2. For furnishings, the acceptable hauling/shipping costs are limited to:
 - i. Commercially rented equipment for hauling, to include gasoline (receipt required), mileage (if any), and the cost of liability insurance (when purchased from the rental company) and taxes (e.g., U-Haul); AND
 - ii. Commercially purchased moving materials (e.g., boxes and tape) or moving services (e.g., packing and shipping of furnishings), to include the cost of liability insurance (when purchased from the moving company) and taxes.
 - iii. Costs incurred for recreational (e.g., pool tables) or large luxury items (e.g., boats, recreational motor bikes) are ineligible.
3. For lodging, applicants will only be eligible for lodging if the total distance between the current/prior temporary housing resource and the physical address to which they have or intend to move is greater than 400 miles. Lodging costs will be limited to:
 - i. One-night, one-room stay in commercial accommodations (hotel/motel) for households traveling with four (4) or less members, unless restricted by hotel/motel occupancy rules.



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- a. An additional one-night, one-room stay is authorized every 400 miles.
 - b. If more than four (4) household members are relocating, another room(s) may be authorized for every four (4) additional household members.
- ii. The cost of an average room and tax.
 - a. For the purpose of this DSG, the cost of an average room will not exceed twice the current maximum lodging per diem rate for the locality, as identified by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA).
 - b. All other amenities and costs, including but not limited to: restaurant, club, room service, telephone, movie rentals, Internet, laundry, dry cleaning, parking and any other ancillary services offered by the hotel/motel are ineligible and are the responsibility of the applicant.
4. Other travel related expenses not expressly authorized by this policy (e.g., gasoline for private vehicles or food) are ineligible.

IX. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: Disaster Assistance Directorate (Individual Assistance Division).

X. SUPERSESSION: Disaster Specific Guidance issued on July 21, 2007 for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita Relocation Assistance for Louisiana and any other DSG issued for Relocation Assistance for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

XI. REVIEW DATE: This guidance remains effective until superseded or rescinded.

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