

# Survivors Living in FEMA Temporary Units in Southwest Louisiana to Start Paying Reduced Rent

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**Release Date: March 18, 2022**

**BATON ROUGE, La.** – Survivors of Hurricanes Laura and Delta who are currently living in FEMA provided temporary housing units will start paying a monthly rent. Survivors of Hurricane Laura will start paying rent April 1 and survivors of Hurricane Delta will start paying rent on May 1. The rent amount is based on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Fair Market Rent, which may be reduced by FEMA based on the household's combined post-disaster income. In many cases, survivors may end up paying rents far below fair market rates for comparable properties.

Occupants who provide verifiable documentation of their post-disaster income that meets or is below the HUD Very Low-Income Limit will qualify for the fully reduced rent of \$50 per month. Households with total combined incomes above the HUD Very Low-Income Limit who wish to request a lower rental rate will have to provide documentation of post-disaster income and any current housing costs (mortgages, etc.) to calculate their financial ability to pay rent and the amount of rent to be charged.

Based on a request from the State, FEMA approved an extension to Oct. 31, 2022 for approximately 1,750 households currently occupying direct housing units through the direct housing program for Hurricanes Laura and Delta. Normally, direct Temporary Housing Assistance ends 18 months from the date a disaster is declared. For Laura occupants, the end date was Feb. 28 and it is Apr. 30 for Delta. As part of the extension and in compliance with federal regulations, survivors who remain in their units beyond 18 months from the date of the federal disaster declaration will be charged a monthly rent.

FEMA caseworkers have been in close contact with survivors to discuss the process and documentation requirements. Survivors have the right to appeal the rent amount they will be charged. If you are a survivor and want to appeal, you



must:

- Provide a written and signed explanation that you cannot pay the amount of rent charged; and
- Provide verifiable documents showing your current housing costs (mortgage statement, rent receipts, insurance, utilities, etc.). Also, provide documents showing all income (such as paystubs, W-2, tax return, proof of income letter, etc.) for all adult members of the household (18 or older).
- Make sure you include your FEMA application number and disaster number on all pages of all submitted documents. These numbers are printed above your name and address on all letters to you from FEMA; and
- Send the documents by:
  - **Mail:** Louisiana Integration and Recovery Office, 1500 Laurel Street Baton Rouge LA 70802
  - **Fax:** 337-582-1896
  - **Email:** [FEMA-DR-4559-directhousingadminsbox@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-DR-4559-directhousingadminsbox@fema.dhs.gov)

Send copies of your documents to FEMA and keep all original documents for your records.

**Sending an appeal does not guarantee that your appeal will be granted, and it does not extend the time you are allowed to occupy the FEMA Unit. Appeals for both Laura and Delta applicants is May 11, 2022.**

While your appeal is being reviewed, rent will continue to be charged on the first day of every month. You will receive a monthly bill for the rent amount until a decision on your appeal is made. The following will apply if your appeal is denied or granted.

If your appeal is denied:

- If you have been paying your monthly rent, you will continue to pay your rent as usual.
- If you have not been paying your monthly rent, you will be required to pay the total of the rent amount charged within **30 days** of the date of FEMA's decision letter and begin paying your rent on the first day of each month until you move-out of the FEMA Unit. This rent will not be prorated if you move out prior to the end of any month.



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Page 2 of 3

If your appeal is granted:

- If you have been paying the monthly rent amount, FEMA will refund you any overpayment above the adjusted rent. The adjusted rent amount will be due on the first day of each month as usual.
- If you have not been paying the monthly rent amount, you will be required to pay the total of these adjusted charges within **30 days** of the date of FEMA's decision letter and begin paying your adjusted rent on the first day of each month until you surrender possession of the FEMA Unit. This adjusted rent will not be prorated if you move out prior to the end of any month.

Local, state and federal partners are stepping up efforts ahead of the new deadline to help eligible Laura and Delta survivors get into their repaired or new permanent homes. FEMA and the State Joint Recertification housing teams continue to meet regularly with occupants to support the hard work it takes to get back into permanent housing. The teams routinely guide occupants to available resources and advise them on program requirements and deadlines.

At the peak of the housing program for hurricanes Laura and Delta survivors, there were 2,401 eligible households licensed into FEMA-provided temporary units across 12 parishes in Southwest Louisiana. Close to 75% remain in their FEMA housing units. FEMA's housing program eligibility and continued occupancy is determined monthly. To remain eligible, occupants must show they are making continued progress on their permanent housing plan.

