

State of Ohio Disaster Housing Strategy

SEPTEMBER 2010

STATE OF OHIO DISASTER HOUSING STRATEGY

I. INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina (August 2005) a need to improve disaster housing assistance became evident. To correct deficiencies key challenges and gaps were identified and used to guide the development of the *National Disaster Housing Strategy*¹ (NDHS). In the NDHS FEMA outlines a vision for a national housing effort that engages all levels of government and non-governmental organizations to collectively meet urgent housing needs of disaster survivors and to rebuild and restore their way of life. The NDHS emphasizes a need to coordinate and utilize all resources available through partnership and collaborative efforts of all stakeholders to provide short and long term housing options.

The NDHS clarifies roles and responsibilities for each level of government. For states, FEMA recommends the establishment of a State-Led Disaster Housing Taskforce. By tapping the expertise of disaster housing experts, representatives of advocacy groups, disability support organizations and other stakeholders, states are able to better prepare for potential disaster housing events and meet the needs of disaster survivors once the event happens.

In October 2009 the Ohio Disaster Housing Taskforce convened for the first time and subsequently developed the State Disaster Housing Strategy. The purpose of this *Strategy* is to identify roles and capabilities of each disaster housing partner. The *Strategy* is intended to address catastrophic disaster housing needs following a presidential declaration that includes Individual Assistance programs. Not every event will require convening the *Taskforce*. The event must be a major incident that requires a significant housing effort. When activated, the *Taskforce* will implement the *Strategy*, providing subject-matter expertise for housing-related issues. The *Taskforce* will coordinate with the Federal Joint Housing Taskforce to determine housing needs versus housing resources and viable solutions. The *Strategy* is intended to supplement county capabilities and would not supplant nor eliminate the need for local capabilities to be identified and/or developed. Implementation of this strategy will require coordination between federal, state and local emergency management; various other federal and state agencies, local governments and other non-governmental organizations.

II. DISASTER HOUSING PARTNERS:

The *Taskforce* is comprised of the following disaster housing partners:

Primary Agencies:

Co-Chairs: Ohio Emergency Management Agency (Ohio EMA)
Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA)

American Red Cross (ARC)

¹ US Department of Homeland Security. Federal Emergency Management Agency. *National Disaster Housing Strategy*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 2009.

Emergency Management Association of Ohio (EMAO)
Ohio Department of Aging (ODAge)
Ohio Department of Development (ODOD)
Ohio Department of Health (ODH)
Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH-Policy & Program)
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
US Department of Agriculture (Rural Development)
US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Support Agencies:

Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR)
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA)
Ohio Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD)

III. CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Regarding housing placement of disaster survivors, consider reasonable commute and the school district in which children are currently enrolled. For longer term housing options consider financial ability of occupant to pay rent.
2. Consider number of substantially damaged structures. This will add longevity to the need for temporary housing, while owners obtain permits and rebuild.
3. Recognize and address challenges and unique situations early-on. Monitor progress.
4. Consider demographics and regional differences.

IV. ROLES AND CAPABILITIES

A. Ohio Emergency Management Agency (Ohio EMA)

1. Co-chair the Ohio Disaster Housing Taskforce with the Ohio Housing Finance Agency.
2. Serve as a liaison between FEMA and state and local governments.
3. Engage local jurisdictions to identify housing needs in heaviest impacted areas.
4. Convene the State Disaster Housing Taskforce.
5. Assist FEMA and local governments with the coordination of interim housing activities.
6. Coordinate with federal, state and local officials and non-governmental organizations in assessing housing needs versus available rental resources.

7. Coordinate ESF6-Mass Care activities with support agencies in State Emergency Operation Center (EOC) regarding sheltering and disaster housing missions and communications.
8. Activate Ohio Responds, which is an online database of Ohio Citizen Corp volunteers, to support shelter and housing missions. Volunteers are able to provide staffing and manpower.
9. Access Aidmatrix, an online donation management system, to provide support and information regarding assistance to survivors in shelters and disaster housing.
10. Access the American Red Cross National Shelter System (NSS), which is an online database that provides accurate, real-time data on emergency shelters and sheltered populations during a disaster. The NSS can serve as an indicator as to how many individuals statewide are in need of available housing.
11. If recommended by the Taskforce, formulate request for FEMA Direct Housing Mission.
12. Utilize FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps and data in local natural hazard mitigation plans to identify hazard areas to be avoided when locating temporary housing units (THUs) and relocating applicants.
13. Ensure mitigation techniques are implemented for THUs, such as wind resistant tie-downs, proper grounding and compliance with federal, state and local floodplain management requirements. Temporary windstorm shelters may be constructed as the situation dictates.
14. Assist local communities to develop applications for FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance programs. These funds can be used to acquire, demolish, elevate, retrofit and flood proof at-risk structures.
15. Coordinate the Ohio Building Officials Association (OBOA) substantial damage inspection process during Emergency Operations Center activation. Utilize data from these inspections to identify areas where THUs may be needed.

B. Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA)

1. Co-chair the Ohio Disaster Housing Taskforce with the Ohio Emergency Management Agency.
2. Convene the State Disaster Housing Taskforce.
3. Work with Ohio EMA and FEMA to identify housing needs in heaviest impacted areas.

4. Assist FEMA, Ohio EMA, and local governments with the coordination of interim housing activities.
5. Access <http://www.ohiohousinglocator.org>, a free website to the general public, providing information about affordable, accessible rental housing in Ohio. Web-users are able to search by location, cost and features.
6. Work with agency partners to collectively identify housing resources for a given area by utilizing housing databases and established relationships with Apartment Management Organizations.
7. Oversee the compilation of available housing resources for a specific disaster area.
8. Coordinate with federal, state and local officials and non-governmental organizations in assessing housing needs versus available rental resources.

C. American Red Cross (ARC)

1. Provide initial assistance by opening and staffing shelters in response to local needs and immediate needs of disaster survivors.
2. Provide ongoing status of open shelters and their population using real-time data through the ARC National Shelter System (NSS). The NSS can serve as an indicator as to how many displaced individuals are in need of temporary housing.
3. May provide vouchers for emergency lodging (i.e. hotel/ motel/ rental assistance).
4. At a service center or other designated facility ARC may provide case management, referrals, etc., in securing temporary housing for displaced disaster survivors.
5. Support the mission of the State Disaster Housing Taskforce.

D. Emergency Management Association of Ohio (EMAO)

1. Serve as a liaison between county emergency management agencies and the State Disaster Housing Taskforce.
2. Relay information to county EMA directors regarding roles for local governments in the event of a presidential declaration requiring the need for disaster housing. (See Section IV, Roles for Local Governments).
3. During a disaster, engage local jurisdictions to assess housing needs in the heaviest impacted areas and identify available housing resources.

4. Support local government efforts to coordinate interim/permanent housing activities with FEMA.

E. Ohio Department of Aging (ODAge)

1. Serve as an advocate for older adults.
2. Serve as liaison to the 12 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) in Ohio, which may have the following roles in emergencies and disaster:
 - a. Identify and address unmet needs among older adults in the disaster area.
 - b. Contact older consumers receiving services from the AAA to determine whether they need emergency housing.
 - c. Provide limited home repairs necessitated by the disaster, if funding is available.
 - d. Maintain a presence at county emergency operation centers and/or disaster recovery centers, either in person or by providing contact numbers and resource materials.
 - e. Help older disaster survivors establish eligibility and complete applications for disaster relief services and disaster assistance programs.
 - f. Follow-up and provide advocacy, if needed, to ensure that individuals were able to complete the application process and received the assistance for which they were eligible.
3. Support the mission of the State Disaster Housing Taskforce.

F. Ohio Department of Development (ODOD)

1. ODOD's primary role is to assist with long term recovery from a disaster. This includes infrastructure and housing.
2. ODOD may have grants with communities or non-profits within the impacted area that may be able to assist with a number of housing activities.
3. ODOD works with these communities, as necessary, to ensure that they are able to respond to a disaster in an effective and expedient manner. This may mean providing communities with the ability to amend or extend current grants in order to meet the needs of the citizens in the affected area.

4. The majority of ODOD's funds are to assist low-income residents. Assistance may include home repairs, rehabilitation, new construction, rental assistance, assistance with monthly payments, utility tap-ins, financial counseling and other eligible activities after the initial FEMA or state assistance has been provided.

G. Ohio Department of Health (ODH)

1. Conduct health assessments of conditions in the communities affected by the disaster. Whenever possible, determine where health problems could occur.
2. Maintain ongoing human health surveillance of affected communities in order to rapidly identify and address health-related problems.
3. Conduct food service sanitation programs and private water system and water hauling programs.
4. Provide consultation for household sewage disposal, housing sanitation, vector control and public health nuisances.
5. Assist local health districts in their emergency inspection programs.
6. Perform examinations and analyses of possibly hazardous and contaminated substances throughout the disaster.
7. Provide medical-related information to the public.

H. Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH-Policy & Program)

1. During disaster, ODMH works with community Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Boards, provider organizations and other emergency responders (i.e. Red Cross) to identify mental health consumers who are or may become at risk due to displacement or loss of primary housing.
2. Work with state, local and community partners in disasters which result in the disruption and/or displacement of these residents. Assist in supporting resident transition to other temporary, permanent or supportive emergency housing through appropriate level behavioral health services and intervention.
3. State mental health care hospitals and facilities may provide temporary emergency shelter as resources are available and determined appropriate by ODMH's senior leadership staff.

I. US Department of Agriculture (Rural Development)

1. Maintain an online database, listing 400 rural rental properties located statewide, financed by Rural Development, which may be available to house those needing temporary or permanent housing.
The website is located at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>. Select the link, “List of Apartment Complexes.” Web-users are able to search by county, town, zip code, and property name or management agency. No information is provided about vacancies.
2. Provide a listing of rental properties with vacancies located in or near a disaster area.
3. Provide priority housing placements, allowing disaster survivors to move to the top of any waiting list if displaced due to a FEMA declared disaster. Security deposits may be waived, as well as any annual lease requirement. Also, age ineligible tenants may rent at elderly designated properties for a period of up to 6 months.
4. Provide low interest loans or grants for home repair. Property must be located in a rural area and applicant must meet income guidelines. Also able to provide subsidized loans for home purchase with income and rural location requirements. These programs are non-disaster specific.
5. Staff Disaster Recovery Centers as needed.

J. US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

1. Rental Housing Assets (257,910 units in Ohio)

- a. *Affordable housing units:* HUD provides funding to Public Housing Authorities and multi-family owners /operators to administer HUD’s rental assistance programs. These affordable housing programs provide safe, decent and affordable housing opportunities for low-income, elderly, disabled residents and those with special needs. In a disaster HUD can contact these partners to assess any impacted units (housing needs) and to identify vacant units (housing resources). These units meet HUD’s Housing Quality Standards.
- b. *Market-rate housing units (FHA-insured developments):* Although this type of housing asset may not have a rental subsidy, HUD works closely with the owner/operator of each of these developments since they are FHA-insured. In a disaster HUD can contact these partners to assess any impacted units (housing needs) and to identify vacant units (housing resources).
- c. HUD housing providers have the ability to provide priority housing placement to allow disaster survivors to move up on the waiting list if displaced due to a FEMA declared disaster.
- d. On-line Rental Housing Resources:

- List of HUD subsidized apartments:
<http://www.hud.gov/apps/section8/step2.cfm?state=OH,Ohio>
- List of Public Housing Authorities in Ohio:
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/states/oh.cfm>
- HUD National Housing Locator:
http://portal.hud.gov/app_nhls/publicWelcome.do?cmd=doInit

2. Grant Funding Resources

- a. HUD administers many formula and competitive grant programs including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. In this program, the state of Ohio, other direct grantees, and sub-grantees of the state have the flexibility to reprogram funding, in coordination with HUD staff in Ohio, to meet an urgent need, including disaster recovery operations.
- b. On-line Resources on Grants:
 - HUD provides a variety of disaster recovery resources for individuals and communities. Link: http://www.hud.gov/info/disasterresources_dev.cfm
 - Information on HUD Disaster Recovery Resources:
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/drsl/>
 - Local Government Contacts for the administration of HUD-funded programs in Ohio: <http://www.hud.gov/local/oh/working/entitlement.cfm>

3. Homes for Sale and Special Programs for Disaster Survivors:

- a. HUD administers the FHA Section 203(h) mortgage insurance program which can be used for the reconstruction of a damaged primary residence or for the purchase of a different primary residence.
- b. On-line Resources for Homes for Sale and Special Programs:
 1. Information on FHA's Section 203(h) program for Disaster Survivors:
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/ins/203h-dft.cfm>
 2. List of HUD-owned homes for sale in Ohio:
<http://www.hudhomestore.com>

4. Leadership, Direct Personnel Support and Technical Assistance

- a. Able to provide technical assistance including GIS disaster risk mapping, housing rehabilitation and community redevelopment.
- b. Maintain close working relationships with key federal and state housing partners.
- c. Provide direct support to the Joint Field Office (JFO) and Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) as needed.

K. Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR)

1. Provide flood hazard area identification to federal, state and local partners. This information will be used to facilitate placement of temporary housing units (THUs) outside Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs).
2. Coordinate with partners for preparation and placement of resources and response [i.e., substantial damage determination (Ohio Building Officials Association–OBOA), crisis permit processing network (Ohio Floodplain Management Association-OFMA) and disaster housing (State Disaster Housing Taskforce)].
3. Advise partners concerning flood-risk mitigation techniques for THUs in compliance with federal, state and local floodplain management requirements.
4. Provide technical assistance to enforce floodplain regulations.

L. Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA)

1. In case of the development of a community site, provide regulatory oversight and technical assistance regarding public drinking water, waste water disposal and solid waste.

M. Ohio Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD)

1. Coordinate voluntary relief agencies' assistance for interim housing and unmet needs.
2. Connect individuals and households with essential support services. Provide case management, information and referrals including the need for spiritual care and crisis counseling.
3. Assist disaster survivors with locating interim housing and through donations management, assist in providing furnishings.
4. Provide volunteer labor, equipment and materials for cleaning and/or repairing disaster damaged homes, making the structure habitable and lessening the disaster survivor's need for interim housing.
5. Assist with the coordination of Long Term Recovery Committees (LTRCs).

V. ROLES FOR COUNTY GOVERNMENTS

1. County governments are responsible for coordinating local jurisdictions and providing technical assistance to same.

2. County governments may play a key role in issuing building permits for substantially damaged structures and the construction of community sites.

(For purposes of this strategy, county government refers to the entity itself; its agencies and departments. It also refers to representatives of county governments including, but not limited to, elected and non-elected officials.)

VI. ROLES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Local governments have firsthand knowledge of community resources. As such, the *National Disaster Housing Strategy* outlines specific roles and responsibilities for local governments. They are as follows:

1. Local governments/jurisdictions will play an active role in their own recovery.
2. Local governments/jurisdictions have a key role in assessing local housing needs versus available rental resources. This should be done in coordination with the State Disaster Housing Taskforce and FEMA.
3. Local needs must be determined in coordination with local communities/ residents/ businesses in the affected areas.
4. Local officials are responsible for identifying available and suitable land, as well as obtaining permits for community sites. They are also responsible for ensuring the availability of local services for residents throughout their stays in disaster housing.

(For purposes of this strategy, local government refers to townships, villages and cities. It also refers to representatives of local governments including, but not limited to, elected and non-elected officials.)

VII. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

1. Identify and rapidly catalog possible temporary and permanent housing resources.
2. Determine number of displaced households versus number of available housing resources.
3. Produce a disaster-specific housing plan.
4. Determine need for Direct Housing mission and formulate request for FEMA.
5. Prioritize populations for occupancy on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to special needs populations and their caretakers. Match disaster survivors with appropriate housing units to accommodate entire households.

6. Coordinate temporary housing mission with local government. Local officials are responsible for identifying sites and obtaining permits.

7. State-acceptable formaldehyde levels for temporary housing units have been established as follows:

- Acute exposure level: 40ppb/v (parts per billion by volume)
- Intermediate exposure level (14 days-1 year): 30 ppb/v
- Chronic non-cancer level (lifetime): 8 ppb/v
- Chronic cancer level (lifetime): 0.07 ppb/v
- In residential settings: US EPA recommended threshold of not greater than 0.1ppm.

(Information above provided by the Ohio Department of Health. Standards are not set forth in statute or rule.)

QUICK REFERENCE

On-line Housing Resources:

- Rental housing locator:
<http://www.ohiohousinglocator.org/>
- Rural rental property locator:
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>
- List of HUD subsidized apartments:
<http://www.hud.gov/apps/section8/step2.cfm?state=OH,Ohio>
- List of Public Housing Authorities in Ohio:
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/states/oh.cfm>
- HUD National Housing Locator:
http://portal.hud.gov/app_nhls/publicWelcome.do?cmd=doInit

Online Homes for Sale and Special Programs for Disaster Survivors:

- Information on FHA's Section 203(h) program:
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/ins/203h-dft.cfm>
- List of HUD-owned homes for sale in Ohio:
<http://www.nhmsi.com/>

On-line Resources for Grants:

- Disaster recovery resources for individuals and communities:
http://www.hud.gov/info/disasterresources_dev.cfm
- Information on HUD Disaster Recovery Resources:
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/drsl/>
- Local Government Contacts for the administration of HUD-funded programs in Ohio:
<http://www.hud.gov/local/oh/working/entitlement.cfm>

Acronyms

AAA	Area Agencies on Aging
ADAMHS	Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services
ARC	American Red Cross
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
DRC	Disaster Recovery Center
EMA	Emergency Management Agency
EMAO	Emergency Management Association of Ohio
EOC	Emergency Operation Center
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHA	Federal Housing Administration
GIS	Geographic Information System
HUD	US Department of Housing and Urban Development
JFO	Joint Field Office
LTRCs	Long Term Recovery Committees
NSS	National Shelter System
OBOA	Ohio Building Officials Association
OCSC	Ohio Community Service Council
ODAge	Ohio Department of Aging
ODH	Ohio Department of Health
ODMH	Ohio Department of Mental Health (Policy & Program)
ODNR	Ohio Department of Natural Resources
ODOD	Ohio Department of Development
OEPA	Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
OFMA	Ohio Floodplain Management Association
OHFA	Ohio Housing Finance Agency
SFHA	Special Flood Hazard Areas
THU	Temporary housing units
VOAD	Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters