

Priority Housing Access for Displaced Households

What does this program do?

If you live in USDA Rural Development-financed multifamily housing or apartments and are displaced from your home because of a natural disaster, you can receive priority placement in other USDA RD-financed multifamily properties.

IMPORTANT: While a FEMA number is not required to request a LOPE, we strongly recommend you get one. If you have been displaced by a federally declared disaster such as a hurricane, flood, tornado, forest fire, or earthquake please register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA - available at this link: [fema.gov/](https://www.fema.gov/)). You will be given a FEMA number to use when applying for different types of federal assistance, including housing assistance outside of the USDA.



QR code for the USDA RD Multifamily Housing webpage

Letters of Priority Entitlement:

If you are living in USDA RD-financed multifamily housing and have been displaced by a natural disaster, you can apply for a Letter of Priority Entitlement – or “LOPE” – allowing you to receive priority placement in vacant units or move to the top of waitlists in USDA RD or U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD)- financed multifamily housing.

A LOPE can be used at USDA RD or HUD-financed properties anywhere in the U.S. or its territories. However, if you apply for priority placement at a HUD-financed property you will also need a FEMA number.

How do I get a Letter of Priority Entitlement?

There are several ways to get a LOPE.

- Request a LOPE directly from USDA RD by calling 1-800-292-8293 or emailing MultifamilyHousing@usda.gov.
- Contact your property management company. In some cases they may have a LOPE letter ready for you already.

You will find a map of USDA RD-financed Multifamily Housing rentals at this link: tinyurl.com/RD-MFH-map.

Is a disaster declaration required?

Not always. The property management company can help you figure out if you are eligible or you can contact the USDA RD Multifamily Housing staff. A staff list is available at tinyurl.com/RDMultiFamily or call 1-800-292-8293.

What are some LOPE guidelines?

- You must be able to prove you lived in an eligible USDA RD-financed multifamily housing property at the time of the disaster.
- If you receive a rental subsidy at your current USDA RD-financed multifamily rental, your subsidy can follow you to your new rental.
- A LOPE expires 120 days after it is issued. However, USDA RD can extend the LOPE if you request an extension.

What governs this program?

Letters of Priority Entitlement are referenced in 7 CFR Subtitle B, Part 3560, available at this link: tinyurl.com/RD-7CFR-B-3560.

NOTE: Because information changes, always consult official program instructions or contact your local Rural Development office for help. A list is available at this link: go.usa.gov/xJHPE. You will find additional resources, forms, and program information at rd.usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Last revised October 2024