

# Priority Housing Access for Displaced Households

**If a natural disaster displaces you from your home in a USDA Rural Development (RD)-financed multifamily property, you may be eligible for priority placement in other RD-financed multifamily properties.**

***Anyone who has been displaced by a federally-declared natural disaster such as forest fire, hurricane, earthquake, tornado, or flood should register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and obtain a FEMA number. This number may be used to apply for different types of federal assistance, including housing.***

Current USDA RD multifamily tenants displaced by natural disaster are entitled to receive a Letter of Priority Entitlement — or LOPE — allowing the household to apply for housing in properties financed by USDA Rural Development or U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Tenants with LOPEs may receive priority placement in vacant units, and also may be moved to the top of waitlists for RD-financed multifamily properties. A LOPE is good for USDA or HUD properties anywhere in the United States or its territories.

## **Disaster Declarations**

You may be eligible for a LOPE even if the disaster doesn't have a presidential or state declaration. Your property management company will be able help you find out if you are eligible, or you may [contact USDA Rural Development](#).

## **How do I obtain a LOPE?**

USDA Rural Development will issue all LOPEs directly to any impacted residents of RD-financed multifamily properties. You may also contact USDA Rural Development to request one. To receive a LOPE, you must be

able to prove you lived in a USDA RD multifamily housing property at the time of the disaster. RD staff members are available to help answer any questions about the letter and the process.

## **Does it expire?**

Yes, a LOPE expires 120 days after it is issued. If necessary, USDA Rural Development may issue another letter.

**I am a current tenant in a USDA-financed multifamily property and I have a FEMA number. Do I also need a LOPE?**

Although it is not required to have a LOPE in addition to a FEMA number, it is recommended for USDA Rural Development tenants. Either a FEMA number or a LOPE will ensure you receive priority placement in USDA-financed multifamily properties.

**What if I don't currently live in a USDA-financed property?**

If you are not currently a tenant in a USDA RD-financed multifamily property, you may still be eligible for priority placement if you have registered with FEMA. [Contact USDA Rural Development](#) if you have questions about eligibility.

If you have questions, please visit: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/mfh-contacts>

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**For additional resources and information about our business, community or housing programs, contact our program specialists at 1-800-670-6553 or visit us online at [www.rd.usda.gov](http://www.rd.usda.gov).**

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