



FEMA

Fact Sheet

FEMA-4344-DR-CA California Wildfires Direct Lease

Eligible applicants in approved counties whose primary residence is inaccessible or uninhabitable as a direct result of a presidentially-declared disaster may receive Direct Temporary Housing Assistance from FEMA.

FEMA may lease existing residential property not typically available to the general public, such as corporate apartments, for use as temporary housing for eligible applicants. FEMA may provide Direct Temporary Housing Assistance for FEMA-4344-DR-CA up to 18 months from date of declaration, unless extended by FEMA. FEMA re-evaluates occupants' eligibility on a periodic basis, usually monthly, for the entire period of assistance to ensure the occupant continues to meet eligibility requirements.

Direct Lease Property Conditions

FEMA may implement Direct Lease with one or more properties that meet the following conditions:

- The property must be existing residential property;
- The property must comply with Housing Quality Standards (HQS) established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and all utilities, appliances, and other furnishings must be functional;
- Each individual unit must provide complete living facilities, including provisions for cooking, eating, and sanitation within the unit;
- The property must be located within reasonable commuting distance; and
- The property must be located within reasonable access to community and wrap-around services, such as accessible public transportation, schools, fire and emergency services, grocery stores, etc.

Before leasing a property, FEMA will inspect the property to ensure compliance with HUD HQS and verify the property owner's capacity to provide all management services, including building maintenance, except where the property is leased or contracted from another government entity, in which case FEMA may directly obtain such services. The property owner must agree to:

- Grant FEMA exclusive use of the housing units and sole discretion to identify and select occupants during the term of lease agreement;
- Grant FEMA the option to extend the lease if FEMA requests and FEMA approves an extension to the period of assistance beyond 18 months;
- Grant FEMA the option of releasing the unit to the owner and ceasing all monthly payments for the unit at any time by providing thirty days' notice;
- Allow FEMA to make reasonable modifications or improvements to the property to provide a reasonable accommodation for an eligible applicant with a disability or other access and functional needs; and

- Incorporate a lease addendum containing FEMA's program conditions of eligibility and termination of tenancy and eviction into any lease between the property owner and the occupant.

FEMA may authorize a one-time payment of security deposits for each unit. Unused portions of each security deposit must be returned to FEMA upon release of the unit. FEMA will pay for utilities that are included in the monthly rent established by the property owner; however, background checks, credit checks, application fees, or pet deposits will not be covered.

When multiple eligible Direct Lease properties exist, FEMA will evaluate properties according to the following factors:

- Cost to the federal government;
- Landlord's demonstrated ability to manage and provide maintenance services;
- Proximity to wrap-around services; and
- Accessibility: When selecting available properties, FEMA will prioritize properties that are already accessible, include accessibility features, or can be easily made accessible, and/or are in proximity to accessible public transportation.

FEMA will prioritize accessible units for applicants whose household includes one or more persons with a disability or other access and functional needs.

Direct Lease Eligibility

Eligible applicants must demonstrate they are unable to secure a housing resource with the use of financial rental assistance provided by FEMA, before occupying the housing unit. Applicants eligible for Direct Lease must:

- Sign and adhere to the terms and conditions outlined by FEMA and the lease agreement with the landlord.
- Agree to pay FEMA a portion of their Additional Living Expenses (ALE) monthly, not to exceed the applicable Fair Market Rent amount, until their ALE is exhausted. ALE is a benefit provided under some homeowners, condominium owners, and renters insurance policies to cover the additional cost of living while the insured is temporarily displaced from their home.