



St. Lucie County Housing Disaster Plan

St. Lucie County
Housing Division of
Community Services

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**ST. LUCIE COUNTY
HOUSING DISASTER PLAN
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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose and Scope

The St. Lucie County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) was adopted in March 1998, in compliance with Chapter 252, Florida Statutes (State Emergency Management Act). The Plan addresses the four phases of emergency management: Preparedness, Response, Recovery, and Mitigation.

Community Services was charged with the responsibility of developing a Housing Disaster Plan, which would be implemented in the event of catastrophic events. The purpose of the Housing Plan is as follows: to identify resources available for post disaster housing, in terms of existing programs and available housing units; to identify potential sites for the placement of temporary housing; and to establish the procedures through which affected residents will be assisted with temporary housing. This Plan addresses how to proceed after a disaster has occurred. Specifically, the Plan looks at the housing needs of displaced persons who may need shelter for up to eighteen months. This period is longer than allowed for emergency shelters.

This Plan was prepared to address a level of disaster considered major or catastrophic, per the State's classification. A major disaster is described as any disaster that will likely exceed local capabilities and require a broad range of State and Federal assistance triggering recovery-oriented actions by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. A catastrophic disaster is described as any disaster that will require massive State and Federal assistance, including immediate military involvement, triggering response and recovery-oriented actions. To permit State and Federal assistance, respectively, a state of emergency must be declared by proclamation or executive order of the Governor of the State, and by the President of the United States. Consequently, the Plan does not address non-declared disasters, which would not trigger the provision of such assistance.

While this Plan does not address emergency shelters, it should be noted that the State's Emergency Shelter Plan has estimated the County's vulnerable population at 6,436 for Category 4 and 5 hurricane events. The vulnerable population in a county consists of the total number of citizens within the county who, based on their home's location or construction type, are vulnerable to the effects of a storm surge and/or high winds from an approaching hurricane. For Florida's coastal counties, the vulnerable population is a summation of a county's entire mobile home population, the non-mobile home population living within the storm surge area for Storm Categories 4 and 5, and the expected number of tourists to be located within the storm surge area during the summer or fall months.

B. Countywide Review of Plan

Key county staff received copies of the draft Plan for review. All comments received were considered, and if applicable, were incorporated into the Plan.

II. AVAILABLE TEMPORARY HOUSING RESOURCES

A. Federal Resources

Local and State governments share the responsibility of protecting their citizens from disasters and of helping them recover from disasters, however, in some cases federal assistance is necessary. The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Public Law 93-288) was enacted to support State and Local governments when disasters overwhelm their capabilities and empowered the President to direct any Federal agency to utilize its authorities and resources in support of State and Local assistance efforts. The National Response Plan (NRP) sets forth the structure and procedure for the delivery of Federal Assistance under the Stafford Act, which can include personnel, equipment, supplies, facilities, and managerial, technical, and advisory services. The Presidential Disaster Declaration will designate which programs are authorized for each disaster, and the Individual Assistance Program provides temporary housing assistance. Generally, temporary housing assistance is 100% federally funded. Projected housing solutions from emergency shelter to transitional and temporary placements through more permanent placements are included in Appendix 1.

1. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Public Law 93-288), FEMA serves as the primary coordinating agency for disaster response and recovery activities. FEMA processes the Governor's request for disaster assistance, coordinates Federal operations under a disaster declaration, and appoints a Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) who is responsible for FEMA operations in the declared State. The Disaster Field Office (DFO) is a field office that serves as a base of operations for the FCO and the Emergency Response Team, an interagency group that supports the FCO in coordinating Federal efforts. Initial tasks include notification, activation, mobilization, deployment, staffing, and facility setup. In continuing operations, FEMA provides support for logistics, communications/IT, financial management, community relations, congressional affairs, and public information.

In addition to providing various types of response and recovery aid to public entities and non-profit relief agencies, FEMA also provides disaster relief assistance to persons, families, and businesses on an individual basis through the Federal Assistance to Individuals and Households Program. People can access this help by registering for assistance through the toll free FEMA Registration Line. FEMA may also establish a Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) in the affected area, a centralized location where victims can obtain information on the disaster recovery assistance programs offered by various Federal, State, local and volunteer organizations.

Federal Assistance to Individuals and Households

The Disaster Management Act of 2000 (DMA 2000) enacted significant changes to FEMA's disaster assistance programs, which became effective October 1, 2002. DMA 2000 eliminated the Individual and Family Grant (IFG) Program in its entirety, and replaced the former Temporary Housing (TH) Program with a new program called Federal Assistance to Individuals and Households.

The Federal Assistance to Individuals and Households Program has two major components: the Housing Assistance, which is 100% federally funded, and Other Assistance, which is 75% federally funded.

Housing Assistance under the new program provides more flexible assistance to individuals through the following four categories:

- 1) Temporary Housing
- 2) Repairs
- 3) Replacement
- 4) Permanent Construction

In accordance with the purposes of this plan, this discussion will only address the Housing Assistance component of the new FEMA program and will review the four categories that make up that component. The rule for Housing Assistance authorizes individual eligibility in more than one category of assistance. However, DMA 2000 did not change FEMA's rule forbidding duplication of benefits, which prohibits federal assistance for disaster-related needs, which have been met by other means (insurance coverage, local aid, etc.).

FEMA's Temporary Housing category ensures that persons whose homes have been damaged or destroyed during a disaster are provided with a safe place until repairs are complete, the homes rebuilt, or other permanent residence secured. This assistance is designed primarily for persons without insurance or those having inadequate insurance, and is available only to homeowners and renters who are legal residents of the United States and were displaced by the declared disaster event.

The **Temporary Housing** Category authorizes:

- a. Financial Assistance to eligible individuals and households to rent alternate housing resources such as existing rental units, manufactured housing, recreation vehicles, and other readily fabricated dwellings.
- b. Financial Assistance for transportation of the rental unit, utility hookups, and installation of the unit.
- c. Financial Assistance for reimbursement of reasonable short-term lodging expenses that individuals or households incur in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.
- d. Direct Assistance to be provided by FEMA, in the form of purchased or leased temporary housing units to individuals and households who lack available housing resources and who would be unable to make use of the Financial Assistance outlined above.
- e. FEMA will charge Fair Market Rent, after 18 months, for any housing unit it has provided as Direct Assistance to an individual or household.

- f. FEMA will sell purchased housing units that it provided as Direct Assistance to individuals and households, and to deposit the proceeds from such sales into the Disaster Relief Fund.

The **Repairs** Category Authorizes:

- a. FEMA to provide financial assistance for the repairs of *uninsured* disaster-related damages to an owner's primary residence. The funds are to help return owner-occupied primary residences to a safe and sanitary living or functional condition. Repairs may include utilities and residential infrastructure.
- b. FEMA to provide financial assistance for eligible hazard mitigation measures that reduce the likelihood of future damage to the residences' utilities or infrastructure.
- c. Eligible individuals and households to receive assistance of up to \$5,000 (adjusted annually by the Consumer Price Index {CPI}) to repair damages to their primary residence without first having to show that the damages cannot be repaired through other means, except insurance proceeds.

The **Replacement** Category Authorizes:

- a. FEMA to provide financial assistance to replace the primary residence of an owner-occupied dwelling damaged by the disaster event when there was at least \$10,000 of damage (adjusted annually by the CPI). Assistance is limited to \$10,000 (adjusted annually by the CPI).
- b. The use of Replacement financial assistance towards the cost of acquiring a new permanent residence that is greater in cost than \$10,000 (adjusted annually by the CPI).

Note: FEMA's Associate Director must approve all Replacement assistance awards.

The **Permanent Housing Construction** Category Authorizes:

- a. FEMA to provide financial or direct assistance to applicants for the purpose of constructing permanent housing in insular areas outside the continental United States and in other remote areas. **This category is not available to St. Lucie County residents.**

In general, to be eligible for Housing Assistance under the Individuals and Households Program three conditions must be met.

1. The home must have been the applicant's primary residence;
2. The home must be inaccessible or have been damaged and rendered uninhabitable as a result of the disaster; and
3. The insurance, if any, covering the dwelling does not fully cover the applicant's additional disaster-related living expense and/or cost of home repairs.

The aggregate amount of assistance provided through FEMA's Individuals and Households Program cannot exceed \$25,000 per household.

Because FEMA's Individual Assistance programs are designed for persons and families, each household seeking assistance must individually apply and establish its eligibility. **To apply for assistance, disaster victims must call one of FEMA's National Processing Service Centers at the toll-free registration number, 1-800-621-FEMA (or TTY 1-800-642-7585).** In the event of widespread telephone system failure, FEMA will make available mobile emergency response units consisting of a telephone bank with satellite hook-up capability. In rare instances, paper applications may be utilized. Disaster victims seeking such assistance should register with FEMA immediately once capable of doing so, and should maintain record of their assigned FEMA registration number.

FEMA (or its designated providing agency) will verify need and eligibility before offering assistance. After an application is submitted, a local FEMA-contracted inspector will assess the damage to the applicant's property and will file a report with FEMA. FEMA will then make an eligibility determination and may issue a check within 10 days of receiving the initial application for assistance. However, response times may vary depending on the volume of demand for assistance.

2. Small Business Administration (SBA)

In the event of a Presidential Declaration of Disaster authorizing the Federal Assistance to Individuals and Households Program, the Small Business Administration (SBA) provides disaster relief in the form of loans, which are repaid to the U.S. Treasury. Home Disaster Loans are made to homeowners or renters to repair or replace disaster damages to real estate or personal property owned by the victim.

A homeowner may apply for a loan to repair or restore his/her primary home to its pre-disaster condition. The loan may not be used to upgrade the home or make additions to it, unless the local code requires structural improvements. Secondary homes and property owned for rental are not eligible for assistance.

Either homeowners or renters may apply for a loan to repair or replace personal property such as clothing, furniture, automobiles, etc. This loan may not be used to replace extraordinarily expensive or irreplaceable items such as antiques, collections, pleasure boats, recreational vehicles, etc.

Loan amounts are limited by SBA regulation to a maximum of \$200,000 to repair or replace real estate and \$40,000 to repair or replace personal property. Loans may be increased by as much as 20% to protect the damaged real property from possible future disasters of the same kind. By law, the interest rate for the loan will depend on whether or not the applicant has credit available elsewhere. The rates for Home Disaster Loans will not exceed 4.0% for those without other credit and 8.0% for those with other credit.

To apply for SBA assistance, victims must call FEMA's National Processing Service Center at 1-800-621-FEMA. The SBA should make a decision on a complete loan application in seven to twenty-one days after its submission.

3. Mass Care

Federal mass care assistance will support: 1) the delivery of shelter, feeding, and emergency first aid; 2) the establishment of systems for bulk distribution of emergency relief supplies; and 3) the collection of information to operate a Disaster Welfare Information (DWI) system for the purpose of reporting victim status and assisting family reunification.

The American Red Cross is designated by the National Response Plan (NRP) as the primary agency responsible for providing mass care. Support agencies include: Department of Agriculture, Department of Defense, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Veteran's Affairs, Federal Emergency Management Agency, General Services Administration, and the U.S. Postal Service.

Direct Federal temporary housing assistance entails the provision of emergency shelter to disaster victims, including the use of pre-identified shelter sites in existing structures and the construction of temporary facilities. Local units of volunteer agencies active in the disaster response should plan to provide immediate shelter, feeding, and emergency first aid services without external support for at least the first seventy-two (72) hours following a disaster event.

B. State Resources

1. Department of Community Affairs, Division of Emergency Management

Chapter 252 of the Florida Statutes mandates the development of the Florida Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), through which the State prepares for, responds to, recovers from, and mitigates the impact of a variety of disasters that might adversely impact residents of Florida. The Plan outlines the roles and responsibilities of State agencies, local governments, and voluntary organizations, and coordinates their activities. The Plan parallels the National Response Plan, and describes how national resources will be coordinated to supplement State resources in response to a disaster.

Types of assistance are grouped into emergency support functions, with a lead agency designated for each based on its authorities, resources, and capabilities in that functional area. An Emergency Coordinating Officer (ECO) is appointed from each lead agency to manage its corresponding function. The ECOs and State DEM staff comprise the State Emergency Response Team (SERT). The SERT serves as the primary mechanism through which State assistance to local governments is managed.

The Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation is designated as the primary agency for the mass care function, the purpose of which is to coordinate activities involved with the emergency provision of temporary shelters, emergency mass feeding, and the bulk distribution of relief supplies. The mass care function does not command resources, but rather

works in cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organizations that provide mass care to disaster victims. Consequently, under the Florida CEMP, temporary housing responsibilities fall upon designated support agencies such as the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army. In St. Lucie County, the Red Cross is the agency with designated responsibility for provision of short-term emergency shelter, and following recent years' hurricanes, has provided the great majority of shelter capacity. Red Cross emergency shelters are generally located in schools or public structures which must be returned to their regular use as soon as feasible, and consequently, are not an appropriate resource for medium- or longer-term temporary housing.

If persons displaced from their homes by a disaster cannot be accommodated in existing shelters and/or vacant residential units, the State DEM may request that FEMA establish temporary mobile home parks to meet these persons' temporary disaster housing needs. A temporary site is a self-contained community within which all basic human needs can be met.

Recent experience has shown that when providing direct temporary housing assistance, FEMA prefers to utilize mobile homes, travel trailers, or other manufactured housing units. It is most preferable to place a temporary mobile home/RV unit on the same property from which the occupant household was displaced. This helps minimize disruptions in the lives of the affected persons, avoids geographic displacement, and facilitates oversight of home repairs and home security.

However, often various logistical and/or regulatory restrictions will prevent the placement of a temporary unit at the site of the damaged home. The next preferable alternative is to utilize existing commercial mobile home/RV properties as necessary infrastructure and zoning/permitting requirements are in place.

The development of new temporary mobile home/RV parks is a less preferable option due to the potentially lengthy time required before availability for occupancy, the significant costs involved, and potential opposition from adjacent property owners. In the case of undeveloped sites, there may be a local cost share for installation of essential utility infrastructure to render the site functional. Regardless of the foregoing considerations, development of new temporary mobile home/RV parks may be necessitated by the need for temporary housing in catastrophic situations. Such development would represent a coordinated joint effort between FEMA, the State, St. Lucie County, affected municipalities, and non-profits. Potential sites for such use are discussed in Section III of this document.

Following the Hurricanes of 2004, SLC Planning, Zoning, and Building Department allowed for permitting of mobile homes/RVs as temporary housing in the unincorporated areas of the County. Procedures for permitting mobile home/RV placements in the municipalities vary according to each individual municipality.

2. Department of Military Affairs, Florida National Guard

Chapter 250 of the Florida Statutes designates the Governor to be the Commander in Chief of all militia of the state. The Florida National Guard is activated through the issuance of a Governor's

executive order, such as in the case of a declared state of emergency, and operates under the direction of the State Adjutant General.

Existing National Guard Bureau Regulations state that the primary responsibility for disaster relief lies with the local and/or state government and those federal agencies designated by statute. National Guard assistance will only be provided when the situation is so severe that effective response is beyond the capacity of local and State government, and all civil resources have been exhausted. When required resources are not readily available from commercial sources, National Guard support will be provided if it is not in competition with private enterprise and/or the civilian work force. The National Guard's resources are normally committed to supplement civil resources provided by the local and State government, and consequently, support will terminate as soon as civil authorities are capable of handling the emergency.

The National Guard could provide disaster response and recovery support in accordance with the Florida Division of Emergency Management's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, Emergency Support Function 13, Military Support. The National Guard will not provide temporary housing units, but could provide complementary services, which are essential to the successful operation of temporary housing. In the event of a disaster of catastrophic magnitude, National Guard services would likely be utilized in conjunction with FEMA and State DEM's temporary housing assistance. The temporary housing related tasks, which the National Guard may undertake, are:

- Transportation of supplies and services
- Maintenance and operation of distribution points
- Provision and operation of electrical generators
- Mass feeding
- Operation of comfort stations
- Water purification
- Law enforcement and security

C. Existing Local Resources

1. Rental Units

Local vacant rental units represent the first source to which displaced persons will turn to meet their temporary housing needs. Rental apartment buildings or complexes of forty (40) or more units tend to be managed by professional property managers. Recent experience has revealed that many of these larger developments do not offer short-term leases. Lease terms are usually for no less than seven (7) months. Those needing temporary housing for a more limited time will have to turn to other sources, or may incur expenses and liabilities associated with violating lease agreements. For the 4th Quarter of 2005, the vacancy rate in rental apartment developments over 18 months old had fallen to 2.4%, continuing a local trend of declining rental vacancy (SLC Quarterly Housing Report, Reinhold P. Wolff Economic Research, Inc. 2006).

Appendix 2 lists rental developments in St. Lucie County that will be contacted following a disaster event to generate an inventory of vacant affordable rental housing units. The listing

includes all substantial rental developments with apartment units offered at or below 120% of Fair Market Value, the premise for which is the assumption that those most in need of temporary housing assistance will be those households with limited financial resources. Additionally, the Florida Housing Coalition, through its website (www.flhousing.org) offers a statewide listing of rental units available to households displaced by disasters.

The county encourages community involvement in registering property and/or residences for use during and after a disaster with Disaster Housing Resources at www.dhronline.org. Disaster Housing Resources is a unique program that brings together immediately available rental properties and residents who need housing.

The St. Lucie County Board of Realtors through the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) has some capability to identify listed homes and condominium apartments, which are vacant. The listing form prepared by the listing Realtor includes a query box, which asks if the property is vacant. Vacancy information is frequently withheld from listings for security reasons. Although a data search to identify vacant homes would be incomplete, the MLS can identify vacant homes and condominium apartments to subscribing members to facilitate their timely marketing to families in need of shelter. The Board of Realtors, in an emergency, could publish or e-mail announcements to all Realtor members to make known the County's needs for commercial /industrial /land properties.

2. Hotel/Motel Units

Vacant hotel/motel units will serve as temporary housing for displaced persons requiring shelter for shorter periods of time, or for those who cannot be accommodated by existing vacant rental units. The St. Lucie County Tourist Development Council reports an inventory of 3,250 hotel/motel/condo units in 45 properties in the County, based upon reporting subject to the hotel bed tax. Based on the most recent reporting year, the average season (November – April) vacancy rate is 78% leaving 716 units available, and the average non-season (May – October) vacancy rate is 60% leaving 1302 units available.

Recent experience has revealed that many of these hotel/motel units become occupied by individuals who come to the County to assist in recovery efforts, including mutual aid-workers from other government agencies and private contractors' employees. Additionally, hotel/motel facilities may be subject to disaster-related damages rendering them uninhabitable, and hotel/motel facilities will not offer vacant units to additional guests (displaced or otherwise) until electrical power and other utility services are functional. Consequently, the number of units actually available to temporarily house displaced county residents can be expected to be substantially lower than those calculated through vacancy rates.

3. Mobile Home/RV Parks

Depending on the magnitude of the catastrophic event, temporary housing assistance may come in the form of mobile homes, park models, or recreational vehicles. If the

temporary housing unit provided cannot be accommodated on the property of the household which has been left homeless, an alternative site must be secured. Because of the costs associated with the development of new mobile home and RV spaces, the utilization of existing spaces is preferable. An inventory of St. Lucie County's mobile home and RV parks was obtained from the St. Lucie County Growth Management Department during October 2006. The complete inventory, including park name, address, capacity, and contact information, is included as Appendix 2 to this document. Maps depicting the locations of these mobile home/RV parks will be retained in HCD and DEM files.

There are 48 permitted mobile home and RV parks located within St. Lucie County.

These existing mobile home sites, both vacant and occupied, represent an important temporary housing resource. In the event of a catastrophe, a large portion of the county's existing mobile home and recreational vehicle stock could be destroyed or otherwise rendered uninhabitable. Once the debris of the former housing units has been cleared, additional vacant spaces over the current estimated number will become available. However, in all likelihood, any spaces, which become available due to the destruction of units, will be utilized by the former resident household of the space for the location of a new housing unit. Therefore, the number of spaces, which would be available to disaster victims who are not currently mobile home or RV park residents, should be estimated at the current vacant number.

4. Vacant Commercial/Industrial Properties

Various commercial or industrial structures may be suitable for conversion to temporary housing in a worst-case scenario in which all other temporary housing resources are exhausted. In addition, some partially developed or undeveloped commercial/industrial properties may be suitable for setting mobile homes or Travel Trailers.

Commercial/Industrial Structures:

Information on the availability of commercial/industrial structures at a specific time is available from several websites:

www.loopnet.com - Loopnet is a listing service for commercial properties only. Loopnet permits non-subscribers limited browsing access and full access to subscribers (\$39.95 per month). Properties, which have been listed for less than 30 days, are available to subscribers only.

www.commrex.com - Florida COMMREX is the Florida component of COMMREX, a nationwide listing service for commercial properties. Though Florida COMMREX does not have as many listings as Loopnet, COMMREX permits visitor's unrestricted access to listings.

www.propertybbs.com – This website provides a listing service for commercial properties in the State of Florida. The service does allow unrestricted access to all listings.

As part of its economic development function, the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County (EDC) performs research on commercial and industrial properties, and vacant land parcels available for lease or purchase within St. Lucie County. The EDC may be available to assist with research if the need arises and other temporary housing sites are exhausted.

As a component of commercial space, vacant office space is also listed in these same vehicles. Office space may have some suitable use, either as temporary office space to facilitate housing referrals or social services. In extreme circumstances, office space in appropriate localities could also be used as temporary shelters. All office properties are presumed to have air conditioning and heating when accepted for listing.

Loopnet.com, Commrex.com and propertybbs.com catalog office space listings. These web sites can be searched at regular intervals to supplement current listings. Paper copies can be retained to hedge against a communications breakdown, which would preclude after-event data searches.

Vacant Land Properties:

In the event that more space is needed for setting emergency housing than has been identified elsewhere within this plan, certain deforested or cleared lands from the realty market may be appropriate. These properties are located throughout the County and most are located along major roadways or are readily accessible from them. The varied locations of these lands could serve to limit the trauma of dislocation from familiar surroundings e.g., schools, employment, churches, family and friends, etc.

5. Methodology to Update Information

This database for all resources discussed in this plan will be updated yearly and will expand that inventory, as appropriate. All information resources will be contacted in the month of May. This update will be timed to the approach of the Atlantic Hurricane Season (beginning June 1). More frequent updates will be conducted as threat conditions may indicate.

Website Realty Listings: Data searches will be conducted on accessible websites at the same annual intervals to supplement current information.

The St. Lucie County Board of Realtors: An annual contact will be maintained to access an updated member list and to ensure continued support for the County in alerting members.

III. IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL VACANT SITES

In order to identify suitable vacant sites for the location of temporary housing in St. Lucie County, a visual survey of sites was conducted for suitability.

A. Selection Criteria

In consideration of the various requirements of the temporary housing alternatives, which might be located in the identified open spaces, staff developed the following list of factors to be considered in site recommendation decisions:

- Size
- Topography
- Existing use of site
- Site hazards
- Compatibility with adjacent uses
- Ownership
- Accessibility to population centers
- Accessibility to commercial/institutional services
- FEMA flood hazard zone classification
- Elevation above sea level
- Adequacy of ingress/egress
- Availability/proximity of public water and sewer infrastructure
- Site preparation requirements

In addition to the above-listed factors, all comments received from reviewing entities were considered during discussion of each potential site.

B. Recommended Sites

Based on information gathered during the review of potential sites, a list of sites that were considered suitable for temporary housing purposes was developed.

A file containing information on each current identified site has been maintained. Information on file includes location details, site characteristics, owner contact information, comments generated during review, and maps and aerial photographs of the sites. The SLC Division of Emergency Management is also provided with a listing of the current identified sites.

Following activation of the Plan, the recommended sites will again be reviewed to verify suitability at that point in time. If necessitated by circumstance, additional sites beyond the identified sites on file may be sought out. These may include sites initially identified during the original site survey and may also include previously unconsidered locations.

It should be noted that although County and municipal input will be provided, under the scenario addressed by this Plan, the ultimate authority in selecting the location for establishment of temporary housing facilities will lie with FEMA.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. General

- 1) The Disaster Housing Plan encompasses:
 - Coordination with FEMA in the placement of temporary housing facilities;
 - The provision of information to displaced persons, and to agencies serving the same, for access to assistance and relocation to existing units; and
 - At the discretion of the Board of County Commissioners, the provision of financial assistance for temporary housing to displaced persons, if appropriate sources of funding for such assistance are available.

It is important to note that the balance between expediting temporary, transitional, and permanent replacement into housing post hurricane and maintaining public safety can be challenging. St. Lucie County makes every effort to enforce all applicable codes in compliance with public safety standards and the Florida Building Code. To expedite temporary and transitional placements, zoning ordinances may be adjusted/waived for a period of time relative to emergency repairs to dwellings and/or for placement in temporary housing units to expedite interim disaster housing. Fee waivers may also be granted for a period of time.

- 2) It will be the responsibility of Community Services Housing Division to implement the Housing Plan and to coordinate with the Public Safety Director unless delegated to a designee.
- 3) Disaster housing operations will initially be located in the SLC Community Services Office, and then relocated to other County facilities, if necessary.

B. Preparedness

- 1) By May 1st of each year, Community Services will facilitate implementation of the Housing Plan.
- 2) By June 1st of each year, the Housing Manager will identify a pool of staff who could potentially serve as Disaster Housing personnel, if necessary. The Housing Manager will be responsible for maintaining contact information on all such staff.
- 3) The Housing Manager will be responsible for determining the resources needed to implement the Housing Plan, and for securing such resources. At a minimum, Housing Office staff should have: laptop computer(s) with word-processing and spreadsheet software and designated phone lines.

- 4) Housing staff is responsible for ensuring that updates of the local resources information utilizing the methodology outlined in Section II of this Plan is completed.
- 5) Housing staff will review the recommended potential temporary housing sites on an annual basis to verify their continued availability and if necessary, will seek to identify additional sites to maintain an adequate inventory of potential temporary housing sites.

C. Response

- 1) Upon notification of the full emergency activation of SLC, Community Services will secure any needed documentation and equipment, and will contact identified Housing personnel to verify their planned post-event whereabouts and availability.
- 2) Once hazardous conditions subside and safe travel is possible, the Housing Manager will report to the Emergency Operations Center to the Community Services Director.
- 3) Once hazardous conditions subside and safe travel is possible, Code Compliance Inspectors will report to the Code Compliance Manager for assignments performing damage assessments.
- 4) The Housing Manager will monitor incoming damage assessment reports, and will coordinate with the Code Compliance Manager in determining an estimated number of displaced SLC residents based on reports of damaged housing structures
- 5) The Community Services Director will activate identified potential temporary Housing personnel, as necessary, and will arrange for continuity of operation. The number of staff members activated will be dictated by the estimated magnitude of demand for housing services. The Community Services Director or designee will be responsible for assigning duties to staff, developing alternative work schedules for staff, and maintaining time and attendance records.
- 6) Housing Staff will utilize contacts, identified in Section II of this plan, to collect and maintain information on available existing vacant housing units, including both hotel/motel units and rental apartments.
- 7) The Housing Manager will coordinate with the Code Compliance Manager, or designee, on the estimated number of temporary housing units needed.
- 8) If necessary, Housing personnel will perform a basic inspection of potential temporary housing sites utilizing the form at Appendix 4. Conditions to be assessed will include: on-site flooding, damage to on-site infrastructure, damage to on-site facilities, extent of debris presence at the site, and accessibility to site.

- 9) All site inspection information will be forwarded to the Housing Manager who will prepare a brief site conditions report to be provided to the Assistant County Administrator.
- 10) The Housing Manager will coordinate with the State DEM, FEMA, SLC Code Compliance, the City of Fort Pierce Community Services and the City of Port St. Lucie Community Services to estimate the numbers of displaced persons requiring temporary housing assistance. This effort shall include contacting municipal building departments to request information on housing units condemned within their jurisdictions.
- 11) The Housing Manager will coordinate with representatives of SLC Central Services, SLC Code Compliance, SLC DEM, State DEM, and FEMA to select a temporary housing site(s) based on estimates of households left homeless, the location(s) of the displaced population, the condition of the potential sites, and the type(s) of temporary housing that will be provided. These sites will not be limited to those identified herein, but may also include other available County-owned facilities which are suitable for temporary housing purposes.
- 12) The Housing Manager will coordinate with SLC Central Services Director and SLC Code Compliance for preliminary approval of the selected site(s), and will submit the site(s) to the County Administrator or designee for final approval.
- 13) The Housing Manager will coordinate with State DEM, FEMA, and local agencies to direct temporary housing resources to the site(s).
- 14) As necessary, the Housing Manager will coordinate with the Public Information Officers (SLC, State, and FEMA), on media releases advising the public of temporary housing information.
- 15) Housing operations will be a function of the Housing Division of Community Services but in the event of damage will be transferred to any other undamaged County Department. The SLC Central Services Department will be consulted for alternate facilities should Community Services facilities have been rendered non-functional.
- 16) On an as-needed basis, the Housing staff will make available an updated inventory of the availability and locations of existing vacant housing units.
- 17) Housing staff will provide displaced households seeking housing assistance with referrals to public and private agencies and programs providing such assistance, and will provide information on available existing vacant housing units.
- 18) At the discretion of the County Administrator, and if appropriate funding sources are available, BOCC approval will be sought and necessary administrative actions

to make available funds for emergency temporary housing assistance for displaced lower income households. This may include funding for: individual households for apartment rental assistance; the rental of a block(s) of hotel/motel units by the County; acquisition of mobile home/RV units; or for other forms of assistance as deemed appropriate by circumstances.

- 19) Housing staff will collect and maintain information on client households, including: household size, address, contact information, needs, and assistance offered.
- 20) Housing staff will coordinate with the SLC Long Term Recovery Organization, Inspired Network To Achieve Community Together (INTACT), in an effort to identify displaced households that require temporary housing assistance.
- 21) As appropriate, or upon request of the County Administrator, Housing staff will prepare reports on actions taken, numbers of households provided with various types of assistance, and numbers of additional temporary housing units which are reported.
- 22) The Housing Manager will prepare a final report that compiles the information contained in previous reports and summarizes all work performed during the period of activation.
- 23) The County will work with the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster (VOAD) in the implementation of this plan.

D. Recovery and Hazard Mitigation

St. Lucie County has established a long-term recovery team, Inspired Network to Achieve Community Together (INTACT). This committee's mission is to strengthen disaster coordination by sharing information, simplifying resident access to services, and providing collaborative leadership in the long-term needs for recovery and rehabilitation for individuals and families vulnerable to disaster events. It is composed of private citizens, faith based, non-profit, and governmental entities that cooperate, collaborate, and coordinate to provide long term care and hazard mitigation services.

Members bring together financial resources, materials, and manpower. They work to avoid duplication of services, effort, energy, and finances and to provide a case management system to help link disaster survivors with resources.

St. Lucie County and the two municipalities (Fort Pierce, Port St. Lucie) have made a commitment to work together to obtain and manage grant funds to address the housing needs of St. Lucie County residents impacted by disasters. Additional grant funding has been applied for by local governments, and efforts will continue to coordinate funding opportunities in the following grants: Community Development Block Grant; Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery Initiative; Community Services Block Grant; Hurricane Housing Recovery Program and HOME funds. These entities will also continue to support INTACT in its service provision.

St. Lucie County has developed a post disaster vision and is determined to provide quality housing assistance in the event of a disaster that dislocates citizens from their homes through damage or destruction and to provide ongoing access to resources to assist homeowners with hardening/retrofitting their homes.

Basic challenges some communities have identified and St. Lucie County is working to address include:

- Evacuation and protection for storm surge zones (Appendix VI).
- Long term retrofitting of homes to decrease losses.
- Reduction and protection of the abundance of trailers utilized as primary residences.
- Coordination with community redevelopment processes and organizational structures.
- Compliance with all building and code ordinance requirements both long term and in emergencies in order to ensure public safety.

APPENDIX I

Projected Housing Solutions

Phase	Shelter – 0-21 days	Transitional – Up to 60 days	Temporary – Up to 18 months	Permanent > 18 month
Housing Types	Shelters Hotel/Motel Friends & Family	Hotel/Motel Friends & Family Apartments/Rental Housing Travel Trailers Mobile Homes Converted Commercial Space Tent Cities	Apartments/Rental Housing Travel Trailers Mobile Homes	Lease or Purchase of Single Family Multi-family Mobile Homes
Solutions Provided by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary & Faith Based Organizations • State/Local Government • <u>Travel Trailer Distributors (if insured)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Lazydays</u> - <u>Travel Easy RV</u> - <u>Copley's RV Center</u> - <u>CJ's RV Town</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to Return Home • Insurance • American Red Cross & other funding sources provide hotel/motel vouchers • FEMA Housing Assistance • Expedited • Repair grants • Replacement Grants • Rental Grants • <u>Travel Trailer Distributors (if insured)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Lazydays</u> - <u>Travel Easy RV</u> - <u>Copley's RV Center</u> - <u>CJ's RV Town</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to Return Home • Insurance • FEMA Housing Assistance • Repair grants • Replacement Grants • Rental Grants • <u>Travel Trailer Distributors (if insured)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Lazydays</u> - <u>Travel Easy RV</u> - <u>Copley's RV Center</u> - <u>CJ's RV Town</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to Return Home • Insurance • FEMA Other Needs Assistance • SSA Loans • HUD • VA • USDA, Rural Development • Voluntary & Faith Based Organizations • <u>Travel Trailer Distributors (if insured)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Lazydays</u> - <u>Travel Easy RV</u> - <u>Copley's RV Center</u> - <u>CJ's RV Town</u>

APPENDIX II

Rental Properties

- D&L – 305-206-9778
- Jasco Corporation – 305-970-0044

The above list represents developments within St. Lucie County with apartment units offered at or below 120% of Fair Market Value

APPENDIX III

Available Resources for Temporary Housing

- Mobile Home Sites
- Commercial Housing (Hotels, Motels, etc.)
- Jai-Alai
- St. Lucie County Fairgrounds

APPENDIX IV Storm Surge Areas for St. Lucie County



Department of
Community Affairs
Division of
Emergency
Management
GIS Section

0 1 2 4 Miles

DISCLAIMER:
Map is intended to be used as reference only.
No warranty for accuracy provided.

St. Lucie County Storm Surge Zones

Notes:

Created by: Larry H. Kung
Date created: Oct. 3, 2006
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