DR-4828/4834-FL Direct Housing Cumulative Public Notice

# Notice Date: 11/05/2024.

The United States (U.S.) Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) hereby gives notice to the public of its intent to provide federal assistance to the designated areas within the State of Florida. under major disaster declaration FEMA-4828-DR-FL (Hurricane Helene) and 4834-DR-FL (Hurricane Milton). This notice applies to the Individual Assistance (IA) program implemented under the authority of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 (Stafford Act). This public notice concerns activities that may be located in or affect wetland areas, the 1 percent annual chance floodplain, critical actions within the 0.2 percent annual chance floodplain, and the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) floodplain, as determined by 44 CFR 9.7(c). Such activities may adversely affect the floodplain or wetland or may result in continuing vulnerability to flood damage.

# Public Notice - Major Disaster Declaration FEMA-4828-DR-FL, FEMA-4834-DR-FL, and Overview of Authorized Assistance

The President declared major disasters for the State of Florida pursuant to his authority under the Stafford Act on September 28, 2024, as a result of Hurricane Helene, and on October 11, 2024, as a result of Hurricane Milton. Section 408 of the Stafford Act authorizes FEMA's Individuals and Households Program (IHP) to provide financial assistance, and if necessary, direct services to individuals and households in the state within the counties of Citrus, Columbia, Dixie, Hamilton, Hernando, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Okeechobee, Pasco, Pinellas, Suwannee, and Taylor; additional counties may be designated at a later date. These actions may include repair, restoration, or construction of housing; purchase and placement of transportable temporary housing units (TTHUs) in the form of travel trailers or manufactured housing units; repair of structures as minimum protective measures; and permanent installation of TTHUs as part of a sale or disposal/donation of temporary housing.

# Federal Actions in or Affecting Floodplains and Wetlands

FEMA may provide certain specified types of temporary housing at a private, commercial, or group site. Prior to providing the temporary housing, FEMA shall determine if the temporary housing action affects the 1 percent annual chance floodplain or wetland by using the process specified in 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 9.7(c), Determination of proposed action's location, Floodplain determination. An individual or family shall not be housed in the 1 percent annual chance floodplain or wetland unless it has been determined the site is the only practicable alternative.

In order to best serve survivors of the flooding associated with Hurricanes Helene, and Milton FEMA intends to install TTHUs in Special Flood Hazard Areas in the Counties of Citrus, Columbia, Dixie, Hamilton, Hernando, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Okeechobee, Pasco, Pinellas, Suwannee, and Taylor if no practicable alternatives outside mapped floodplains are available. Any delay in licensing survivors into safe, secure, and sanitary housing at the first opportunity will cause undue hardship. Placing TTHU will enable eligible residents of these thirteen (13) counties to move from FEMA’s transitional sheltering programs to a longer-term temporary housing solution while their primary dwellings are made habitable. FEMA has determined the best course of action is to place TTHU on homeowner’s property where feasible.

This action will ensure that the homeowner will be able to safeguard their dwelling while it stands empty; be able to carry out repairs to the damaged dwelling with a minimum amount of inconvenience; remain within their community for social and economic sustenance; and be able to retain living patterns with minimal interruption and hardship.

When placement of a THU on a homeowner’s property is not feasible, a TTHU may be placed on a commercial group site, which may also be located in the mapped floodplain. All TTHU installations will meet the manufacturer’s specifications and comply with local floodplain requirements, along with all other applicable federal, state, local or tribal laws, regulations, and Executive Orders.

1. FEMA considered the following significant factors in making this determination:
2. Other available temporary housing resources outside the floodplain
3. Proximity to schools, places of worship and habitual life patterns (shopping, social interaction, etc.)
4. Security of damaged property (appearance of abandonment inviting looting)
5. Reasonable commuting time and distance to work/school/worship/social interaction
6. Preference of survivor when presented temporary housing options and the survivor’s preferred placement of the THU to the extent possible
7. FEMA used the following criteria to identify practicable alternatives to placing TTHU in the floodplain in accordance with 44 C.F.R. § 9.13:

a. Speedy provision of temporary housing
b. Potential flood risk to the temporary housing occupants
c. Cost-effectiveness
d. Social and neighborhood patterns
e. Timely availability of other housing resources
f. Potential harm to the floodplain or wetland

 3. FEMA considered the following temporary housing options when making this decision:

1. Transitional shelter options (hotels)
2. Rental accommodations
3. Staying with friends or family members while repairs are made.
4. Other available temporary housing resources outside the floodplain

 4. Placement of TTHUs will be made in accordance with the following provisions:

1. Installations are temporary and for the purpose of providing emergency temporary housing to disaster survivors.
2. FEMA contractors will perform the installation according to manufacturer’s specifications and will comply with NFIP floodplain management standards or any more restrictive federal, state, local or tribal government floodplain regulations.
3. Prior to granting occupancy permits, the building code inspector for that jurisdiction will inspect the installation.
4. Elevation requirements in the jurisdiction where the TTHU is being installed will be used. In cases where best available information indicates that more stringent elevation levels (beyond the locally mandated elevation requirements) are prudent, this data will be used.
5. Any impacts to the floodplain will be temporary and minimized to the extent possible.

Executive Order 14030, Climate-Related Financial Risk (May 20, 2021), reinstated Executive Order 13690, Establishing Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) and a Process for Further Soliciting and Considering Stakeholder Input (January 30, 2015), which established the FFRMS. As such, FEMA will be identifying the applicable design standard for project types incorporating the FFRMS-Climate Informed Science Approach (CISA) for actions situated along the low-lying areas along the Gulf and Atlantic coastlines; the Freeboard Value Approach (FVA) for coastal and riverine areas and the 0.2-Percent-Annual-Chance Flood Approach (0.2PFA) for inland riverine areas per FEMA Policy 206-24-005 effective for federally declared disasters on or after September 9, 2024.

The FFRMS does not apply to the placement of temporary housing units due to the short-term nature of their placement. The FFRMS does apply to those units when the unit is permanently installed or becomes permanent after installation during implementation of the IHP. FEMA will establish the FFRMS floodplain area and associated flood elevations by using the process specified in 44 CFR 9.7(c) and FEMA Policy 206- 24-005 (FFRMS).

**Ill. Further Information or Comment**

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protects the civil rights of persons with disabilities. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by the federal government, federal contractors, and by recipients of federal financial assistance. Any recipient or sub-recipient of federal funds is required to make their programs accessible to individuals with disabilities. Its protections apply to all programs and businesses that receive any federal funds. This applies to all elements of physical/architectural, programmatic and communication accessibility in all services and activities conducted by or funded by FEMA. FEMA intends to comply with the Rehabilitation Act in all federally conducted and assisted programs in alignment with the principals of whole community inclusion and universal accessibility.

Executive Orders 13985 and 14008 further address the need to achieve environmental justice and equity across the federal government. The issuance of the new executive orders more than 20 years after Executive Order 12898 was signed indicates the administration's directive to federal agencies to renew their energy, effort, resources, and attention to environmental justice. FEMA complies with Executive Order 12898 by reviewing a proposed project to identify the presence of low-income and/or minority populations that could be affected by the project. FEMA then analyzes if those populations/communities would bear any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects from the project's implementation.

This may be the only public notice regarding the actions described above for which FEMA may provide financial assistance under the Individual Assistance program. Interested persons may obtain information about these actions or a specific project by writing to the Federal Emergency Management Agency Region IV- 3005 Chamblee Tucker Rd, Atlanta, GA 30341-4112 or by email at FEMA-R4EHP@fema.dhs.gov. Please include in the subject line of the email "DR 4828-FL/DR 4834-FL EHAD". Comments should be sent in writing at the above address within 30 days of the date of this notice.