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Transitional Sheltering Assistance for Hurricane Florence

FEMA Recovery Policy FP 104-009-5

BACKGROUND

This policy applies only to states, tribes, and territories receiving disaster declarations associated with Hurricane Florence. This policy supersedes Appendix A of FEMA's Individuals and Households Program Unified Guidance (FP 104-009-3) issued on September 30, 2016, for assistance resulting from Hurricane Florence.

PURPOSE

Based on lessons learned from the 2017 hurricane season and previous Transitional Sheltering Assistance (TSA) activations, and in alignment with FEMA's Strategic Plan to reduce the complexity of recovery, the Recovery Directorate is issuing this policy on the use of TSA.

The purpose of this document is to provide FEMA's policy on how TSA will be implemented, if requested, by states, tribes, and territories impacted by Hurricane Florence. Through this policy, FEMA is standardizing the TSA process to become an efficient non-congregate sheltering option for state, tribal, and territorial governments who need temporary assistance to protect disaster survivors. This policy establishes how FEMA may provide TSA to state, tribal, or territorial governments when disaster survivors are unable to return to their pre-disaster primary residence for an extended period of time because their home is either uninhabitable or inaccessible following Hurricane Florence, a Presidentially-declared Major Disaster.

PRINCIPLES

- A. FEMA's TSA will meet temporary sheltering needs of eligible survivors due to immediate threats to life and property resulting from a major disaster.
- B. FEMA will increase the opportunities for survivors to access wrap-around services and resources offered to disaster survivors in congregate shelters.
- C. FEMA will maximize clarity by communicating information about this assistance to survivors in a simple and effective manner and promote state, tribal, and territorial governments' understanding of the assistance's scope, benefits, limitations, and costs.
- D. FEMA will use standard eligibility criteria and more robust guidance to reduce complexity in the delivery of this assistance.
- E. FEMA will simplify the provision of assistance by reducing the number and frequency of extension requests.



REQUIREMENTS

A. AUTHORIZING TSA

Outcome: FEMA authorizes TSA in appropriate circumstances based upon emergency needs of applicants in the area of the Presidentially-declared Major Disaster.

The state, tribal, or territorial government must submit their request to FEMA through the Regional Administrator (RA) or Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO). The package must include:

1. State, Tribal, or Territorial Activation Request Letter signed by the Governor, Governor's Authorized Representative, or the Tribal Chief Executive;
2. Fully executed and signed Resource Request Form;
3. Analysis demonstrating the following:
 - a. The need to return the facilities serving as congregate shelter(s) to their original pre-disaster use (e.g., schools);
 - b. The insufficiency of shelter capacity to meet the needs of the displaced population;
 - c. Shelter support resources from shelter providers and other response partners are inadequate to support long-term sheltering;
 - d. Available rental resources, as determined by FEMA in coordination with the state, tribal, or territorial government, are not sufficient to meet the needs of the displaced population, especially those residing in shelters within the affected areas;
 - e. Exigent circumstances require federally-supported long-term, non-congregate sheltering; and
 - f. Whether the state, tribal, or territorial government is contemplating operating a non-congregate shelter operation concurrently with TSA.
4. Length of time the state, tribal, or territorial government is requesting TSA to be implemented (the time period cannot exceed 180 days from the date of declaration) to include justification for the length of time; and
5. The IA-declared counties for which the state, tribal, or territorial government is requesting TSA.
6. Once submitted to the RA or FCO, a signed concurrence letter will be submitted to FEMA's Individual Assistance Division Director (IADD) for final review and approval.

FEMA's IADD may approve TSA based upon the review of the complete request package, including the above identified criteria. TSA is appropriate when:

1. Congregate shelters are overwhelmed;
2. A substantial number of applicants' pre-disaster primary residences are uninhabitable or inaccessible or uninhabitable with respect to individuals with access and functional needs; or
3. Areas that are inaccessible or incurred damage that prevents disaster survivors from returning to their pre-disaster primary residence for an extended period of time, generally 30 days or more.



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TSA will not be implemented prior to the anticipated conclusion of short-term sheltering operations, generally up to two weeks post-declaration.

Once TSA is approved, the IADD may approve the total TSA period of assistance based on the determined need and supported analysis up to 180 days from the date of declaration. The RA, in coordination with the IADD, may approve extension requests up to 180 days from the date of the declaration.

B. CONDITIONS OF INITIAL APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Outcome: TSA is authorized for applicants who actually have a determined need.

To be considered for TSA, applicants must:

1. Register with FEMA for assistance;
2. Pass identity verification;
3. Pass occupancy verification;
4. Have a primary residence located in an area designated for TSA;
5. Indicate home damage during registration due to Hurricane Florence;
6. Report damage that occurred within the incident period for Hurricane Florence;
7. Report a cause of damage that corresponds with impacts associated with Hurricane Florence (e.g., wind and rain);
8. Be the head of household and/or not be linked with another valid registration for FEMA assistance; and
9. Have a current sheltering location of mass shelter, hotel, car, or place of employment.

Applicants must agree to and sign the TSA Terms and Conditions when checking into a TSA-participating facility.

C. EXTENDING TSA

Outcome: TSA extensions are tied to a continuing emergency sheltering need.

In coordination with the FCO, the state, tribal, or territorial government may submit a written request to extend TSA to the RA. The request must:

1. Be received 30 days prior to the end of the TSA period of assistance;
2. Include the dates for the previously approved TSA periods of assistance associated with Hurricane Florence;
3. Specify exigent circumstances that justify a request extension (e.g., continued lack of rental resources, delays in repairs to damaged dwellings, inability to access impacted areas, demonstrated need for a direct housing mission, etc.); and
4. Include the projected TSA completion date for the requested extension.

When submitting a request for a TSA extension to the RA for approval, the FCO and the affected state, tribal, or territorial government will coordinate, document, and submit an exit



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strategy describing the actions and/or components that will assist applicants' transition to temporary or permanent housing solutions.

D. CONTINUED APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Outcome: Continued eligibility requirements for TSA are based on an applicant's continued need for this form of assistance.

Throughout the approved TSA period of assistance, TSA applicants' continued eligibility will be reviewed by FEMA on a 10-day period. Applicants determined ineligible will have their assistance terminated during the next 10-day period. Based on their Individuals and Households Program (IHP) eligibility determination, participants who no longer meet the eligibility criteria will be notified 7 days prior to their TSA end date.

Applicants are ineligible to remain in TSA if:

1. The applicant is not referred to FEMA Housing Assistance;
2. The applicant voluntarily withdrew from consideration for disaster assistance;
3. The applicant is ineligible for IHP Housing Assistance;
4. The applicant's pre-disaster primary residence is safe to occupy based on the inspection;
5. The applicant is not willing to relocate from the residence while repairs are made based on information provided during the inspection;
6. The applicant has insurance that provides Additional Living Expense coverage based on the cause of damage verified by the inspection;
7. The inspector was not able to contact the applicant to complete an inspection after multiple attempts (i.e., three attempts);
8. The applicant is assisted with another pre-disaster household member;
9. The applicant has agreed to participate in an emergency temporary repair program (e.g., Sheltering and Temporary Essential Power Program, Voluntary Agencies Leading and Organizing Recovery, etc.) and the repairs have been completed;
10. The applicant received and can make use of Rental Assistance;
11. The applicant chose not to accept direct housing assistance when offered;
12. The applicant has been leased into a direct housing unit or repairs or construction are completed if Permanent Housing Construction has been approved; or
13. The applicant does not comply with the TSA Terms and Conditions.

Applicants who are determined to no longer be eligible for TSA based on any of the above criteria will be notified via phone call.

E. IMPLEMENTATION

Outcome: The TSA terms and conditions are clear and consistent to ensure effective implementation.



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1. Eligible applicants may choose to stay at any TSA participating lodging facility where a vacant room is available. FEMA provides access to a list of approved lodging facilities on <http://www.disasterassistance.gov/> or through FEMA's Helpline.
2. The applicant and/or co-applicant must be present during check-in to a TSA-participating lodging facility and display a government-issued photo identification or other approved form of identification.
3. The number of rooms provided to applicants at a TSA-participating lodging facility will be based on the pre-disaster household composition.
 - a. A household of four or fewer members will be authorized for one room.
 - b. A household of five or more will be authorized for additional rooms, based on a limit of four individuals per room (an adult must be present in each room).
4. Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities will be made based on an applicant's written request detailing their specific circumstances, with relevant supporting documentation, and/or when a participating lodging facility imposes additional restrictions, rules, or constraints.
5. The allowable TSA room rate is based on the locality lodging rates identified by the General Services Administration (GSA). FEMA will cover the lodging taxes and fees in addition to the applicable GSA lodging rate. When combined with the lodging taxes and fees, this will be the maximum TSA allowable rate. The IADD may authorize an increase up to 300% of the applicable GSA lodging rate if circumstances warrant the increase and may decrease the rate, when appropriate.
6. The applicant is responsible for all incidental costs associated with the lodging and amenities, such as room service, laundry, parking, telephone, or other ancillary services. Applicants are required to sign the TSA Terms and Conditions, acknowledging their responsibilities, at the time of check-in for the TSA period of assistance.
7. FEMA may cover non-refundable pet fees when applicable. FEMA will cover the combined cost of the applicable lodging rate plus the non-refundable pet fee up to the maximum TSA allowable rate; the applicant will be responsible for any pet-related fees exceeding the maximum TSA allowable rate.
8. Households separated during a disaster, through no fault of their own, and unable to reunite due to the disaster are eligible for TSA.
 - a. Examples include households evacuated to different locations during a federal/state/tribal/territorial assisted evacuation (e.g., air, bus, ship, etc.) and/or households physically separated after a disaster.
 - b. Should such a separation occur, each separated group of the full household will be authorized one TSA hotel room per every four household members per location. Maximum allowable costs, as explained above, will apply to each room.
 - c. Once separated households reunite, any eligible TSA will resume under the head of household only. For example, a family of four who evacuated to two different locations during a disaster would be approved for two rooms (one room in each location) until they are able to reunite, at which point they would only be authorized for one room total. This paragraph does not apply to households that choose to separate after a disaster.



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F. ENDING TSA

Outcome: State, tribal, and territorial governments understand when TSA associated with Hurricane Florence will conclude.

TSA will end when:

1. The state, tribal, or territorial government does not request further extension prior to the end of the authorized TSA period of assistance;
2. The RA denies extension requests beyond the authorized TSA period of assistance. The RA may deny extension requests when sufficient additional resources are available to meet the sheltering or temporary housing needs of displaced individuals in the impacted areas; or
3. The period of assistance reaches 180 days from the date of declaration. Extensions beyond this time frame will not be approved.

Keith Turi

Keith Turi
Assistant Administrator, Recovery Directorate

9/17/18

Date



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

REVIEW CYCLE

FEMA Recovery Policy FP 104-009-5: Transitional Sheltering Assistance for Hurricane Florence will expire following the end of TSA associated with Hurricane Florence.

AUTHORITIES

- A. Section 403, 42 U.S.C. § 5107b, Essential Assistance, of the Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended.
- B. Section 408, 42 U.S.C. § 5174, Federal Assistance to Individuals and Households, of the Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended.

REFERENCES

- A. FEMA Recovery Policy FP 104-009-3: Individuals and Households Program Unified Guidance, September 30, 2016

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Following the expiration of this policy, FEMA will review and consider changes necessary to FEMA Policy FP 104-009-3: Individuals and Households Program Unified Guidance.

QUESTIONS

Direct questions to Christopher B. Smith, Director, Individual Assistance Division, at christopher.b.smith@fema.dhs.gov.