

# Massachusetts Housing Resources for Hurricane Maria Survivors

*Information to assist persons displaced from Puerto Rico who are looking for affordable temporary or permanent housing in Massachusetts*

## FEMA Housing Assistance

- **There is some temporary FEMA housing assistance available ONLY if you are registered.** For a short explanation see the [FEMA Hurricane Maria site](#).
  - For more details see **Chapter 4** of the FEMA publication *Individuals and Households Program (IHP) Unified Guidance*, available at <https://www.fema.gov/ihp-unified-guidance> or click [here](#) to download.
- **How to register with FEMA or check application status:**
  - Online at [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov)
  - Telephone Helpline toll-free at **800-621-3362**
  - Contact the nearest Family Resource Center:
    - By phone dial **2-1-1**. This number is available 24 hours a day and provides assistance and advice in several languages including Spanish.
    - Online at <https://www.frcma.org/>
- **FEMA housing assistance is only available for a limited period of time.** For a summary of available benefits go to **Chapter 4** of the [FEMA IHP Unified Guidance](#). The types of assistance are:
  - **Temporary Lodging Expenses** – FEMA will reimburse for stays up to 7 days.
  - **Transitional Sheltering Assistance (TSA)** – Financial assistance to rent alternate housing accommodations, including hotels, for a limited time. Click [here](#) for a list of FEMA hotels in Massachusetts.
  - **FEMA Rental Assistance** – FEMA will pay rent plus utilities for 2 months, and this can be extended.

## How to Use a Section 8 Voucher from Puerto Rico in Massachusetts

**You can use your voucher in Massachusetts under a HUD system called portability.**

- Even if you cannot get your Section 8 documents from Puerto Rico, you may be able to use your voucher in Massachusetts. HUD has advised housing authorities to relax the requirements for portability until January 31, 2018. See the HUD Section 8 disaster guidance [here](#).
- To begin the process of transferring your Section 8 voucher, call or go to the public housing authority or Section 8 administering agency in the area where you want to live. Click [here](#) for a list of public housing authorities. Click [here](#) for a list of Section 8 administering agencies.

## **If You Lived in Public or Subsidized Housing in Puerto Rico You May Qualify for Housing in Massachusetts**

- **You MAY have an admissions preference for HUD-subsidized housing in Massachusetts if you are FEMA-registered.** Contact the manager of the housing where you are interested in living and let them know you are registered with FEMA to find out if you qualify. Click [here](#) for a list of HUD-subsidized housing.
- **You may be able to rent a HUD-subsidized unit on a temporary basis.** HUD-subsidized developments may choose to rent to disaster victims on a temporary basis. However, you will have to pay the full market rent unless you already have a subsidy. This may be useful if you have some income, have a Section 8 voucher, want to return to Puerto Rico, and only need a temporary place.

## **You May Be Eligible for Priority for Public Housing, Subsidized Housing or Vouchers in Massachusetts**

**You may be eligible for a high priority for some government-assisted housing,  
which can help you move up a waiting list more quickly**

- **You should have first priority for state public housing and rental housing vouchers from the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP).** If you do not have all the required documentation, alternative forms of documentation are acceptable. Remember that even with a priority, there are very few public housing units or vouchers available, so do not expect to find housing immediately. Click [here](#) to see a recent DHCD guidance. Click [here](#) to find a list of public housing authorities in Massachusetts to find one in the area where you want to stay.
- **You should have first priority for disaster victims in MassHousing-subsidized housing.** Click [here](#) to access a document titled *Tenant Selection Plan Applicant Summary*. For a list of MassHousing rental developments in Spanish and English click [here](#).
- **You may have priority for federal public housing and Section 8 vouchers.** Ask the public housing authority where you want to apply if it has a priority for victims of natural disasters. To find housing authority in the area you want to live click [here](#).

## **You May be Able to Stay with Family or Friends for a Limited Time with Landlord Approval**

- **HUD-subsidized housing guest policies.** FEMA-registered residents can move in with family or friends who live in HUD-subsidized housing on a temporary basis if the owner approves and as long as it does not result in overcrowding. Residents can call HUD's regional office at [617-994-8200](tel:617-994-8200) or email Joe Crisafulli ([joe.crisafulli@hud.gov](mailto:joe.crisafulli@hud.gov)), and HUD will work with the owner or manager to obtain approval. See HUD disaster policy letter [here](#).

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Please check <https://www.masslegalservices.org/evacuees> for updates

- **State public housing guest policies.** State housing authorities are encouraged to allow residents to temporarily house family and/or friends displaced by disasters. The manager, tenants and guests should meet and discuss the length of stay. See DHCD 2017 state guidance [here](#).
- **Permanently Adding a Family Member.** If a state public housing resident wants to add a family member, the housing authority can relax the verification requirements and the unit size standards, as long as it does not violate the overcrowding rules. See DHCD 2017 state guidance [here](#).
- **Private housing or housing where tenant is using a voucher.** You may need to get the landlord's permission to stay with family or friends.

### Web addresses and other resources

#### *Hurricane/Disaster*

- FEMA Hurricane Maria site: <https://www.fema.gov/hurricane-maria>
- FEMA Individuals and Household Unified Guidance page: <https://www.fema.gov/ihp-unified-guidance>
- Applying for disaster assistance: [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov)
- Family Resource Centers: <https://www.fcma.org/>
- FEMA hotels in Massachusetts: <http://www.femaevachotels.com/index.php>
- HUD guidance on voucher portability after disaster: <http://www.nahro.org/sites/default/files/searchable/HUD-Disaster-Portability-Guidance-11-13-17.pdf>
- List of Massachusetts housing authorities: <https://hedfuel.azurewebsites.net/>
- List of Massachusetts regional administering agencies: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/regional-administering-agencies-contact-listing>
- List of MassHousing Rental Properties: [https://www.masshousingrental.com/portal/server.pt/directory/rental\\_housing\\_list/511](https://www.masshousingrental.com/portal/server.pt/directory/rental_housing_list/511)
- HUD housing guidance for disaster victims: <https://www.masslegalservices.org/content/housing-opportunities-tenants-displaced-hud-multifamily-housing-after-2017>
- DHCD housing notice for disaster victims: <https://www.masslegalservices.org/content/public-housing-notice-2017-23-housing-inquiries-due-recent-hurricanes>
- Information about assistance for disaster victims from MassLegalServices: <https://www.masslegalservices.org/evacuees>

#### *General*

- General information about finding and applying for affordable housing: <http://www.masslegalhelp.org/housing/finding-housing>
- DHCD Guide to Massachusetts Housing: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/a-guide-to-obtaining-housing-assistance>

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