

State Accepting Public Comments on Funding for Isaac-Recovery Housing Program in Plaquemines Parish

Aug. 20, 2014

BATON ROUGE - The State of Louisiana is accepting public comments on a Partial Action Plan that allocates \$12.8 million to Plaquemines Parish to create the Plaquemines Homeowner Assistance Program in response to Hurricane Isaac. This partial action plan also obligates the first \$800,000 of those funds so the parish can begin program activities.

Partial Action Plan 3 allocates \$12,828,440 of the parish's total funding of \$16,953,000 to create the new housing program, which is necessary to address the unmet housing needs in Plaquemines due to the 2012 storm.

Forty-six percent of all homeowners in Plaquemines Parish reported damage to their home after Hurricane Isaac, with 61 percent of those being low- to moderate-income homeowners.

The Homeowner Assistance Program will provide funding to assist LMI, owner-occupied households that have a gap in financial means due to resource limitations, whose homes are in a substandard condition and/or in violation of code requirements. Through an extensive outreach initiative, parish officials will identify qualifying homeowners and will coordinate all aspects of administering the program, including applicant intake, case management and construction work.

While the program will be implemented by parish officials, the state Office of Community Development's Disaster Recovery Unit and the Louisiana Housing Corporation will provide technical assistance and guidance.

"It was clear, both from the damage assessments and from what we heard from parish residents, that there were significant housing needs in Plaquemines Parish. These funds are the first step in addressing those needs," said Pat Forbes, executive director of the Louisiana Office of Community Development.

"Our parish residents clearly expressed a need for housing repairs, so we have dedicated more than 75 percent of our funding allocation to this program," said Billy Nungesser, president of Plaquemines Parish. "We are grateful to the state for dedicating \$16.9 million to Plaquemines for our recovery from Hurricane Isaac."

The funds are part of the \$66.4 million in Community Development Block Grant dollars that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development allocated to Louisiana for recovery from Hurricane Isaac. The City of New Orleans, Jefferson Parish and St. Tammany Parish all received individual allocations from HUD. Of the \$66.4 million, the state has allocated \$32.7 million to St. John the Baptist Parish and \$16.9 million to Plaquemines Parish for their Hurricane Isaac recovery efforts.

Citizens, community leaders and elected officials can access the plan and submit comments online by visiting http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/cdbq/dr/IC_ActionPlans.htm and opening "Isaac Partial Action Plan 3". A copy of the plan can be requested by calling (225) 219-9600.

The formal public comment period for Partial Action Plan 3 begins today, Aug. 20, 2014 and runs until 5 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 2, 2014.

After accepting public comments, the state will submit the plan to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for final federal approval. Members of the public can submit comments several ways:

- Using the online form at http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/cdbg/dr/IC_ActionPlans.htm;
- Emailing them to ocd@la.gov;
- Mailing them to Disaster Recovery Unit, P.O. Box 94095, 70804-9095, Attn: Janice Lovett; or
- Faxing them to the attention of Janice Lovett at (225) 219-9605.

The Disaster Recovery Unit within the Office of Community Development is dedicated to helping Louisiana's citizens recover from hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Ike and Isaac. As the state's central point for hurricane recovery, OCD-DRU manages the most extensive rebuilding effort in American history, working closely with local, state and federal partners to ensure that Louisiana recovers safer, stronger and smarter than before.

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