

## **Isle de Jean Charles (IDJC) Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Program**

### **Purpose:**

The Isle de Jean Charles (IDJC) Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Program offers eligible current permanent, primary IDJC residents and former IDJC households that have been displaced from IDJC on or after August 28, 2012 (the initial Louisiana landfall date of Hurricane Isaac) with assistance towards securing safe housing while permanent resettlement housing solutions are designed and constructed.

The Isle de Jean Charles (IDJC) Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Program is a needs-based, voluntary program intended to help fulfill two main goals of the overarching IDJC Resettlement Program: “the provision of housing, for all income groups, that is disaster-resistant, including optional relocation” and to “minimize displacement of persons or entities, and assist any persons or entities displaced.”

### **Program Administration:**

The IDJC Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Program will be administered by the Louisiana Housing Authority (LHA) or their designated third party administrator in coordination with the Louisiana Office of Community Development – Disaster Recovery Unit (OCD-DRU). The program is being conducted as part of fulfilling the aims of the State of Louisiana’s National Disaster Resilience (NDR) award.

### **Program Length:**

Participation in the IDJC Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Program will be subject to household re-evaluation and renewal every 12 months to confirm that program guidelines are being met. This will also include an assessment with possible renewal of the lease and a unit inspection. The maximum duration for household participation in the program shall be the sooner of either placement into permanent housing through the IDJC Resettlement Program or 42 months from the time of initial placement.

### **Eligibility:**

Households eligible to receive optional relocation assistance are:

- Current permanent, primary IDJC residents who commit in writing to relocate from IDJC into permanent housing that is “safe, sanitary, secure, functional, and in good repair”<sup>i</sup> through participation in the IDJC Resettlement Program

OR

- Former permanent IDJC households that satisfy the following requirements:
  - Household was displaced from IDJC on or after August 28, 2012;
  - Household is determined to be homeless or at risk of homelessness;<sup>ii</sup>

- Household commits in writing to relocate into permanent housing that is “safe, sanitary, secure, functional, and in good repair” through participation in the IDJC Resettlement Program.

### **Eligibility Verification**

#### *Current IDJC Residents -*

- Site visit to IDJC household residence;
- Proof of current IDJC residency based on a Louisiana motor vehicle or other official personal identification that evidences the purported Island Road residency address for the household;
- Secondary proof of IDJC residency based on a utility or other household related bill that includes the purported Island Road residency address for the household.

#### *Former IDJC Residents -*

- Site visit to current residence and interview with household to determine evidence of homelessness or risk of homelessness;<sup>iii</sup>
- Proof of prior IDJC residency after August 28, 2012 based on official mortgage, tax, or other documentation;
- Proof of current residency in an NDR eligible parish based on a Louisiana motor vehicle or other official personal identification;
- Secondary proof of current NDR eligible parish residency based on a utility or other household related bill that includes the address for the household.

### **Application Process:**

Households meeting the program eligibility criteria must complete the Application for IDJC Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Program, including a signed release form authorizing the provider to obtain and verify all information necessary for processing the application. Once complete, the application and release authorization form shall be submitted via a designated program point of contact.

The application will be reviewed to make sure the household meets program eligibility criteria. Eligibility determination shall be completed within ten business days after receipt of the application. If approved, the household must sign an IDJC Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Program Participation Agreement, which commits the household to ultimately securing permanent housing through the IDJC Resettlement Program. If for any reason a permanent housing option is not offered to a participant through the IDJC Resettlement Program by the end of the 42 month assistance period, participant will not be held responsible and the Optional

Relocation Assistance Program Participation Agreement will be considered null and void.

In turn, the household shall be issued an IDJC Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Program Voucher and Unit Approval Form. Final receipt of IDJC Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance is conditioned upon:

- (a) Selecting a housing unit located in an NDR eligible parish within 60 days of receipt of the voucher; and
- (b) Completing the steps necessary to lease and move into the selected unit.

Households that are determined to be ineligible will be provided (via U.S. mail or hand-delivery), a Notice of Denial of Eligibility.

**Provider Assignment:**

Approved families will be immediately assigned to a Housing Support Provider/Representative to engage with the family and assist in the housing search process. The Housing Support Provider will offer voluntary assistance with locating suitable optional relocation based on cost, access to essential services such as schools, healthcare providers, and employers, flood risk, and other needs. Additionally, the Housing Support Provider will coordinate the inspection of a chosen housing unit to ensure it meets LHA's established standards. The Housing Support Provider will serve as the point of contact for LHA for all assigned families.

**Unit Selection:**

Applicants, with the help of their Housing Support Provider, are responsible for identifying an appropriate rental unit in Terrebonne Parish with reasonable rent. The Program will use LHA's payment standard and a rent reasonableness determination to determine the rent amount. The payment standard is set at 110% of the fair market rent. It is updated annually when HUD updates its fair market rents. The IDJC ORA program will pay the lesser of the payment standard or the amount determined reasonable by the rent reasonableness determination. If desired, the tenant has the option to pay the difference in the payment standard.

**Final Fiscal Year 2018 FMRs by Unit Bedrooms:**

Year	Bedroom			
	One	Two	Three	Four
2018	\$650	\$824	\$1,156	\$1,406

The unit must pass the housing inspection required by LHA, not exceed the voucher amount, be located in FEMA flood zones A, AE, or X, and be secured and available within the time period identified on the voucher. If a desired unit is outside of FEMA flood zones A, AE, or X, and it is determined that the landlord holds a flood insurance policy covering both the unit and the contents, LHA will review these circumstances on a case-by-case basis. Flood insurance must be maintained for the duration of the time IDJC participant(s) reside in the unit.

**Occupancy Standards (*the established LHA Continuum of Care Standards will be used*):**

<i>Rental Assisted Unit Bedroom Size</i>	<i>Number of Persons</i>	
	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>8</i>

**Lease Signing Process:**

Once an identified unit has passed inspection, LHA will schedule a lease signing appointment with the landlord. This appointment will be communicated to the assigned Housing Support Provider to inform the approved household.

**Termination of Rental Assistance for non-compliance:**

1. Absence from Program Assisted Unit: If household members are absent from the unit for over 30 days for personal reasons, the program participant may request and LHA may approve the absence. Before LHA grants approval, the designated third party administrator shall inform LHA in writing of the approved absence as well as communicate with LHA any change of status. If the absence continues for more than 90 consecutive days, LHA reserves the right to terminate the participant from the program and LHA shall make final determination of rental assistance. For the purposes of this policy, absence from the unit means **no** family member listed on the lease is living there.

2. Termination of Lease and Moving: Landlords have the right to terminate the lease with a participant in accordance with Louisiana tenant-landlord law. If a participant is in good standing in regards to the Isle de Jean Charles (IDJC) Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Program the designated third party administrator should: (1) help the participant locate a new unit and (2) continue providing rental assistance on their behalf once a unit is found. An Owner may evict the program participant household from the contracted unit only by instituting a court action. The Owner must notify LHA or the third party program administrator in writing of the commencement of procedures for termination of tenancy at the same time that the owner gives notice to the family under state or local law. ***Eviction does not always equal termination of rental assistance.*** Final termination of rental assistance may

only be approved by LHA in coordination with OCD-DRU.

LHA or their designated third party administrator and OCD-DRU may terminate rental assistance payments in accordance with federal regulations, LHA’s Policies and Procedures, the IDJC Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Agreement and participant’s obligations under the Participation Agreement. LHA may allow rental assistance to a former participant who was previously terminated from the program.

Participants can move to another unit, but not to exceed more than once per year. In such cases, the participant must provide at least a 30 day written notice submitted by the first day of the month prior to the move, to the designated third party administrator and the landlord. This written notice may include statements from doctors, employers or school counselors. If the participant asks to move in the middle of any lease term, permission may be granted only with a written statement from the Owner releasing the participant from the lease. Under certain circumstances involving, for example, health, education or employment needs, the designated third party administrator may waive these limitations.

**Moving Expenses:**

Moving expenses will be paid for all households that are awarded an IDJC Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Program Voucher, subject to Program caps and schedules. Fifty percent of the moving allowance is paid at time of move-in and the remaining fifty percent at time of move-out. Moving expenses will only be paid for one (1) total move through the IDJC Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Program.

Subject to Program caps and limitations, participants will receive receipt of a fixed payment based upon an established schedule may choose to receive payment for moving and related expenses:

Number of Bedrooms	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight
Maximum Amount	\$600	\$800	\$1000	\$1200	\$1300	\$1550	\$1700	\$1900

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<sup>i</sup> For purposes of the IDJC Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Program, “safe, sanitary, secure, and functional” housing shall be determined based firstly on applicable State and local codes for building and maintenance but additionally must meet the following definitions from applicable federal regulations:

*Safe* means secure from disaster-related hazards or threats to occupants (44 CFR 206.111).

*Sanitary* means free of disaster-related health hazards. (44 CFR 206.111).

*Secure* means structurally sound, habitable, and in good repair such that the building's doors, fire escapes, foundations, lighting, roofs, walls, and windows, where applicable, are free of health and safety hazards, operable, and in good repair (24 CFR 5.703).

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*Functional* means a home capable of being used for its intended purpose (44 CFR 206.111).

A property is *in good repair* if compliant with applicable state and local codes for building and maintenance as well as compliance with the requirements of 24 CFR 5.703.

<sup>ii</sup> For purposes of the IDJC Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Program, “At risk of homelessness” means:

An individual or family who:

- a) Has an annual income below 80 percent of median family income for the area, as determined by HUD;
- b) Does not have sufficient resources or support networks, *e.g.*, family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, immediately available to prevent them from moving to an emergency shelter or another place described in paragraph (1) of the “homeless” definition in this section; and meets one of the following additional conditions:
  - (i) Has moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for homelessness prevention assistance;
  - (ii) Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship;
  - (iii) Has been notified in writing that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance;
  - (iv) Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost of the hotel or motel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals;
  - (v) Lives in a single-room occupancy or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than 1.5 persons per room, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau;
  - (vi) Is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a health-care facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correction program or institution); or
  - (vii) Otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness.

For purposes of the IDJC Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Program, “Homeless” means:

An individual or family who:

- (a) Lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:
  - (i) An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;
  - (ii) An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, optional relocation, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals); or
  - (iii) An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution;
- (2) An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:
  - (i) The primary nighttime residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;
  - (ii) No subsequent residence has been identified; and
  - (iii) The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks, *e.g.*, family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, needed to obtain other permanent housing;

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(3) Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:

- (i) Are defined as homeless under section 387 of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. § 5732a), section 637 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. § 9832), section 41403 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. § 14043e-2), section 330(h) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. § 254b(h)), section 3 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. § 2012), section 17(b) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. § 1786(b)) or section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. § 11434a);
- (ii) Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing at any time during the 60 days immediately preceding the date of application for homeless assistance;
- (iii) Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during the 60-day period immediately preceding the date of applying for homeless assistance; and
- (iv) Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities, chronic physical health or mental health conditions, substance addiction, histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse (including neglect), the presence of a child or youth with a disability, or two or more barriers to employment, which include the lack of a high school degree or General Education Development (GED), illiteracy, low English proficiency, a history of incarceration or detention for criminal activity, and a history of unstable employment; or

(4) Any individual or family who:

- (i) Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member, including a child, that has either taken place within the individual's or family's primary nighttime residence or has made the individual or family afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence;
- (ii) Has no other residence; and
- (iii) Lacks the resources or support networks, *e.g.*, family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, to obtain other permanent housing.

<sup>iii</sup> Participants who are determined to be homeless or at risk of homelessness will need either third party documentation, or if this cannot be obtained, a written record of case manager's due diligence to obtain, the case manager's documentation of the living situation, AND the individual's self-certification of the living situation will be required.

**\*This document was updated on September 5, 2018.**