

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 (OCD). 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. 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 repairⁱ 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 presently resides in an NDR eligible parish (Terrebonne, Lafourche, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. John the Baptist, or St. Tammany);
- Household is determined to be homeless or at risk of homelessness;ⁱⁱ
- 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;
- 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 five calendar 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.

If the applicant is determined eligible and commits to participation in the Resettlement, 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.

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

Provider Assignment:

Approved families will be immediately assigned to a Housing Support Provider to engage with the family and assist in the housing search process. The Housing Support Provider will offer assistance with locating suitable optional relocation based on cost, access to essential services such as schools and healthcare providers, proximity to employment, 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 offer assistance in financial literacy and planning and other elements that will aid in assuring self-sufficiency as defined by specific households and the social resilience of the new permanent settlement. The Housing Support Provider will serve as the point of contact for LHA for all assigned families.

Unit Selection:

Applicants are responsible for identifying an appropriate rental unit in Terrebonne Parish with reasonable rent. Reasonable rent is based upon the current fiscal year’s Fair Market Rent (FMR) for Terrebonne Parish, LA.

Final Fiscal Year 2019-2020 FMRs by Unit Bedrooms

Year	Bedroom			
	One	Two	Three	Four
2019	\$669	\$848	\$1,190	\$1,423
2020	\$690	\$873	\$1,206	\$1449

The unit must pass the housing inspection required by LHA, be located in FEMA flood zones A, AE, or X, and be available and secured within the time frame identified on the voucher. The voucher amount will not exceed the FMR for the appropriate

bedroom count. However, if desired, the tenant may choose a unit with a higher rent amount, but the tenant must pay the difference.

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>

Program participants must report the names of all individuals that will live in the unit and must notify LHA or its third party administrator of any changes to household composition within ten (10) days of such change. If, as a result of this change, participant needs to increase the number of rooms for which s/he qualifies, Household Expansion form must be submitted to LHA or its third party administrator, where requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Lease Signing:

Once an identified unit has passed inspection, LHA or its third party administrator 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 or do not return contact attempts by the OCD, LHA, or its third party administrator, OCD or LHA may remove the participant from the program. 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. A landlord may evict the program participant household from the contracted unit only by instituting a court action. If a program participant is issued an eviction notice, the program participant is required to attend the eviction hearing. If the program participant does not attend the eviction hearing and is subsequently evicted, he or she will not be re-housed under the Optional Relocation Assistance Program and will not be considered in good standing.

If the participant requests a new unit, the tenant must provide the reasons for the eviction and the tenant must not have caused the eviction. Replacement housing shall only be approved by OCD. If approved, the LHA or its third party administrator

should: (1) help the participant locate a new unit and (2) provide rental assistance on their behalf once a unit is found. LHA or its designated third party administrator and OCD may terminate rental assistance payments in accordance with LHA's Policies and Procedures, the IDJC Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Participation Agreement and participant's obligations under that Agreement.

Participants may be allowed to move to a new unit once per year for good cause shown. The participant must submit the request at least 30 days prior to the requested move date to the LHA or its designated third party administrator and the landlord. The request must state the necessity of the need with specificity. If the participant's request is made during the lease term, permission may be granted only with a written statement from the landlord releasing the participant from the lease without penalty.

Eligible Assistance

The following types of monetary assistance are available through this program:

- Rental subsidy
- Application fee
- Security deposit
- Moving expenses
- Utility deposits

LHA or its third party administrator will provide this assistance directly to the landlord or utility provider on behalf of each program participant. If a landlord does not return the security deposit paid by LHA or its third party administrator after the program participant moves out, due to some fault of the program participant (i.e. damages, breaking the lease, unpaid rent), LHA or its third party administrator shall not pay another security deposit for the program participant for another rental unit unless repayment is made on the initial security deposit.

Furthermore, participants that receive a refunded deposit are required to issue the refund to the OCD. Failure to return a refunded deposit may result in recapture of funds in the amount of the deposit and may also result in termination from the Optional Relocation Assistance Program.

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. The moving allowance is paid at time of move-in. Moving expenses will only be paid for one (1) move through the IDJC Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Program.

Subject to Program caps and limitations, participants may choose to receive payment for moving and related expenses by one of the following measures below:

1. Commercial mover selected through a minimum of three (3) competitive bids obtained by the LHA or its third party administrator paid directly to the mover or reimbursed to the household; OR
2. Reimbursement of actual expenses and costs incurred for a self-move; OR
3. Fixed payment based upon the following established schedule:ⁱⁱⁱ

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

ⁱ 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).

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.

ⁱⁱ 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;

(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.

ⁱⁱⁱ Any person displaced from a dwelling or a seasonal residence or a dormitory style room is entitled to receive a fixed moving cost payment as an alternative to a payment for actual moving and related expenses under § 24.301. This payment shall be determined according to the Fixed Residential Moving Cost Schedule 3 approved by the Federal Highway Administration and published in the Federal Register on a periodic basis. The payment to a person with minimal personal possessions who is in occupancy of a dormitory style room or a person whose residential move is performed by an Agency at no cost to the person shall be limited to the amount stated in the most recent edition of the Fixed Residential Moving Cost Schedule. The Fixed Residential Moving Cost Schedule is available at the following URL: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/real_estate/uniform_act/relocation/moving_cost_schedule.cfm Agencies are cautioned to ensure they are using the most recent edition. Moving expenses paid prior to September 16, 2019 were based on previous program guidelines where participants received half of the moving cost schedule for the move into the ORA program.

*Guidelines were updated December 23, 2019. The changes are not retroactive.