



Housing Assistance Council

Building Rural Communities

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Affordable Rural Housing Issues and Recommendations: DISASTER RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

The challenges of disaster recovery – including the need for affordable housing – in urban and rural areas are now well known. The Housing Assistance Council encourages the Obama Administration and the 111th Congress to:

- △ **Continue improving federal response to disasters**, including providing short-, medium-, and long-term housing for survivors, and taking rural needs into account.
- △ **Involve housing agencies**, including the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development arm, in pre-disaster planning efforts and in recovery efforts for the time immediately after a disaster and in the longer term.
- △ **Pre-position resources for community-based groups, including churches**, which are often the first line of relief after a disaster. Similar to FEMA's pre-positioning of food and water when a hurricane approaches, pre-positioning supplies, communications technology, and the like with community groups will help ensure that they have the capacity to meet their communities' needs during and immediately after a disaster.
- △ **Base decisions regarding provision of post-disaster housing aid on eligibility, not on residents' pre-disaster housing aid status**; all who meet eligibility criteria after a disaster should receive aid, not only those who were receiving aid before the disaster.
- △ **Conduct pre-disaster planning outreach and post-disaster recovery outreach in all languages, and with sensitivity to all cultures, represented in an area.**