

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

to Picking Up the Pieces: Restoring Rural Housing and Communities After a Disaster

Oklahoma Tornado Disaster Guide

Housing Assistance Council

May 24th, 2013

On May 19th and May 20th, 2013, tornados as large as a mile-wide ravaged significant areas of Central Oklahoma. Many affected families and individuals are only now coming to terms with the reality of the devastation. The following guide provides general information for those affected by the storms. For more information, please see HAC's report *Picking Up the Pieces: Restoring Rural Housing and Communities After a Disaster* available for free online at:

http://www.ruralhome.org/storage/documents/disaster_guide_2012.pdf.

If your house is unsafe, uninhabitable, or no longer standing, emergency, transient housing exists to provide immediate shelter for those in need. The Red Cross currently has five shelters available in the area: one in Oklahoma City, one in Moore, and two in Shawnee. Help4OK has also compiled a list of people, hotels, and B&B's that have offered to provide housing for those affected by the tornados. Visit their website (www.help4OK.org) to complete a questionnaire that can help find a housing match based upon your needs (accessibility, family size, pets, and so on). Help4OK.org also provides a tool for individuals without access to vehicles to match up with other individuals offering rides and transportation.

Currently, the Red Cross is deploying emergency relief vehicles to distribute food and relief items across affected areas in Oklahoma and has opened ten emergency aid stations in the region. Meals are being provided in partnership with the Southern Baptist Convention. The Red Cross has also distributed more than 2,800 relief items including personal toiletries and recovery items such as coolers, buckets, gloves, dust masks, trash bags, flashlights, tarps, shovels, rakes and blankets. They are also providing health and mental health services for those in need.

President Obama issued a Major Disaster Declaration on May 20th, 2013. As a result, federal relief funds for residents of counties affected by the tornado (Lincoln, Oklahoma, Cleveland, Potawatomie, and McClain counties) have been made available. Currently, FEMA has approved \$1,413,238.93 for housing assistance, \$1,693,167.53 for the individuals and households program, and \$279,928.60 for other needs assistance. Housing Assistance provides assistance for disaster-related housing needs; the Individuals & Household Program provides money and services to people in presidentially declared disaster areas. To see if you are eligible for funding, you can apply online at <http://www.diasasterassistance.gov/> or call FEMA's toll-free helpline at **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)**. When applying, make sure to have a pen and paper as well as the following information: your social security number, current and pre-disaster address, a telephone number where you can be contacted, insurance information, total household income, a routing and account number from your bank if you are interested in having disaster assistance funds transferred directly into your bank account, and a description of your losses that were caused by the disaster. Three Disaster Survivor

Assistance Teams are also on the ground helping survivors register for FEMA assistance using internet-enabled tablets to register people as quickly as possible. These teams will also be available to record any unmet needs that affected individuals or communities are experiencing.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will also speed federal disaster assistance to the State of Oklahoma in addition to FEMA resources. HUD will provide support to homeowners and low-income renters forced from their homes as a result of the storms. HUD will also enforce existing Federal Housing Administration (FHA) policy that mortgage lenders should release insurance payments to homeowners rather than applying funds toward outstanding mortgage debts. Individuals receiving HUD rental assistance should contact their Public Housing Authority, multi-family apartment manager, or local HUD office for help in locating temporary housing. Those not receiving HUD assistance should contact FEMA or the Red Cross for more immediate shelter.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development is identifying USDA-funded and available multi-family (apartment) units that can be provided to those in need of emergency housing. USDA has also reached out to Oklahoma state partners to provide food assistance to those in need through their Food and Nutrition Service (FNS).

Debris from the destruction of the tornado remains a large threat and individuals should exercise extreme caution when walking among it or through damaged buildings. Be aware of downed power lines, or electrical systems. Do not touch power lines or objects in contact with power lines. Report any downed lines to the police and the utility company. If your home has been damaged, use care and judgment to avoid further hazards and injuries when entering the structure. Do not go into damaged areas unless assistance has been requested to avoid hampering relief efforts or endangering yourself. If safe, wear sturdy shoes or boots, long sleeves and gloves when handling or walking near debris, and be cautious of hazards from exposed nails and broken glass. The Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality has published guidance of debris management for residents available here: <http://www.deq.state.ok.us/tornado/tornado.html>.

To apply for disaster assistance funding affected individuals must complete a multi-purpose application *over the phone on FEMA's toll-free national teleregistration, online, or via Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams.*

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):

Toll-free helpline:

1-800-FEMA (3362)

For hearing impaired callers only:

1-800-462-7585 (TTY)

1-800-621-3362 (Video Relay Service)

American Red Cross Disaster Service:

For referrals and updates on Red Cross shelter services in your area, locate a local Red Cross office through: <http://www.redcross.org/find-help> or by calling the Public Inquiry Center at 1-800-214-0441.

Local Office of Housing and Urban Development

301 NW 6th Street, Ste 200
Oklahoma City, OK 73102
405-609-8509
405-553-7480 (TTD)
www.hud.gov/local/

State Emergency Management Agency

Oklahoma Department of
Emergency Management
2401 Lincoln Blvd Suite C51
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
405-521-2481 phone
405-521-4053 fax
<http://www.ok.gov/OEM>

State and Local Housing Agencies

The state of Oklahoma has two agencies that administer state and federal programs to promote decent affordable housing to for low-income individuals. Typically these agencies and authorities administer some aspects of state or federal programs.

Housing Finance Agency

100 Northwest 63rd, Suite 200
Oklahoma City, OK 73116-8250
405-848-1144 phone
800-256-1489
www.ohfa.org

Department of Commerce
P.O. Box 26980
Oklahoma City, OK
73126-0980
405-815-6552 phone
1-800-879-6552
info@odoc.state.ok.us
www.odoc.state.ok.us