



*Opening doors to a better life*

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## **Wildfire victims offered quicker access to housing**

**SEATTLE** — The Washington State Housing Finance Commission has issued a waiver that allows victims of recent Washington wildfires to more quickly access emergency housing.

People displaced by the wildfires in the 11 counties and four tribal areas noted below, and who earn less than 60% of area median income, can now skip several time-consuming steps when applying for emergency housing in tax-credit apartments in Washington State. They can remain in the housing through December 21 before having to reapply and meet the normal requirements.

“We hope this waiver can help people access housing more quickly so they can begin to rebuild their lives,” said Karen Miller, chair of the Housing Finance Commission.

Under the waiver, wildfire victims who apply for tax-credit housing can simply self-certify that their income is under the required limits—generally, below 60% of median income in that area—instead of providing proof. They must also self-certify that they lived in one of the wildfire-affected areas noted below.

Families will still pay rent, and background and/or credit checks may still be required.

But the waiver will save up to a week of certifications and paperwork, removing one barrier for displaced families. They will then have until December 21, 2015, to reapply if they wish to stay.

The Low Income Housing Tax Credit, a federal resource allocated by the Housing Finance Commission, has created or rehabilitated more than 72,500 affordable apartments across Washington state, in rural, suburban and urban areas alike.

Any tax-credit property in Washington State can house displaced families under this waiver.

**To find a tax-credit apartment building**, as well as details and contact information, visit [www.aptfinder.org](http://www.aptfinder.org). Click “by program type” at right, then “Properties that offer Wash. State housing tax credit affordable apartments.” Tax-credit properties can also be found on [www.housingsearchnw.org](http://www.housingsearchnw.org) or the Commission’s website at [wshfc.org/property/property.asp](http://wshfc.org/property/property.asp).

“The first step should be to call the property you’re interested in to ask about vacancies, and to make sure your gross annual income makes you eligible,” said Melissa Donahue, manager of the Commission’s Asset Management and Compliance division.

The Housing Finance Commission last used this waiver to assist people displaced by wildfires in 2014, and before that for those displaced by the Oso mudslide.

Further information and links to housing resources for fire victims: [wshfc.org/managers/resources.htm](http://wshfc.org/managers/resources.htm). Affected individuals should also check the Federal Emergency Management Agency website at [www.fema.gov/disaster-survivor-assistance](http://www.fema.gov/disaster-survivor-assistance).

**Presidentially-declared disaster areas (counties and tribes):**

North Central	Eastern	Southwest	South Central
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chelan</li> <li>• Douglas</li> <li>• Okanogan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asotin</li> <li>• Ferry</li> <li>• Pend Oreille</li> <li>• Spokane</li> <li>• Stevens</li> <li>• Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation</li> <li>• Kalispel Tribe</li> <li>• Spokane Tribe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Klickitat</li> <li>• Skamania</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yakima</li> <li>• Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation</li> </ul>

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The [Washington State Housing Finance Commission](#) is a publicly accountable, self-supporting team that brings private investment dollars to benefit families and achieve public goals throughout Washington. Over 30 years, the Commission has created and preserved affordable apartments and homeownership for more than 307,000 people across the state, while contributing more than \$42.5 billion and 240,000 jobs to the economy.

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