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Hurricane Harvey victims can skip steps to access affordable rental housing in Washington

SEATTLE, WASH. — The Washington State Housing Finance Commission has issued a waiver that allows victims of Hurricane Harvey to more quickly access housing in Washington State.

People displaced by the storm, and who earn less than 60% of area median income, can now skip several time-consuming steps when applying for tax-credit apartments in Washington State. They can remain in the housing through August 31 of next year before having to reapply and meet the normal requirements.

“We hope this waiver can help alleviate just one of the hardships endured by those who have lost their homes,” said Karen Miller, chair of the Housing Finance Commission. “We stand ready to issue similar waivers for the Washington wildfires or Hurricane Irma if they are declared federal disasters.”

Under the waiver, Hurricane Harvey 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.

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 seeking temporary homes. They will then have until August 31, 2018, to reapply if they wish to stay.

The Low Income Housing Tax Credit has created or rehabilitated more than 78,000 affordable apartments across Washington State, in rural, suburban and urban areas alike.

Tax-credit apartments can be found at www.aptfinder.org. Click “by program type” at right, then “Properties that offer Wash. State housing tax credit affordable apartments.”

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

More information and links to housing resources for hurricane victims and property owners can be found at www.wshfc.org/managers/resources.htm.

The Housing Finance Commission has issued similar waivers in the past for federally declared disasters, including Hurricane Katrina and the Oso mudslides. The Commission is currently coordinating with other regional public funding agencies to see if they can offer income qualification waivers as well.

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The [Washington State Housing Finance Commission](http://www.wshfc.org) is a publicly accountable, self-supporting team that brings private investment dollars to benefit families and achieve public goals throughout Washington. Over 33 years, the Commission has created and preserved affordable apartments and homeownership for more than 350,000 people across the state, while contributing more than \$42.5 billion and 240,000 jobs to the economy.



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