



**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**  
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**THE HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY ANNOUNCES NEW  
HOUSING ELIGIBILITY POLICY FOR LAHAINA FIRE-DISPLACED RESIDENTS**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 14, 2024

HONOLULU - Households in Non-Congregate Sheltering (NCS) were initially part of the response efforts following the Maui wildfires. The state is now prioritizing the urgent transition of individuals and families out of NCS and into more permanent housing solutions. This proactive approach is an important step as the state progresses toward recovery efforts in the aftermath of the devastating events of August 8.

The state has developed a comprehensive strategy to move individuals and families out of NCS, offering them choices that will necessitate them to make firm arrangements. The Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) has unveiled a new policy regarding the eligibility of housing services for individuals and families who were displaced by the Lahaina fires. Under this new policy, households may no longer be eligible for NCS services under certain circumstances.

A recent business rule agreed upon by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the state has been issued, authorizing HI-EMA and a joint task force to implement actions that will help facilitate efforts to transition households out of NCS currently living in hotels. Continual engagements with clients will be crucial in determining their outcomes. A survivor in NCS seeking support for the FEMA-eligible program will have four opportunities to accept their Direct Housing option, while survivors in NCS seeking support through the state of Hawai'i's Housing solution - they will be given two opportunities to accept an option. The state's plan is to ultimately wrap up its NCS program.

The NCS Joint Task Force is comprised of HI-EMA, FEMA, American Red Cross (ARC), Hawai'i Department of Human Services (DHS), and representatives from other community organizations. Community engagement will play a pivotal role in the NCS transition process, as the Joint NCS Task Force will be responsible for initiating contact with survivors and implementing procedures should clients decline offers from the task force.

This new policy is designed to ensure that households facing challenges in accepting housing options are given the necessary support and time to find a suitable solution. HI-EMA Administrator, James Barros expressed, "We are committed to working with individuals and families to address their specific needs and provide assistance in finding alternative housing options so that families can regain a sense of normalcy and stability in their lives."

As the state moves forward into its recovery efforts, it remains committed to ensuring that all individuals and families have access to safe and secure housing. "We will continue to work closely with our partners to develop innovative and compassionate solutions that prioritize the well-being of those we serve," declared Barros.

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