

116TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 2914

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 18, 2020

Received; read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs

AN ACT

To make available necessary disaster assistance for families
affected by major disasters, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Housing Survivors of
3 Major Disasters Act of 2020”.

4 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

5 In this Act:

6 (1) FEMA.—The term “FEMA” means the
7 Federal Emergency Management Agency.

8 (2) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-
9 trator” means the Administrator of FEMA.

10 **SEC. 3. ELIGIBILITY FOR AND USE OF DISASTER ASSIST-**
11 **ANCE.**

12 (a) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—Notwithstanding any
13 other provision of law, individuals and households de-
14 scribed in subsection (c) may be eligible for assistance
15 made available under section 408 of the Robert T. Staf-
16 ford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42
17 U.S.C. 5174) in connection with a major disaster declared
18 by the President under section 401 of such Act (42 U.S.C.
19 5170), including Hurricane Maria of 2017.

20 (b) USE OF FUNDS.—Any assistance provided pursu-
21 ant to subsection (a) may include costs relating to obtain-
22 ing title for a property described in subsection (c)(1), in-
23 cluding the cost of land surveys and any other taxes or
24 fees associated with obtaining the title for such property.

25 (c) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS OR HOUSEHOLDS.—With
26 respect to a major disaster declared by the President

1 under section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Re-
2 lief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170), an
3 individual or household described in this subsection is an
4 individual or household who—

5 (1) is residing on a property located in the area
6 for which the major disaster was declared but does
7 not have documented ownership rights to such prop-
8 erty and is not renting such property; or

9 (2) is or was residing in an area for which a
10 major disaster has been declared by the President
11 under section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster
12 Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C.
13 5170), during the designated incident period, includ-
14 ing residing in any housing accommodation or prop-
15 erty upon which a housing accommodation is lo-
16 cated, including any living quarters, boardinghouse,
17 bunkhouse, manufactured home, mobile home, or
18 travel trailer.

19 (d) EVIDENCE.—

20 (1) CONSIDERATION.—In making a determina-
21 tion to provide assistance pursuant to this Act, the
22 Administrator shall consider a wide range of evi-
23 dence.

24 (2) ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF EVIDENCE.—In
25 determining if an individual or household is eligible

1 for assistance pursuant to this Act, the Adminis-
2 trator shall accept either a declarative statement or
3 the presentation of at least one item of alternative
4 evidence, including the following:

5 (A) A utility (including gas, electric, sewer,
6 or water) bill with the name and address of the
7 individual.

8 (B) A merchant's statement (including a
9 credit card, delivery notice, or first class mail)
10 with the name and address of the individual.

11 (C) A pay stub from an employer with the
12 name and address of the individual.

13 (D) A current driver's license or State-
14 issued identification card of the individual.

15 (E) The deed or title for the applicable
16 property.

17 (F) A mortgage payment booklet or an-
18 other mortgage document.

19 (G) Property title of mobile home certifi-
20 cate of title.

21 (H) A real estate property tax receipt.

22 (I) A school registration containing the ad-
23 dress of self, child, or children.

24 (J) A will and testament with the name
25 and address of the individual.

1 (K) In a State that does not require a will
2 and testament for the transfer of immovable
3 property, a death certificate and birth certifi-
4 cate that establishes an automatic transfer of
5 legal ownership.

6 (L) Medical records that list the name and
7 address of the individual.

8 (M) A charitable donation receipt that list
9 the name and address of the individual.

10 (N) Any other documentation, certification,
11 identification, or proof of occupancy or owner-
12 ship not included on this list that can reason-
13 ably link the individual requesting assistance to
14 the applicable property.

15 (e) APPLICABILITY.—This section shall apply to
16 funds appropriated on or after the date of enactment of
17 this Act.

18 **SEC. 4. DECLARATIVE STATEMENT.**

19 (a) DEVELOPMENT OF DECLARATIVE STATEMENT.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after
21 the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator
22 shall create, in coordination with the appropriate au-
23 thorities of the applicable jurisdiction, and dis-
24 tribute, where necessary, a declarative statement
25 form that an applicant for assistance provided pur-

1 suant to section 3 may use to self-certify such appli-
2 cant’s eligibility for assistance pursuant to this Act.

3 (2) PROHIBITION OF NOTARIZATION.—The Ad-
4 ministrator may not require the declarative state-
5 ment form created under paragraph (1) to require
6 notarization by the applicant.

7 (b) EXEMPTIONS.—A declarative statement form cre-
8 ated under subsection (a)(1) is exempt from publication
9 notice, public comment periods, and agency information
10 collection review and approval by the Office of Manage-
11 ment and Budget required by the Paperwork Reduction
12 Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.).

13 (c) GUIDANCE.—Not later than 30 days after the
14 date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall pro-
15 vide written notification and guidance to employees of
16 FEMA regarding the requirements of this Act.

17 (d) PUBLICATION.—Not later than 30 days after the
18 date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall—

19 (1) make the declarative statement form cre-
20 ated under subsection (a)(1) available in Spanish
21 and English at all active Disaster Recovery Centers;
22 and

23 (2) publish in English, Spanish, and any other
24 locally predominant languages on the website of
25 FEMA and on social media the declarative state-

1 ment form and instructions on how applicants can
2 reopen or seek further appeal of relevant determina-
3 tions.

4 (e) PAST DISASTERS.—For applicants of assistance
5 provided pursuant to section 3 since January 1, 2017, the
6 Administrator shall provide an applicant not fewer than
7 180 days to submit the declarative statement form to re-
8 open or appeal a case after such applicant has received
9 notice of the right to do so.

10 **SEC. 5. REPAIR AND REBUILDING.**

11 Section 408(c) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Re-
12 lief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5174) is
13 amended—

14 (1) in paragraph (2)(A)(i) by striking “to a
15 safe and sanitary living or functioning condition”
16 and inserting “to ensure that such residences are
17 habitable during longer term recovery (including
18 through coordination with other sources for repair
19 and rebuilding of such residences)”; and

20 (2) in paragraph (4) by striking “in cases in
21 which” and all that follows through the end and in-
22 serting “if the President determines such assistance
23 is a cost effective alternative to other housing solu-
24 tions, including the costs associated with temporary
25 housing provided under this section.”.

1 **SEC. 6. POST-DISASTER HOUSING ASSISTANCE ANALYSIS**
2 **AND REPORT.**

3 (a) ANALYSIS.—The Administrator, in coordination
4 with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development,
5 shall conduct an analysis comparing the costs, benefits,
6 and effectiveness of assistance provided under the Disaster
7 Housing Assistance Program, including any case manage-
8 ment services provided, with other temporary housing op-
9 tions provided by the Administrator under the Robert T.
10 Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act
11 (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.).

12 (b) PROVISION OF DATA.—The Secretary shall en-
13 sure that public housing authorities engaged in carrying
14 out the Disaster Housing Assistance Program relay data
15 concerning the extent and effectiveness of case manage-
16 ment services in transitioning individuals and households
17 toward self-sufficiency under the Program compared to
18 other alternative disaster assistance programs available
19 under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emer-
20 gency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.).

21 (c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date
22 of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit
23 to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
24 of the House of Representatives and the Committee on
25 Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Sen-
26 ate a report that contains the analysis required under sub-

