Allocations and Waivers Granted to and Alternative Requirements for CDBG Disaster Recovery Grantees Under Chapter 9 of Title II of the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Hurricane Recovery, 2006

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, HUD.

ACTION: Notice of allocation, waivers, and alternative requirements.

SUMMARY: This Notice advises the public of the allocations for grant funds for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) disaster recovery grants for the purpose of assisting in the recovery in the most impacted and distressed areas related to the consequences of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma in the Gulf of Mexico in 2005. As described in the Supplementary Information section of this notice, HUD is authorized by statute to waive statutory and regulatory requirements and specify alternative requirements for this purpose, upon the request of the State grantees. This notice also describes the application and reporting waivers and the common alternative requirements for the grants made under the subject appropriations act.

DATES: Effective Date: November 6, 2006.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jan C. Opper, Director, Disaster Recovery and Special Issues Division, Office of Block Grant Assistance, Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 Seventh Street, SW., Room 7286, Washington, DC 20410, telephone number (202) 708–3587. Persons with hearing or speech impairments may access this number via TTY by calling the Federal Information Relay Service at (800) 877–8339. FAX inquiries may be sent to Mr. Opper at (202) 401–2044. (Except for the “800” number, these telephone numbers are not toll-free.)
Allocations

Public Law 109–234 (effective June 15, 2006) provides $5.2 billion of supplemental appropriation for the CDBG program for:

- necessary expenses related to disaster relief, long-term recovery, and restoration of infrastructure in the most impacted and distressed areas related to the consequences of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, or Wilma.

The law further notes:

That funds provided under this heading shall be administered through an entity or entities designated by the Governor of each State. And that: No State shall receive more than $4.2 billion of the amount provided under this heading.

As provided for in Public Law 109–234, the funds may not be used for activities reimbursable by or for which funds are made available by the Federal Emergency Management Agency or the Army Corps of Engineers. Further, none of the funds made available under this heading may be used by a State or locality as a matching requirement, share, or contribution for any other Federal program.

Also as required by the law, not less than $1.0 billion of the $5.2 billion appropriation less $27.0 million in administrative set-asides (which computes to 19.3311 percent of any State’s allocation) shall be used for repair, rehabilitation, and reconstruction (including demolition, site clearance and remediation) of the affordable rental housing stock (including public and other HUD-assisted housing) in the impacted areas. Therefore, HUD is requiring that not less than 19.3311 percent of each State’s grant be used for these activities.

From this supplemental appropriation, the Secretary is allocating funds as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Minimum amount for affordable rental housing ($)</th>
<th>Disaster</th>
<th>Allocation amount ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>4,103,146</td>
<td>Hurricane Katrina (FEMA–1605–DR)</td>
<td>$21,225,574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>19,344,001</td>
<td>Hurricane Katrina (FEMA–1602–DR), Hurricane Wilma (FEMA–1609–DR)</td>
<td>100,066,518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>811,907,984</td>
<td>Hurricane Katrina (FEMA–1604–DR), Hurricane Rita (FEMA–1607–DR)</td>
<td>4,200,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>81,777,703</td>
<td></td>
<td>423,036,059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>82,867,166</td>
<td></td>
<td>428,671,849</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The amounts in the table directly above are the minimum required for each State to use of its allocation from Public Law 109–234 for repair, rehabilitation, and reconstruction (including demolition, site clearance and remediation) of the affordable rental housing stock (including public and other HUD-assisted housing) in the impacted areas.

In Louisiana, the Department has reviewed data chronicling the massive impact of the disasters on affordable rental housing, including public housing, in the areas of the State most affected by disasters. In light of the unprecedented housing needs resulting from the disasters, the Secretary is carrying out its statutory duty to ensure that priority has been given to identified affordable rental housing by providing an alternative requirement. HUD is requiring that, before the State of Louisiana spends any funds to meet the minimum requirement for affordable rental housing under this notice (see table above), the Governor of Louisiana shall demonstrate to the Secretary’s satisfaction that the State will provide funds or has identified dedicated resources sufficient to meet the key disaster recovery needs for repair, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of affordable rental housing stock, including public housing, in the most impacted areas of the State.

HUD invites each State receiving an allocation to submit an Action Plan for Disaster Recovery in accordance with this notice.

The appropriations statute requires funds be used only for disaster relief, long-term recovery, and restoration of infrastructure in the most impacted and distressed areas related to the consequences of hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico in 2005. The statute directs that each grantee will describe in its Action Plan for Disaster Recovery how the use of the grant funds gives priority to infrastructure development and rehabilitation and the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the affordable rental housing stock including public and other HUD-assisted housing. HUD will monitor compliance with this direction and may be compelled to disallow expenditures if it finds uses of funds are not disaster-related, or funds allocated duplicate other benefits.

For the State of Louisiana, which suffered major impacts from two different hurricanes, HUD estimates that over 85 percent of the major and severe damage due to those storms is in the New Orleans-Metairie-Bogalusa Metropolitan Area (Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, and St. Tammany Parishes). HUD therefore expects that the State will target a substantial majority of its disaster recovery funds under Pub. L. 109–234 toward the disaster recovery needs in the New Orleans-Metairie-Bogalusa Metropolitan Area, and has included an alternative requirement to that effect.

Prevention of Fraud, Abuse, and Duplication of Benefits

The statute also directs the Secretary to:

- Establish procedures to prevent recipients from receiving any duplication of benefits and report quarterly to the Committees on Appropriations with regard to all steps taken to prevent fraud and abuse of funds made available under this heading including duplication of benefits.

To meet this directive, HUD is pursuing five courses of action. First, this notice makes applicable specific reporting, written procedures, monitoring, and internal audit requirements for grantees. Second, to the extent its resources allow, HUD will institute risk analysis and on-site monitoring of grantee management of the grants and of the specific uses of funds. Third, HUD will be extremely cautious in considering any waiver related to basic financial management requirements. The standard, time-tested CDBG financial requirements will continue to apply. Fourth, HUD is collaborating with the HUD Office of Inspector General to plan and implement oversight of these funds. Fifth, HUD will follow the direction of the conference report, 109–494, and apply $6 million of funds appropriated for the Working Capital Fund for immediate enhancement of the capabilities of the Disaster Recovery Grant Reporting system by building...
additional electronic controls that will increase accountability while further decreasing the risk of fraud, waste, or abuse.”

**Waiver Justification**

In general, waivers already granted to the States and alternative requirements already specified for CDBG disaster recovery grant funds provided under the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2006 (Pub. L. 109–148, approved December 30, 2005) (Appropriations Act) will apply to grant funds provided under Public Law 109–234. This eliminates unnecessary inconsistencies in administration of the two grants and thus reduces the opportunities for technical errors. The notices in which these prior waivers and alternative requirements appear are 71 FR 7666, published February 13, 2006 (all five States); 71 FR 34448 (for Alabama), 71 FR 34451 (for Mississippi), and 71 FR 34457 (for Louisiana), all published June 14, 2006; 71 FR 43622, published August 1, 2006 (for Texas); 71 FR 51678 (for Florida), published August 30, 2006; and 71 FR 62372 (for Mississippi), published October 24, 2006, except that the provisions of paragraph four of the latter notice do not apply to the funds allocated under Pub. L. 109–234.

In addition to making applicable the requirements cited above, this notice specifies and provides for differences in program rules, waivers, or alternative requirements that are necessary due to the provisions of Public Law 109–234.

The provisions of this notice do not apply to funds provided under the regular CDBG program. The provisions provide additional flexibility in program design and implementation and implement statutory requirements unique to this appropriation.

**Application for Allocation**

The waivers and alternative requirements related to a State’s application for its allocation are those delineated in a notice entitled, “Allocations and Common Application and Reporting Waivers Granted to and Alternative Requirements for CDBG Disaster Recovery Grantees Under the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2006,” published February 13, 2006 71 (FR 7666), with the changes noted below. HUD encourages each State receiving an allocation to submit an Action Plan for Disaster Recovery to HUD within 60 days of the publication date of this notice.

New elements added to the State’s Action Plan for Disaster Recovery include a description of how the State will give priority to infrastructure development and rehabilitation and how the State will give priority to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the affordable rental housing stock including public and other HUD-assisted housing. The State must also explain how its choices for fund use will result in the State meeting the requirement to use not less than 19.3311 percent of its allocation for repair, rehabilitation, and reconstruction (including demolition, site clearance and remediation) of the affordable rental housing stock (including public and other HUD-assisted housing) in the impacted areas. The explanation should include how the State has considered the unique challenges that individuals with disabilities face in finding accessible and affordable housing.

**Applicable Rules, Statutes, Waivers, and Alternative Requirements**

1. General note. Except as described in this notice, the statutory, regulatory, and notice provisions that shall apply to the use of these funds are:

   a. Those governing the funds appropriated under the Appropriations Act and already published in the Federal Register, including those in notices 71 FR 7666, published February 13, 2006 (all five States); 71 FR 34448 (for Alabama), 71 FR 34451 (for Mississippi), and 71 FR 34457 (for Louisiana), all published June 14, 2006; 71 FR 43622, published August 1, 2006 (for Texas); 71 FR 51678 (for Florida), published August 30, 2006; and 71 FR 62372 (for Mississippi), published October 24, 2006, except that the provisions of paragraph four of the latter notice do not apply to the funds allocated under Pub. L. 109–234.

   b. The grantee’s overall plan for disaster recovery will also include:

      (i) An explanation of how the State will give priority to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the affordable rental housing stock including public and other HUD-assisted housing, a description of the activities the State plans to undertake with grant funds under this priority, and a description of the unique challenges that individuals with disabilities face in finding accessible and affordable housing;

      (ii) An explanation of how the State will give priority to infrastructure development and rehabilitation, and a description of the infrastructure activities it plans to undertake with grant funds; and

      (iii) An explanation of how the method of distribution or use of funds described in accordance with the applicable notices will result in the State meeting the requirement that at least 19.3311 percent of its allocation for repair, rehabilitation, and reconstruction (including demolition, site clearance and remediation) of the affordable rental housing stock (including public and other HUD-assisted housing) in the impacted areas.

2. Note that use of grant funds must relate to the covered disaster(s). In addition to being eligible under 42 U.S.C. 5305(a) of this notice and meeting a CDBG national objective under the penultimate paragraph of 42 U.S.C. 5304(b)(3), Public Law 109–234 requires that activities funded under this notice must also be for necessary expenses related to disaster relief, long-term recovery, and restoration of infrastructure in the most impacted and distressed areas related to the consequences of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma in communities included in Presidential disaster declarations.

3. Alternative Requirements Regarding Targeting in Louisiana. a. The State of Louisiana will target 70 percent of its disaster recovery funds under Pub. L. 109–234 towards the disaster recovery needs in the New Orleans-Metairie-Bogalusa Metropolitan Area; and

   b. Before the State of Louisiana expends any funds to meet the minimum requirement for affordable rental housing under this notice, the Governor of Louisiana shall demonstrate to the Secretary’s satisfaction that the State will provide funds or has identified dedicated resources sufficient to meet the key disaster recovery needs for repair, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of affordable rental housing stock, including public housing.
5. Information collection approval note. HUD has approval for information collection requirements in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501–3520) under OMB control number 2506–0165, which expires August 31, 2007. In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act, HUD may not conduct or sponsor, nor is a person required to respond to, a collection of information unless the collection displays a valid control number.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance numbers for the disaster recovery grants under this notice are as follows: 14.219; 14.228.

Finding of No Significant Impact

A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) with respect to the environment has been made in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR part 50, which implement section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332). The FONSI is available for public inspection between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays in the Office of the Rules Docket Clerk, Office of General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 Seventh Street, SW., Room 10276, Washington, DC 20410–0500. Due to security measures at the HUD Headquarters building, please schedule an appointment to review the finding by calling the Regulations Division at (202) 708–3055 (this is not a toll-free number).

Roy A. Bernardi,
Deputy Secretary.

SUMMARY: On July 28, 2006, HUD published a notice entitled, “Implementation Guidance for Section 901 of the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations to Address Hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico, and Pandemic Influenza Act, 2006.” This notice extends the period for eligible public housing agencies (PHAs) located within the most heavily impacted areas of Louisiana and Mississippi that are subject to a declaration by the President of a major disaster under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act in connection with Hurricanes Katrina or Rita to submit Notices of Intent and Fungibility Plans in accordance with the July 28, 2006, notice. Section 901 of the supplemental appropriations act authorizes PHAs to combine assistance provided under sections 9(d) and (e) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (Act) and assistance provided under section 8(o) of the Act, for the purpose of facilitating the prompt, flexible, and efficient use of funds provided under these sections of the Act to assist families who were receiving housing assistance under the Act immediately prior to Hurricane Katrina or Rita and were displaced from their housing by the hurricanes. In addition to extending the PHA submission deadline, this notice removes the restriction that the combined funding may not be spent for uses under the housing choice voucher (HCV) program. If approved by HUD, the combined funding may now be used for eligible purposes under the HCV program. Any use of combined funds under the HCV program must also be in accordance with the requirement to assist those families who were receiving housing assistance under the public housing or HCV program immediately prior to Hurricane Katrina or Rita and were displaced from their housing by the hurricane. A PHA that already has an approved Fungibility Plan may request HUD approval to change the Plan in order to use the combined funds for HCV program eligible purposes. As provided in the July 28, 2006 Federal Register notice, PHAs must submit to HUD requests for approval of any substantial deviations from the approved Fungibility Plan, and HUD will respond to such requests within 10 calendar days.

DATES: Eligible PHAs must submit their Notices of Intent and Fungibility Plans no later than November 21, 2006.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For technical assistance and other questions concerning the Notice of Intent and Section 901 Fungibility Plan, PHAs should contact their local HUD Public Housing Hub in New Orleans, Louisiana, or Jackson, Mississippi; or Bessy Kong, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Program, and Legislative Initiatives, Office of Public and Indian Housing, Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 Seventh Street, SW., Room 4216, Washington, DC 20410–5000, telephone (202) 708–0614 or 708–0713, extension 2548 (this is not a toll-free number). Persons with hearing or speech impairments may access this number via TTY by calling the toll-free Federal Information Relay Service at (800) 877–8339.