

# Christie Administration Issues More Than 900 Housing Vouchers to Vulnerable Residents Displaced by Superstorm Sandy

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## ***Vouchers Help More Than 700 Displaced Low-Income Families Move into Permanent Housing, Others in Active Housing Search***

**Trenton, NJ** – In furtherance of Governor Christie’s commitment to help New Jersey’s most vulnerable residents in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, the Christie Administration today announced that more than 900 Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers have been provided to low-income families displaced by Superstorm Sandy to help them move into permanent housing. The federally-funded housing vouchers average approximately \$9,840 per year per household and are used as “Special Admissions” for Sandy-impacted families who cannot return to their homes because of storm damage.

To date, the housing vouchers have helped approximately 715 low-income families move into permanent housing, and other families issued vouchers are nearly leased or in active housing search.

“We are pleased to have helped hundreds of displaced families settle into a home again,” said New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Richard E. Constable, III. “With this initiative, we have put forth tremendous effort in providing housing counseling to families, hosting rental fairs, and directly connecting families with landlords – all with the goal of moving storm-impacted residents into new homes.”

The Administration earmarked 1,000 Special Admissions vouchers from the DCA-administered Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program in December 2012. The HCV program provides decent, safe and sanitary housing in the private rental market to very low-income households by reducing housing costs through direct rent subsidy payments to landlords. The Special Admissions vouchers are funded through existing program dollars that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has awarded the DCA. Once a family finds a housing unit, the housing assistance doesn’t expire so families can continue receiving assistance for as long as they meet eligibility standards.

The Special Admissions vouchers were instrumental in helping families move out of the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Transitional Sheltering Assistance program and into permanent housing. The Transitional Sheltering Assistance program, which ended May 1, 2013 allowed eligible Sandy survivors who could not return to their homes because of damage caused by the storm to stay in participating hotels or motels until more suitable housing was found. With the help of such partners as FEMA, the New Jersey Department of Human Services, the American Red Cross, and county welfare agencies, the DCA was able to more effectively connect with displaced residents who were eligible for the vouchers to encourage them to apply.

For example, the DCA staffed FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers for several months after Sandy and distributed Special Admissions voucher applications at these locations. The Department also used organizations like the New Jersey Hope and Healing Program, which is a crisis response program, to reach eligible families and contacted every family in the Transitional Sheltering Assistance program that could be reached to send them a voucher application. Additionally, the Department hosted five rental fairs in Atlantic, Monmouth and Ocean counties, in part, to assist voucher recipients in locating permanent housing and helped displaced families utilize the New Jersey Housing Resource Center, which is a free service at [www.NJHRC.gov](http://www.NJHRC.gov) for people in search of affordable housing and for landlords who are looking to provide housing.

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Staff from the DCA is diligently working to help those voucher recipients still engaged in a housing search locate available rental housing that meets their needs. The Department is no longer accepting Special Admissions voucher applications.

Voucher recipients had to verify displacement from their housing as a direct result of Sandy. They were required to provide proof of identity, Social Security Numbers, birth records, income records for all household members, along with proof of survivor status. They also had to meet all other program eligibility standards, including being registered with FEMA and deemed eligible for FEMA housing assistance, having a gross household income that doesn't exceed 50% of area median income, and being a U.S. citizen or legal resident.

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