

## Christie Administration Announces FEMA Transitional Sheltering Assistance Program Extended A Final Time To April 30

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**Trenton, NJ** – The Christie Administration today announced that the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Transitional Sheltering Assistance (TSA) Program has been extended, at the Administration’s request, to April 30, 2013, with a check-out date of May 1, 2013. This will be the final extension sought by the State and will provide the necessary time to continue aggressive outreach and case management to migrate individuals from the program to more suitable and long-term housing solutions. TSA may appropriately terminate between now and April 30th, as individuals’ housing solutions are identified in advance of that date. As a result of exhaustive casework that included personal outreach to Sandy-displaced families in the program, the Administration and FEMA have determined that virtually all participants in the TSA program will have long-term housing plans in place by April 30 and, accordingly, will no longer require the extraordinary assistance offered through the TSA program.

“FEMA’s Transitional Sheltering Assistance Program has been invaluable in giving Sandy-displaced families the time they need to find a safe, suitable housing solution that works for them,” said Governor Christie. “Now, six months after Sandy’s landfall, we are able to conclude the program with an effort to help the last remaining families solidify a long-term housing solution. I thank FEMA for their work with us to keep this program running as long as was required to secure the best possible housing options displaced families, and bring a successful close to the program.”

Intensive outreach through in-person counseling, telephone calls, and electronic notification has succeeded in finding more suitable housing solutions for the overwhelming majority of households assisted by the program. As of today, approximately 219 Sandy-displaced New Jersey residents are being housed through the TSA program. In cooperation with FEMA, the State Departments of Community Affairs and Human Services will continue proactive casework with these remaining residents to identify and secure a long-term housing solution that meets their individual needs in a more appropriate and lasting way than hotel occupancy.

At New Jersey’s request, FEMA launched its Transitional Sheltering Assistance Program on November 1. The program allowed eligible Superstorm 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. All individuals and households in the program had to register with FEMA; pass identity verification; and demonstrate that they were displaced from a primary residence located in a geographic area impacted by Superstorm Sandy.

“The FEMA/State partnership has been a seamless effort to help these displaced families and we continue to support the state in all their efforts on behalf of the residents of New Jersey,” said Gracia Szczech, the FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer for New Jersey.

Through the program, FEMA and the State have been able to provide transitional sheltering accommodations for more than 5,500 displaced families. Approximately 435 hotels have participated in TSA since the program was activated. More than 253,425 room nights have been provided to families or individuals needing shelter as a result of Superstorm Sandy, with an average length of stay of 31 days. The total cost of the program through March 31 was \$33,959,272.36.

“We promised to help all families in the TSA program develop and finalize a plan for moving into adequate, longer-term housing and we are delivering on that promise,” said New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Richard E. Constable, III. “Between now and April 30, we will continue to work collaboratively with

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FEMA, the New Jersey Department of Human Services, the American Red Cross, county welfare agencies, and others to address as many outstanding needs as possible.”

To help displaced families locate permanent housing, the DCA has partnered with the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency and with the non-profit organization Socialserve.com to frequently update and add new rental listings to 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.

The Christie Administration has also set aside 1,000 Special Admissions vouchers, which are provided through the DCA-administered Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. They are designed to help low-income, Sandy-displaced residents move into decent, safe and sanitary housing in the private rental market by reducing housing costs through direct rent subsidy payments to landlords. Special Admissions households that meet the income eligibility requirements pay no more than 30 percent of their monthly income towards their housing cost.

Individuals who have questions regarding the TSA program should contact the FEMA helpline at 1-800-621-3362 (FEMA).

To register with FEMA, call the phone number listed above or visit [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov) on the Internet.

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**Press Contact:**  
Michael DREWNIAK  
Kevin ROBERTS  
609-777-2600



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Office of the Governor  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
609-292-6000