

Pecan Acres Sustainable Resettlement
Optional Relocation Assistance Program

Purpose:

The Pecan Acres Sustainable Resettlement Program Optional Relocation Assistance (ORA) offers eligible Pecan Acres households with assistance towards safe, temporary housing while permanent resettlement housing is designed and constructed. The Pecan Acres Optional Relocation Assistance Program is a needs-based, voluntary program.

Program Administration:

The Pecan Acres Optional Relocation Assistance Program will be administered by the Louisiana Housing Corporation (LHC) or their designated third party administrator in coordination with the Louisiana Office of Community Development – Disaster Recovery Unit (OCD-DRU).

Program Length:

Participation in the Pecan Acres Optional Relocation Assistance Program will be subject to household re-evaluation and renewal every 12 months to confirm that program guidelines are being met. This will also include an assessment with possible renewal of the lease and a unit inspection. The maximum duration for household participation in the program shall be the sooner of either placement into permanent housing through the Pecan Acres Sustainable Resettlement Program or 42 months from the time of initial placement.

Eligibility:

Households eligible to be reviewed for potential receipt of optional relocation assistance are:

- Must have a household annual income at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI).
- Must be deemed eligible for buyout and/or incentive awards through the Pecan Acres Sustainable Resettlement Program as a current or former owner-occupant.
- Must agree to participate in the Pecan Acres Sustainable Resettlement Program and choose to move into the new community.
- Must reside in unsafe housing, subject to verification by HQS inspection.

Verification of Need:

Households wishing to receive Optional Relocation Assistance must complete the program application for the Pecan Acres Sustainable Resettlement Program and be deemed eligible for buyout and/or resettlement as current or former owner-occupant.

Households must also be reviewed for evidence of current living situation being unsafe. This will include a visit to the current housing location, an interview with household to determine evidence of unsafe living conditions, and a Housing Quality (HQS) Inspection. Households whose HQS inspection shows satisfactory living conditions will not be eligible for Optional Relocation Assistance.

Households who have requested assistance from the program but moved to a safer location prior to the provisioning of assistance may still be eligible, but they must provide documentation to show evidence of their former living situation being unsafe.

Application Process:

Households interested in receiving Optional Relocation Assistance must contact their Solution 4 Case Manager and request this service. The Solution 4 Case Manager will verify the household meets program and income requirements, and if so, complete an ORA Referral Form which is transmitted to the Housing Support Provider. The Housing Support Provider Representative will reach out to the household to complete a supplemental application for Optional Relocation Assistance including a signed release form authorizing the program to obtain and verify all information necessary for processing the supplemental application.

The supplemental application will be reviewed to make sure the household meets program eligibility criteria for unsafe housing. Eligibility determination shall be completed within ten business days after receipt of the application. If approved, the household must sign a Pecan Acres Sustainable Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Participation Agreement, which commits the household to ultimately securing permanent housing through the Pecan Acres Sustainable Resettlement Program. If for any reason a permanent housing option is not offered to a participant through the Program by the end of the assistance period, participant will not be held responsible and the Optional Relocation Assistance Program Participation Agreement will be considered null and void.

In turn, the household shall be issued a Pecan Acres Sustainable Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Voucher and Unit Approval Form. Final receipt of a Pecan Acres Sustainable Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance is conditioned upon:

- 1) Selecting a housing unit located in a Pointe Coupee or surrounding parishes (West Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge, West Feliciana, East Feliciana) parish within 60 days of receipt of the voucher; and
- 2) Completing the steps necessary to lease and move into the selected unit, which includes HQS inspection

Households that are determined to be ineligible will be provided (via U.S. mail or hand-delivery), a Notice of Denial of Eligibility.

Provider Assignment:

Approved families will be immediately assigned to a Housing Support Provider/Representative to engage with the family and assist in the housing search process. The Housing Support Provider will offer voluntary assistance with locating suitable optional relocation based on cost, access to essential services such as schools, healthcare providers, and employers, flood risk, and other needs. Additionally, the Housing Support Provider will coordinate the inspection of a chosen housing unit to ensure it meets LHC's established standards. The Housing Support Provider will serve as the point of contact for LHC for all assigned families.

Unit Selection:

Applicants, with the help of their Housing Support Provider, are responsible for identifying an appropriate rental unit in Pointe Coupee Parish with reasonable rent. The Program will use LHC’s payment standard and a rent reasonableness determination to determine the rent amount. The payment standard is set at 110% of the fair market rent. It is updated annually when HUD updates its fair market rents. The ORA program will pay the lesser of the payment standard or the amount determined reasonable by the rent reasonableness determination. If desired, the tenant has the option to pay the difference in the payment standard.

Final Fiscal Year 2019 FMRs by Unit Bedrooms:

Year	Bedroom			
	One	Two	Three	Four
2019	\$849	\$981	\$1,259	\$1,567

The unit must pass the housing inspection required by LHC, not exceed the voucher amount, be located outside the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), and be secured and available within the time period identified on the voucher. If a desired unit is inside of the Special Flood Hazard Area (indicated by Zones A, AE, or V) and it is determined that the landlord holds a flood insurance policy covering both the unit and the contents, LHC will review these circumstances on a case-by-case basis. Flood insurance must be maintained for the duration of the time Pecan Acres participant(s) reside in the unit.

Occupancy Standards (the established LHC Continuum of Care Standards will be used):

<i>Rental Assisted Unit Bedroom Size</i>	<i>Number of Persons</i>	
	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>8</i>

Program participants will report the names of all individuals living in the unit, and notify LHC or its third party administrator of any changes to household composition within 10 days of such change. If, as a result of this change, participant needs to increase the number of rooms for which s/he qualifies, they must submit a Household Expansion form to LHC or its third party administrator, where requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Lease Signing Process:

Once an identified unit has passed inspection, LHC or its third party administrator will schedule a lease signing appointment with the landlord. This appointment will be communicated to the assigned Housing Support Provider to inform the approved household.

Termination of Rental Assistance for non-compliance:

1. Absence from Program Assisted Unit: If household members are absent from the unit for over 30 days for personal reasons, the program participant may request absence and OCD, LHC or its third party administrator may approve the absence. Before OCD-DRU, LHC or its third party administrator grants approval, the designated third party administrator shall inform OCD/DRU and LHC in writing of the requested absence as well as communicate with OCD-DRU and LHC any change of status. If the absence continues for more than 90 consecutive days, OCD-DRU and/or LHC reserves the right to terminate the participant from the program and OCD-DRU and/or LHC shall make final determination of rental assistance. For the purposes of this policy, absence from the unit means no family member listed on the lease is living there.

2. Termination of Lease and Moving: Landlords have the right to terminate the lease with a participant in accordance with Louisiana tenant-landlord law. A landlord may evict the program participant household from the contracted unit only by instituting a court action. The landlord must notify LHC or the third party program administrator in writing of the commencement of procedures for termination of tenancy at the same time that the owner gives notice to the family under state or local law. If a program participant is issued an eviction notice, the program participant will be required to attend the eviction hearing. If program participant does not attend the eviction hearing and is subsequently evicted, they will not be rehoused under the Optional Relocation Assistance Program and will not be considered in good standing.

Eviction does not always equal termination of rental assistance. Final termination of rental assistance may only be approved by LHC in coordination with OCD-DRU if a participant is in good standing in regard to the Pecan Acres Sustainable Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Program the designated third party administrator should: (1) help the participant locate a new unit and (2) continue providing rental assistance on their behalf once a unit is found. LHC or their designated third party administrator and OCD-DRU may terminate rental assistance payments in accordance with federal regulations, LHC's Policies and Procedures, the Pecan Acres Sustainable Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Agreement and participant's obligations under the Participation Agreement. LHC may allow rental assistance to a former participant who was previously terminated from the program.

Participants can move to another unit, but not to exceed more than once per year. In such cases, the participant must provide at least a 30 day written notice submitted by the first day of the month prior to the move, to the designated third party administrator and the landlord. This written notice may include statements from doctors, employers or school counselors. If the participant asks to move in the middle of any lease term, permission may be granted only with a written statement from the landlord releasing the participant from the lease. Under certain circumstances involving, for example, health, education or employment needs, the designated third party administrator may waive these limitations.

Eligible Assistance:

The following types of assistance are available through this program.

- Rental subsidy
- Application fees and security deposit
- Moving expenses
- Utility deposit

LHC or its third party administrator will provide this assistance directly to the landlord or utility provider on behalf of each program participant. If a landlord does not return the security deposit paid by LHC or its third party administrator after the program participant moves out, due to some fault of the program participant (i.e. damages, breaking the lease, unpaid rent), then LHC or its third party administrator may not pay another security deposit for the program participant for another rental unit unless repayment is made on the initial security deposit.

Moving Expenses:

Moving expenses will be paid for all households that are awarded a Pecan Acres Sustainable Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Program Voucher. Moving expenses will be subject to Program caps and the Fixed Residential Moving Cost Schedule approved by the Federal Highway Administration. Moving expenses will only be paid for one (1) move through the Pecan Acres Sustainable Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Program. Assistance with moving into permanent housing will be provided under a separate program. The amount of the payment will be based on the number of furnished rooms in the home the participant is moving from. Payment will be made directly to the applicant who will coordinate and procure their own resources for moving.

Number of Rooms	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight or More
Maximum Amount	\$600	\$800	\$1,000	\$1,200	\$1,300	\$1,550	\$1,700	\$1,900

Program Definitions

“Safe, sanitary, secure, and functional” housing shall be determined based firstly on applicable State and local codes for building and maintenance but additionally must meet the following definitions from applicable federal regulations:

- Safe means secure from disaster-related hazards or threats to occupants (44 CFR 206.111).
- Sanitary means free of disaster-related health hazards. (44 CFR 206.111).
- Secure means structurally sound, habitable, and in good repair such that the building's doors, fire escapes, foundations, lighting, roofs, walls, and windows, where applicable, are free of health and safety hazards, operable, and in good repair (24 CFR 5.703).
- Functional means a home capable of being used for its intended purpose (44 CFR 206.111).
- A property is in good repair if compliant with applicable state and local codes for building and maintenance as well as compliance with the requirements of 24 CFR 5.703.