



CITY OF HOUSTON
Neighborhoods & Housing Department

Bill White

Mayor

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August 18, 2006

Butch Smith
Director, Texas Transitional Recovery Office
Federal Emergency Management Agency
9001 I-35 N, Ste 100
Austin, TX 78753

**Re: City of Houston Request for One-Month Extension until September 30 of
Sheltering for Households Projected to Lose Housing Assistance on
August 31**

Dear Mr. Smith:

Thank you for our meeting on Wednesday, August 16th, and your leadership in this transition.

The data which you supplied indicates that 3,641 households are projected to lose rental assistance on August 31, 2006. You asked whether the City would want to request an extension for those households. After consideration of this issue, the City does request that FEMA extend sheltering benefits for one month, until September 30, 2006, for this group of up to 3,641 households. Our request is based on the following:

- FEMA continues to have great success at converting households from ineligible for 408-eligible status. Your data indicates that in only three weeks (between July 26 and August 15), FEMA has been able to convert 1,500 households to eligible status. With 500 households a week being converted to eligible status, it is too soon to terminate assistance for 3,641 putative ineligible households.
- FEMA published a large ad in today's Houston Chronicle advising evacuees that they "MAY be eligible for continued help under another housing assistance program," and encouraging evacuees to contact FEMA. FEMA has also issued a recent *Recovery News and Fact Sheet*, which also explain the need for urgent evacuee action. These new communication efforts will have positive results and will result in more evacuees contacting FEMA and attaining 408 eligibility.

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However, there must be an extension of time for these efforts realize their objectives for the 3,642 households set to lose assistance on August 31.

- Finally, the City is participating with United Way of the Texas Gulf Coast and Neighborhood Centers, Inc. in a program designated as the Joint Hurricane Community Settlement Program ("JHCSP"). The goal of the JHCSP is to settle successfully 35,000 evacuee-households, currently residing in the Houston area, into the community of their choice by the second quarter of 2007. The JHCSP program will coordinate job training/placement, child-care, case management and other supportive services with stable housing. Neighborhood Centers has applied for a \$3.4 million Social Services Block Grant to fund certain of the JHCSP activities. Award of those grant monies is expected in mid-September, which will then permit the JHCSP to begin operations on October 1. A one-month extension of the housing assistance until September 30 will enable the JHCSP to be operational when those ineligible evacuees lose their housing assistance.

You had also asked whether the one-month extension should be for all ineligible or for certain subgroups. Due to the little remaining time before the end of August, we do not believe we could effectively communicate any extension on a per individual basis. We believe any extension can only be effectively communicated and understood if it is for all persons otherwise scheduled to lose their housing assistance on August 31—which group we understand to now be 3,642 households.

We appreciate the offer of this extension, and hope that you and your supervisors at FEMA will grant this request. As always, if you have any questions, please call me immediately.

Sincerely yours,



John E. Walsh, Jr.
Deputy Chief of Staff
Neighborhoods and Housing

c: Philip Parks, Senior Official—Houston, FEMA
David Ecklund, CPA CCIFP, Chief Financial Officer, JHHTF
Buddy Grantham, JHHTF, Sunland Group
Robert Johnson