

Hawai'i Fire Relief Housing Program FAQ

Last updated August 14, 2023, 10 a.m.

What is the Hawai'i Fire Relief Housing Program and what is its goal?

The goal of the Hawai'i Fire Relief Housing Program is to pair those Maui residents in urgent need of housing due to the recent fires with those Hawai'i homeowners willing to assist by offering unoccupied rooms, units or houses on a temporary basis at no or nominal cost.

How is the State going about this?

We are quickly trying to assemble a database of available and unoccupied rooms, vacation rentals, ohana or accessory dwelling units, houses or other units that we can provide to those whose homes were lost or significantly damaged as a result of this week's tragic fires. Governor Green and HHFDC are urging private homeowners with an unoccupied spare bedroom, ohana or accessory dwelling unit (ADU), vacation rental unit or house to join landlords and property management agencies to in participating in the program and help some of the thousands of Maui residents who have been displaced.

I have a spare unit or house and would like to help a family out. What should I do?

Thank you for helping! Please fill out the Property Information Form that's on the HHFDC website. The information you provide will be included in a database of information that displaced families and individuals will be able to view and determine if your arrangement meets their needs. (NOTE: We are asking for personal information including your names and addresses of available units. For security reasons, this information will not be made public. Whether you would like a prospective dweller to contact you by telephone is up to you, but we do ask that you at least share an email address. If you are unable to access the form electronically, either call our hotline at 808-587-0469 or email hawaiifirereliefhousing@hawaii.gov and leave a message and your contact information.

Will I be compensated for opening up my unit or home for rental to a displaced individual or family?

Rent and other terms of occupancy will be a private contractual agreement between the owner and tenant. Landlords who rent to eligible persons displaced by the fires may be eligible for FEMA or state funds. More information will be provided if such funding is made available.

I was displaced as a result of the recent brushfires and need help. What should I do?

We are hoping that by Tuesday, August 15, we will have enough inventory to form a database showing available units and houses both on Maui and across the state. You are free to contact the landlords or management companies with the information provided. If you are unable to

access the HHFDC website, either call our hotline at 808-587-0469 or email hawaiifirereliefhousing@hawaii.gov and leave a message and your contact information.

How much are landlords and management companies allowed to charge dislocated Maui residents?

While we urge landlords and property managers to charge only a nominal rent or no rent at all for their accommodations, this program sets no requirements on rent prices. The program's purpose is to provide quick, available housing to what is expected to be a large number of displaced Maui residents.

Are landlords and property managers being asked to rent their properties for any minimum amount of time?

We are asking landlords and property managers to make their units available to displaced Maui residents for a minimum of one month.

There were no fires outside of Maui and Hawai'i Island, why are you asking homeowners and landlords on other islands to participate? And will you provide transportation for displaced workers to travel to another island?

We expect more than a thousand families and individuals are in need of help finding someplace to live. We want to offer them as many options as possible. We do not have funding to pay for interisland travel but we understand that major airline carriers have significantly lowered their ticket prices to assist those on Maui who want to travel elsewhere.

How often will the list of available units be updated?

We will update the list at least once every four hours if there are changes to be made.

Are you going to verify if a property is actually available for rent by a property owner.

HHFDC will make some attempts to verify the truthfulness of those seeking applicants but we are hopeful that Hawai'i residents recognize the severity of Maui's housing crunch and not abuse the informal nature of this program.

I see that there are other organizations creating similar listing databases. Should I list my property with yours or theirs?

Both. Listing your property on multiple platforms will increase the chance of it being seen by displaced families, couples or individuals. The benefit of listing it with the Hawaii Fire Relief Housing Program, though, is that we can provide information on Federal and State assistance that may become available.

Will HHFDC screen those claiming to be displaced?

No.

The Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) does not make any representation or warranties as to the qualifications or eligibility of any potential tenant.

HHFDC will not be conducting any screening of potential tenants - it is the homeowner's sole responsibility to do so.

In submitting this form and participating in the Hawai'i Fire Relief Housing Program, the homeowner hereby releases HHFDC and the State of Hawai'i from and waives any and all claims arising out of or relating to the Hawai'i Fire Relief Housing Program.

What can you tell us about those offering up their rooms, units and houses?

Similarly, the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) does not make any representation or warranty as to the habitability or suitability of any property listed herein. It is the responsibility of potential renters to make such a determination.

HHFDC and the State of Hawai'i (State) does not assume any liability for the information provided herein and those who may rent one of the properties waive and release HHFDC and the State from any and all claims related to the HHFDC Fire Relief Housing Program.