

[Skip to article](#)

- [Welcome, ctzcrank](#)
- [Member Center](#)
- [Log Out](#)
- [TimesSelect](#) Free 14-Day Trial
- [Home Page](#)
- [My Times](#)
- [Today's Paper](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Most Popular](#)
- [Times Topics](#)



- [U.S.](#)
- [All NYT](#)

The New York Times

U.S.

- [World](#)
- [U.S.](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Washington](#)
- [N.Y. / Region](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Technology](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Arts](#)
- [Style](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [Real Estate](#)
- [Autos](#)

Evacuees Find Housing Grants Will End Soon

- [E-Mail](#)
- [Print](#)
- [Single Page](#)
- [Reprints](#)
- [Save](#)

ARTICLE TOOLS
SPONSORED BY



By [SHAILA DEWAN](#)

Published: April 27, 2006

HOUSTON, April 21 — Thousands of hurricane evacuees who counted on a year of free housing and utilities are being told by the Federal Emergency Management Agency that they are no longer eligible for such help and must either pay the rent themselves or leave.

[Skip to next paragraph](#)

[Enlarge This Image](#)



Michael Stravato for The New York Times

Nolan Clements Jr., now in Houston, said he planned to appeal a notice that he no longer qualified for help.

Related

[Senate Committee Leaders Urge FEMA Dismantling \(April 27, 2006\)](#)

Hurricane Katrina

[Go to Complete Coverage »](#)

Of about 55,000 families who were given long-term housing vouchers, nearly a third are receiving notices that they no longer qualify, FEMA officials said. For the rest, benefits are also being cut: they will have to sign new leases, pay their own gas and electric bills and requalify for rental assistance every three months.

The process has been marked by sharp disagreements between the agency and local officials, and conflicting information given to evacuees about their futures. Although agency officials say they never promised a full year of free housing, many local officials around the country say yearlong vouchers were exactly what FEMA agreed to provide.

[The agency was sharply criticized in draft bipartisan recommendations to be released Thursday by a Senate committee, which said the agency functioned so poorly during Hurricane Katrina that Congress should abolish it and rebuild a more powerful agency.]

In the desperate weeks after Hurricane Katrina, the vouchers helped stabilize the lives of evacuees who had bounced from place to place while trying to find missing family members and deal with mysterious skin rashes, shellshocked children and reams of red tape. At least, the vouchers promised, they would not have to worry about shelter.

Now, eight months later, the notices have panicked evacuees and raised the ire of local officials and landlords, who say FEMA is renegeing on a promise and dismantling a program that is helping more people and is far less expensive than other housing solutions like trailers.

To make matters worse, advocates and local officials say, many evacuees either do not know why they have been found ineligible or have been given spurious reasons. Many notices do not even give a deadline, saying only, "You will not be asked to leave before April 30."

"We believe that many of the people who received notice that they're ineligible are eligible," said Mayor Bill White of Houston, where more than 9,000 of the 35,000 families on vouchers have been determined to be unqualified, raising fears of mass homelessness.

In an effort to persuade FEMA to reconsider, Mr. White has gone so far as to send teams of building inspectors to New Orleans to photograph evacuees' destroyed homes.

David Garrett, FEMA's acting director of recovery, said the agency had promised only to reimburse for "up to" 12 months of housing. But the cities that actually issued the vouchers, including Houston, Memphis and Little Rock, Ark., said the agency had agreed in negotiations to pay for the full term.

Although the paperwork accompanying the vouchers in Houston did say they were good for "up to" 12 months, local officials in all three cities said evacuees had been told, without contradiction from FEMA, that they would last a year.

"They knew exactly what we were doing," said Buddy Grantham, the chief operating officer of the Joint Hurricane Housing Task Force for Houston, which issued the 12-month vouchers in anticipation of being reimbursed by FEMA. "We were totally transparent."

Agency officials say fairness and the law prevent them from leaving the voucher system in place. The programs were hurriedly set up by state and local governments under FEMA guidelines for emergency housing, which is available to virtually anyone from a disaster-stricken area but is not intended to be used for extended periods.

Now, the agency is converting the families to its more traditional, and stricter, long-term housing program, the individual assistance program. Many people who qualified for emergency housing do not meet the requirements for long-term assistance, and the agency says it cannot ask taxpayers to continue to bankroll those families, although an agency spokesman, Aaron Walker, was unable to provide an estimate of how much money would be saved.



- 1
- 2

[Next Page »](#)

[More Articles in National »](#)

Need to know more? 50% off home delivery of The Times.

Related Articles


- [U.S. Issues Lenient Guidelines For Rebuilding in New Orleans \(April 13, 2006\)](#)
- [FEMA Trailer Park Fails to Survive Storm From Residents \(April 5, 2006\)](#)
-  [Trailers, Vital After Hurricane, Now Pose Own Risks on Gulf \(March 16, 2006\)](#)
-  [Trailer Dispute May Mean Thousands Will Go Unused \(February 14, 2006\)](#)

Related Searches

- [Housing](#)
- [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [Vouchers](#)
- [Hurricane Katrina](#)

[More Articles in National »](#)

MOST POPULAR

- [E-Mailed](#)
 - [Blogged](#)
 - [Searched](#)
1. [Op-Ed Contributor: Brand U.](#)
 2. [At Decision Time, Colleges Lay On Charm](#)
 3. [MTV's 'Super Sweet 16' Gives a Sour Pleasure](#)
 4. [Never Mind Mars and Venus: Who Is 'the Decider'?](#)
 5. [Mick Jagger Joins a New ABC Sitcom](#)
 6. [The Oyster Is His World](#)
 7. [Critic's Notebook: Another Season of Love: The Original Cast Reassembles for a 'Rent' Anniversary](#)
 8. [Student's Prize Is a Trip Into Immigration Limbo](#)
 9. [A Tool for Every Treat](#)
 10.  [Op-Ed Columnist: A Prius in Every Pot](#)

[Go to Complete List »](#)

1. [One Day, That Economy Ticket May Buy You a Place to Stand](#)
2. [Jane Jacobs, Urban Activist, Is Dead at 89](#)
3. [At Los Angeles Times, a Columnist Who Used a False Web Name Loses His Blog](#)
4. [Paul Greengrass's Filming of Flight 93's Story, Trying to Define Heroics](#)
5. [Finland Squirms as Its Latest Export Steps Into Spotlight](#)
6. [Advertiser Counts on Sheep to Pull Eyes Over the Wool](#)
7. [Rebuilding of Iraqi Pipeline as Disaster Waiting to Happen](#)

8. [Fired C.I.A. Officer Denies Role in Leak](#)
9. [A Comic Expands His Persona via Podcast on 'The Ricky Gervais Show'](#)
10. [Fox Commentator to Join White House, Officials Say](#)

[Go to Complete List »](#)

1. [illegal immigration](#)
2. [iran nuclear](#)
3. [china](#)
4. [duke lacrosse](#)
5. [india](#)
6. [education](#)
7. [gay](#)
8. [iraq war](#)
9. [bush](#)
10. [women](#)

[Go to Complete List »](#)



sponsored by

Automobiles
nytimes.com/autos

AUTO SHOW
WRAP-UP

AUTO SHOW
WRAP-UP

AUTO SHOW
WRAP-UP



[Look back at highlights from the New York auto show](#)

Also in Autos:

- [➔ An irreverent guide to the auto show](#)
- [➔ Introduced at the show: The Honda Element goes urban](#)
- [➔ Introduced at the show: Bentley Continental GTC — "the fastest 4-seat hair dryer"](#)

Advertisements

[Sign up with VONAGE and get 1 month free!](#)

Drug Prevention

[Find Advice & Resources Online](#)

The New York Times STORE



Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev
[Buy Now](#)

Inside NYTimes.com



TimesSelect

[N.Y. / Region »](#)

[Style »](#)

TimesSelect

[Home & Garden »](#)

[Arts »](#)



[Frontlines: Revisiting Afghanistan](#)



[Grannies in the Courtroom](#)



[The Man Who Aged Tom Hanks](#)

 [Readers Respond to Krugman on Our Financial Future](#)



[At Home With Andy Garcia](#)



[If Mommy Helps Baby, Who Helps Mommy?](#)

Home

- [World](#)
- [U.S.](#)
- [N.Y. / Region](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Technology](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Arts](#)
- [Style](#)
- [Travel](#)

- [Jobs](#)
- [Real Estate](#)
- [Autos](#)
- [Back to Top](#)

Copyright 2006 The New York Times Company

- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Search](#)
- [Corrections](#)
- [XML](#)
- [Help](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Work for Us](#)
- [Site Map](#)

■ ■