

Public Housing Disaster Preparedness Act of 2013
Section-By-Section

A bill to require PHAs to develop and implement disaster response and relief plans to protect assets and assist tenants in the case of a natural disaster.

Section 1—Short Title

This title would establish the short title of the bill as the “Public Housing Disaster Preparedness Act of 2013”.

Section 2—Disaster Response and Relief Plan

This section amends the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C.1437 et seq.) with a new Title V “Disaster Preparedness.”

Sec. 501—Definitions

This section provides definitions for specific terms within the new title.

Sec. 502—Requirements of a Disaster Response and Relief Plan

This section would require large PHAs (authorities with 500 units of public housing or more) to develop standardized disaster response plans in a case of a natural disaster. These plans must be approved by HUD and included in a PHA’s annual and five-year plans prior to implementation.

Sec. 503—Establishing Communication and Support Protocols

This section requires PHAs to establish a specific chain of command in their disaster response and relief plan for developing, executing, and disseminating information related to disaster response and relief protocols.

Sec. 504—Resident Preparedness

This section requires PHAs to provide materials to tenants informing them of preparation and evacuation protocols and their rights and responsibilities in case of a natural disaster. This information must be provided at move-in, annually, and prior to a natural disaster.

Sec. 505—Immediate Disaster Response

This section would require PHA disaster relief plans to include detailed information on how the authorities plan to allocate and station staff during and following a natural disaster. These plans should ensure that staff members are not overworked and that other staff members are “on-call” in a close location during an emergency to provide relief efforts.

Sec. 506—Protecting Special Needs Public Housing Tenants

This section requires PHAs to have a backed-up list of all public housing households which specifically identifies (based on information voluntarily provided by tenants) tenants with special needs such as the elderly, disabled, those with physical or mobility impairments, or medical conditions that may require additional assistance following a disaster or persons with limited English proficiency.

Sec. 507—Safe Evacuation of Residents and Staff

This section requires PHAs to establish protocols and supportive services—including written and oral translation services—to evacuate tenants and staff and transport them to a safe location in the case of a natural disaster.

Sec. 508—Supporting Short-Term and Long-Term Relocation of Tenants

This section obliges PHAs to include detailed information on their protocols for relocating tenants when their units are uninhabitable in short-term, long-term, and permanent situations in their plan.

Sec. 509—Providing Relief to Other Victims

This section obliges PHAs to include details on their protocols for renting vacant units to local victims of natural disasters who are not current public housing tenants.

Sec. 510—Protecting Tenants From Eviction

This section prohibits PHAs from evicting tenants as soon as an impending natural disaster is announced through the conclusion of PHA disaster and emergency relief efforts. However, this would not apply to evictions related criminal charges, sex offenders, or drugs.

Sec. 511—Rental Payment Fairness

This section requires PHAs to provide rent abatements to affected public housing residents immediately following a disaster, as provided under each authority's rules, leases, or other Federal, State, or local laws.

Sec. 512—Ensuring Residents Receive Basic Human Needs and Assistance

This section requires PHAs to provide tenants with information on where to obtain disaster relief assistance, basic human needs, first aid, and additional supportive services in multiple languages within 24 hours after the conclusion of a natural disaster.

Sec. 513—Protection and Restoration Public Housing Buildings

This section requires PHAs to establish protocols for addressing building repair and rehabilitation needs following a disaster. PHAs are responsible for immediately restoring any critical and eliminating any exigent health and safety hazards (including mold and mildew) as soon as possible. PHAs shall monitor and address any utility or health and safety issues as necessary. PHAs shall determine necessary repairs and rehabilitation are for long-term recovery and future disaster mitigation.

Sec. 514—Emergency Supplies and Equipment

This section requires PHAs to develop lists and maintain emergency supplies and equipment. PHAs would also be required to enter into standby contracts for critical equipment in order to facilitate the speedy restoration of necessary utilities.

Sec. 515—Sources of Assistance

This section requires PHAs to include information regarding the different Federal, State, and local grants and loans for disaster relief and how to apply for those resources in their plan. The plans must also include information regarding claims on the PHA's insurance plan.

Sec. 516—Proper Implementation of the Plan

This section requires PHAs to develop step-by-step checklists for the implementation their disaster relief plan(s) for relevant staff members, with an emphasis on disaster relief at the property level. Copies of the relevant PHA disaster relief plan(s) and protocols must also be available on-site at each public housing project for reference.

Sec. 517—Emergency Disaster Training

This section would require PHAs to hold annual emergency and disaster relief workshops for staff, at least three emergency and disaster relief training and education workshops for tenants and local advocates, and annual evacuation and emergency drills at public housing buildings.

Sec. 518—Improving Disaster Relief Oversight

This section obligates HUD's Inspector General to evaluate a PHA's implementation of its disaster response and relief plan and, if necessary, make recommendations for improving the plan within 180 days following a natural disaster.

Section 3—Amendment to the Housing Act

This section makes technical amendments to the Housing Act to reflect the changes made in this bill.

Section 4—Appropriations

This title would authorize such sums as are necessary to carry out this act.

Section 5—Effective Date

This title would require PHAs to develop and implement their disaster relief plans within 270 days after the passage of the bill.