



September 30, 2022

GENERAL NEWS

HUD Announces Disaster Assistance for Puerto Rico

In a [press release](#) Wednesday, the Department of Housing and Urban Development ([HUD](#)) announced the implementation of federal disaster assistance, including a new package of waivers offering regulatory and administrative relief, to supplement commonwealth and local recovery efforts in areas of Puerto Rico affected by Hurricane Fiona beginning on September 17, 2022, and continuing.

A presidential [major disaster declaration](#) issued on September 21, 2022, makes federal funding available to affected individuals in 55 municipalities within the commonwealth. Effective immediately, the department will:

- Issue waivers that offer flexibility and relief to commonwealth and local partners. HUD has issued a new package of 29 regulatory and administrative [waivers](#) aimed at helping Puerto Rico communities accelerate their recovery from Hurricane Fiona.
- Grant a [90-day moratorium](#) on foreclosures of FHA-insured homes
- Make mortgage insurance available under [HUD's Section 203\(h\)](#) program
- Make insurance available for both mortgages and home rehabilitation under [HUD's Section 203\(k\) program](#)
- Make [information on housing providers](#) and HUD programs available
- Provide flexibility to PHAs, which can apply for needed waivers and flexibilities for disaster relief and recovery. To find detailed information on applying for a waiver, click [here](#) for the latest *Federal Register* disaster relief notice. The Department also released Notice [PIH 2022-09](#), which advises the public of HUD's streamlined process for waivers and flexibilities from HUD regulatory and administrative requirements for various public housing and voucher programs.
- Ensure [HUD-approved housing counseling agencies](#) are ready to assist
- Assist with housing discrimination

Federal funding, provided by FEMA, is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide. Click [here](#) for more information about disaster resources.

DOJ Settles Two Disability Discrimination Lawsuits

In a [press release](#) Tuesday, the Department of Justice ([DOJ](#)) announced that a Maryland-based developer and related entities have agreed to pay \$185,000 to settle claims that they violated the [Fair Housing Act](#) and the Americans with Disabilities Act ([ADA](#)) by failing to build 11 multifamily housing complexes with required accessible features for people with disabilities. As part of the settlement, the defendants also agreed to make extensive retrofits to remove accessibility barriers at the complexes.

According to the announcement, the properties at issue in the litigation were built with financial assistance from the federal government's Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program and the HOME Investment Partnerships program, and some of the properties are specifically marketed as housing for seniors.

The [settlement](#), which must still be approved by the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland, requires the defendants to pay all costs related to the retrofits, \$175,000 into a settlement fund to compensate individuals harmed by the inaccessible housing and civil penalties of \$10,000 to the government. The settlement also requires the defendants to receive training about the Fair Housing Act and the ADA to ensure that their future multifamily housing construction complies with these laws and to provide periodic reports to the Justice Department.

In another [press release](#) Thursday, DOJ announced that an architectural design firm in Pennsylvania has agreed to settle a federal lawsuit alleging that it violated the [Fair Housing Act](#) and the Americans with Disabilities Act ([ADA](#)) by failing to design and construct senior living facilities to be accessible to people with disabilities.

Under the [consent order](#) that was approved by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, the firm will pay \$350,000 to fund retrofits at eight Pennsylvania properties, \$75,000 into a settlement fund to compensate individuals harmed by the inaccessible housing and \$25,000 to the government as a civil penalty to vindicate the public interest.

HUD Publishes Summer 2022 Issue of *Evidence Matters*

HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research ([PD&R](#)) has published the [Summer 2022](#) issue of [Evidence Matters](#). PD&R provides this introduction to the 32-page issue, which focuses on climate and housing:

This issue of Evidence Matters covers housing and climate change. In this issue, you will learn about the relationship between climate and housing and the ways we can adapt housing to be more sustainable and resilient to the changing environment.

For PD&R's list of additional resources on climate and housing, click [here](#).



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