

DHS Rental Assistance Program (RAP) FAQs
Updates 12/8/2023

GENERAL QUESTIONS REGARDING THE DHS RAP:

Q: Who is leading this program?

- The DHS RAP is being led by the Department of Human Services (DHS), in collaboration with Global Empowerment Mission (GEM). GEM is a non-profit organization that will facilitate this program on behalf of DHS and is the primary point of contact for any inquiries. Please email hawaii@globalempowermentmission.org if you are a survivor interested in this program, or a property owner interested in possibly listing your short-term rental.

Q: Who is eligible for this program?

- This rental assistance program is specifically for Maui wildfire survivors who are ineligible for FEMA assistance.

Q: What kind of housing is available?

- The RAP will require that properties be conventional housing options, such as a single-family home, condominium, apartment, or similar with connection to infrastructure. This means no tents/ yurts/ campers/ etc.
 - Requirements include:
 - Connection to county electric grid
 - Running water
 - Sewer
 - Conventional construction

Q: How can you apply?

- Households that have been identified as FEMA-ineligible and are in need of housing will be contacted by DHS, GEM, or the American Red Cross through the recently launched interim Disaster Case Management Program (DCMP). If you are a survivor of the Maui wildfires, and believe you are ineligible for FEMA assistance and would like to inquire directly about DHS RAP, please email hawaii@globalempowermentmission.org for more information.

Q: What costs are covered? What are the limits on rent amounts?

- The State of Hawai'i has approved **up to** the average monthly rates (AMRs) at the following rates:
 - 0-1 Bedroom: \$5,000/month
 - 2 bedrooms: \$7,000/month
 - 3 bedrooms: \$9,000/month
 - 4 bedrooms: \$11,000/month
- NOTE: these are maximum rates, inclusive of all taxes and fees, but these rates are not guaranteed.

Q: What does the program include?

- The RAP will help find, book, and pay for housing for Maui wildfire survivors that qualify for this program up to 12 months.

Q: How long will the program be available for?

- The RAP will provide housing support for Maui wildfire survivors that qualify for this program for up to 12 months.

Q: How is this program being funded/ how much funding is available?

- Governor Green has allocated an initial \$2.5 million in funding for this RAP.

GENERAL Information for Property Owners:

- The DHS RAP program provides funding to target the short-term rental (STR) market.
- While we encourage property owners to participate in this program, please note this program is **specifically for the STRs that have not already leased their property to wildfire survivors or other local residents** on a long-term basis.
- If you are a STR owner and have do not currently have a tenant in your property on a long-term basis, we encourage you to participate in this program and suggest you list with Airbnb.
- Doing so will greatly streamline the process of matching a survivor with your property and getting them into much needed housing quickly—and afford you as the owner all the protections and benefits of an Airbnb host. Note, Airbnb has agreed to waive its fees for this program.
- Further, listing through Airbnb will also streamline the booking/leasing process. IF you are an STR owner who has already listed your property on the Hawaii Fire Housing Relief site, we encourage you to also list with Airbnb for the DHS RAP.
- Please review the posted .pdf from Airbnb with listing guidance for more information on how to list with Airbnb.

Note the following:

- Short-term rentals are required to pay State of Hawaii General Excise Tax (GET) and Transient Accommodation Tax (TAT). Short term stays are less than six months. If a STR property is booked longer than 180 days, the TAT will not apply.
- The publicized RAP monthly rates are the MAXIMUM price point for STRs located in West Maui, inclusive of all taxes and fees. However, the maximum payment is NOT guaranteed. With free market pricing, listings will compete.

- In pricing your property, we ask you include tax and any additional fees such as for cleaning, parking, or for pet allowances.
- **While the response to this program has been overwhelming positive, we want to be clear that terminating an existing lease with a Hawaii resident to list your property with this program is unacceptable.** All reports of this conduct will be referred to the Department of the Attorney General for follow-up and any appropriate legal action, and those properties will be flagged and ineligible to participate in the DHS RAP until that follow up is complete.
- If you have additional questions, or to participate in this program and list with Airbnb, please contact GEM at hawaii@globalempowermentmission.org.