



**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT *of*
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

OFFICE OF LONG-TERM RESILIENCY

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

Version History

16 July, 2019	Draft Citizen Participation Plan posted to website
1 January, 2021	Updated list of open Rebuild Florida centers, updated Disaster Recovery address, updated phone number for Fair Housing complaints
25 March, 2021	Updated references to Office of Disaster Recovery (ODR) to the program's new name, Office of Long-Term Resiliency (OLTR)

VI. Citizen Participation Plan

The primary goal of this plan is to provide Floridians with definitive opportunities to participate in the long-term recovery efforts of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's (DEO) Office of Long-Term Resiliency. The DEO Office of Long-Term Resiliency Citizen Participation Plan for the Hurricane Irma allocation was developed based on the requirements outlined in U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Federal Register Notice, Volume 83, No. 157 published Tuesday, August 14, 2018 and HUD Federal Register Notice, Volume 83, No. 28 published Friday, February 9, 2018.

According to the Notice No. 28, "To permit a more streamlined process, and ensure disaster recovery grants are awarded in a timely manner, provisions of 42 U.S.C. 5304(a)(2) and (3), 42 U.S.C. 12707, 24 CFR 570.486, 24 CFR 1003.604, and 24 CFR 91.115(b) and (c), with respect to citizen participation requirements, are waived and replaced by the requirements below. The streamlined requirements do not mandate public hearings but do require the grantee to provide a reasonable opportunity (at least 14 days) for citizen comment and ongoing citizen access to information about the use of grant funds."

The most current version of the Office of Long-Term Resiliency's Citizen Participation Plan for Hurricane Irma will be placed on the official Office of Long-Term Resiliency website at www.floridajobs.org/CDBG-DR.

A. Action Plan

The State of Florida Action Plan for Disaster Recovery for Hurricane Irma, and any following amendments, defines how the Office of Long-Term Resiliency will effectively use all available funding to support a data-driven recovery based on the calculation of unmet need across the state. The action plan describes Florida's proposed allocation by activity and lays out program designs for each area of assistance. The plan also identifies the beginning and end dates for each disaster recovery activity, performance and expenditure schedule.

Before adopting the State of Florida Action Plan for Disaster Recovery, DEO sought public input on program design issues including the amount of assistance Florida expected to receive, the range of activities that may be undertaken, the estimated amount of benefit expected for persons of low-to-moderate income and plans to mitigate displacement. A summary of outreach feedback is included in the State of Florida Action Plan approved by HUD. The final plan approved by HUD is posted to www.floridajobs.org/CDBG-DR.

B. Amendments to the Action Plan

Substantial Amendment

As additional information and funding becomes available through the grant administration process, amendments to this Action Plan are expected. Prior to adopting any substantial amendment to this Action Plan, the Office of Long-Term Resiliency will publish the proposed plan or amendment on the official website and will afford citizens, affected local governments, and other interested parties a reasonable opportunity to examine the plan or amendment's contents. At a minimum, the following modifications will constitute a substantial amendment:

- a change in program benefit or eligibility criteria;
- the addition or deletion of an activity; or
- the allocation or reallocation of more than 10 percent of the original appropriation.

Citizens will be provided with no less than 30 days to review and provide comment on proposed substantial changes. A summary of all comments received will be included in the final substantial amendment submitted to HUD for approval. Final substantial amendments approved by HUD will be posted to RebuildFlorida.gov.

Non-substantial Amendment

The Office of Long-Term Resiliency will notify HUD when it makes any plan amendment that is not substantial. HUD will be notified at least five (5) business days before the amendment becomes effective. HUD will acknowledge receipt of the notification of non-substantial amendments via email within five (5) business days.

Every amendment, substantial or not, will be numbered sequentially and posted on RebuildFlorida.gov, not in replacement of, but in addition to all previous versions of the plan.

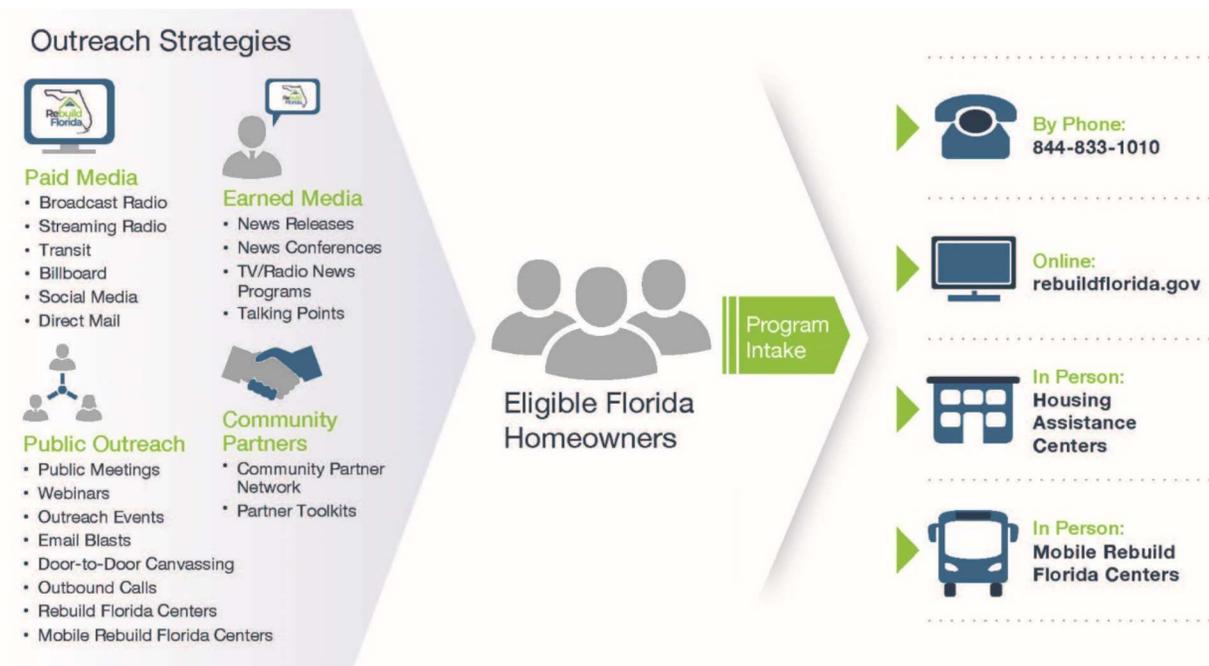
C. Public Notice and Comment Period

Before the Action Plan for this grant or any substantial amendment to this grant is adopted, the Office of Long-Term Resiliency will publish the proposed plan or amendment on www.floridajobs.org/CDBG-DR, and will cross-reference with additional agency websites: <http://floridajobs.org/rebuildflorida> and <http://rebuildflorida.gov>.

Notice of public comment period will be provided by publication on RebuildFlorida.gov. Florida will open the citizen comment period for the following timeframes:

- Comment period for the original Action Plan took place for 14 days after the publication of the Action Plan to RebuildFlorida.gov.
- Comment period for Substantial Amendments took place for 30 days after the publication of the Substantial Amendment to RebuildFlorida.gov.

The Office of Long-Term Resiliency and/or subgrantees will notify affected citizens through electronic mailings, press releases, statements by public officials, media advertisements, public service announcements, newsletters, contacts with neighborhood organizations, and/or through social media.



Office of Long-Term Resiliency's Rebuild Florida Housing Repair and Replacement Program, Strategic Communications and Outreach Plan

The Office of Long-Term Resiliency will take comments via USPS mail, fax, email, or through the main website:

Attention: Rebuild Florida Constituent Services
 Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
 Division of Community Development
 107 East Madison Street
 Caldwell Building, MSC 400
 Tallahassee, FL 32399
 E-mail: cdbg-dr@deo.myflorida.com
 Website: www.floridajobs.org/CDBG-DR

D. Consideration of Public Comments

The Office of Long-Term Resiliency will consider all written comments regarding the Action Plan or any substantial amendment. A summary of the comments and the response to each will be located in the appendix section of any Action Plan or substantial amendment submitted to HUD.

E. Limited English Proficiency

Florida is committed to providing all citizens with equal access to information about the disaster recovery program, including persons with disabilities and Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Florida follows HUD's regulation, 24 CFR Part 1, "Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development—Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964," which requires all recipients of federal financial assistance from HUD to provide meaningful access to LEP persons.

Persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English may be entitled to language assistance with respect to a particular type of service, benefit or encounter. To address this need, DEO developed and implemented a Rebuild Florida Language Access Plan, which details how Florida will address the needs of LEP individuals. Translators will be present when a significant number of non-English speaking residents can be reasonably expected to participate in public hearings or open comment periods. Outreach materials and citizen comments will also be translated into the appropriate language.

The State of Florida Action Plan for Disaster Recovery, any ensuing amendments, outreach materials, the application and related guidance materials will be published in English, Spanish and French Creole. The languages selected were selected based on the entire eligible area of the CDBG-DR funds and a natural break in the numbers of LEP individuals. Recognizing there may be a need for individuals to have access to the document in additional languages the Office of Long-Term Resiliency will be contracting with an as needed translation service to provide personalized translations of the Action Plan upon request. Any public places that work directly in programs available to private individuals will carry signage (e.g., “I speak” visual card containing a wide range of language samples) detailing this specialized translation service.

DEO has also posted a Babel Notice on RebuildFlorida.gov informing individuals that interpretive and translational services are available upon request. The Office of Long-Term Resiliency will ensure that all citizens have equal access to information about the programs, including persons with disabilities and Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and will ensure that program information is available in the appropriate languages for the geographic area served by the jurisdiction.

F. Technical Assistance

Citizens with disabilities or those who need technical assistance can contact the Rebuild Florida program for assistance at 844-833-1010 or visit one of the nine Rebuild Florida Centers located throughout the state.

All Rebuild Florida Centers are open 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

BROWARD COUNTY

Next to CareerSource Broward
2680 West Oakland Park Blvd.,
Ft. Lauderdale

DUVAL COUNTY

WorkSource Career Service building
215 Market St.,
Jacksonville

LEE COUNTY

Department of Children and Families building
(DCF)
2295 Victoria Ave.,
Fort Myers

MONROE COUNTY

State of Florida Office Building, 2nd Floor
2796 Overseas Hwy., Suite 219-A,
Marathon

ORANGE COUNTY

Office complex
6101 Chancellor Dr., Suite 100-B,
Orlando

Sign Language Interpretation Service

When communicating with hearing-impaired applicants, the Rebuild Florida program provides support via Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) with Legal Language Services. Each Rebuild Florida Center is equipped with designated technical equipment (e.g. laptop, USB camera, speakers) to accommodate hearing-impaired applicants. Rebuild Florida staff will secure a private meeting location to setup VRI with a hearing-impaired applicant.

Home Visits

Since the Rebuild Florida Program is prioritizing applicants with disabilities in Phase 1, it is important that the program provides reasonable accommodations to assist whenever and wherever necessary. This may require Rebuild Florida Intake Specialists to conduct home intake visits. The procedure is as follows:

1. Applicant requests an at-home visit with an Intake Specialist or Call Center Agent.
 - a. Applicant must be homebound - Elderly, disabled, or otherwise incapacitated and unable to access assistance in transportation to an Intake Center as verified by an Intake Specialist through a screening call.
2. Center Managers will determine who will be assigned to conduct the home visit. The files should be assigned based on geography of an applicant's current address and proximity to an Intake Center.
3. The file must be scheduled in AppointmentPlus with the appropriate Intake Center. The Intake Specialist will be required to make the appointment, choosing the "Home Visit" option from the dropdown menu. Calls received by the Call Center requesting an at-home visit will be documented in SharePoint for the appropriate Center Manager to review for assignment and outreach.
 - a. Home visits must be scheduled a minimum of one (1) week from the date requested and approved by the Center Manager.
 - b. Should a home visit need to be scheduled within one (1) week, it must be approved by the Single-Family Housing Manager.
4. The Intake Specialist contacts applicant to review information, inform them of the documentation requirements, and confirms appointment 24 hours prior.
 - a. Intake Specialists can ask about pets in the home for both aggression and allergy issues. Homeowners should be advised that they must have pets locked away at the time of the home visit.
5. The Center Manager will assign an additional program staff member to attend the home visit with the Intake Specialist. For safety reasons, at-home visits should be conducted by two Program staff members together.
6. The Intake Specialist will bring a mobile kit (scanner/MiFi/laptop) to the visit.
7. The Intake Specialist and additional program representative will arrive at the applicant's location.

- a. The assigned Intake Specialist will review the program and complete the application with the applicant.
- b. The other staff member will complete the scanning of any required documents.
- c. The Intake Specialist will record any issues for follow-up requested by the applicant.

8. Staff should keep track of the mileage and submit for reimbursement in accordance with the program’s travel policy.

G. Fair Housing

	<p>Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended, makes discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin illegal in connection with the sale or rental of most housing and any vacant land offered for residential construction or use.</p>
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The Rebuild Florida program is committed to affirmatively furthering fair housing through the established affirmative marketing policies summarized below. The goal is to ensure that eligible persons from all racial, ethnic, national origin, religious, familial status, the disabled, “special needs,” gender groups, and populations least likely to apply for assistance are given the opportunity to rehabilitate their rental property that sustained damages due to Hurricane Irma and/or its after effects.

- A. In accordance to the affirmative marketing policies and procedures, program participants will be informed about available opportunities and supporting requirements via counselors, printed and electronic materials, publications, direct contact, workshops/seminars, and through the placement of flyers and posters in public facilities.
- B. The Housing Repair and Replacement Program will conduct marketing through widely available media outlets. Efforts will be taken to affirmatively market the Rebuild Florida CDBG-DR program as follows:
 - a. Advertise with media outlets, which provides unique access for persons who are considered members of a protected class under the Fair Housing Act.
 - b. Reach out to public or non-profit organizations under the Fair Housing Act.
 - c. Conduct other forms of outreach tailored to reaching the eligible population, including door to door outreach if necessary.
- C. Applications and forms will be offered in English, Spanish, and French Creole. In addition, every effort will be made to assist limited English proficient potential applicants in the application process.

- D. Measures will be taken to make the program accessible to persons who are considered members of a protected class under the Fair Housing Act by holding informational meetings in buildings that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), providing sign language assistance when requested (with a three-day notice), and providing special assistance for those who are visually impaired when requested (also with a three-day notice).
- E. All marketing measures used, including copies of all advertisements and announcements, will be documented and retained and made available to the public upon request.
- F. The Housing Repair and Replacement Program will use the Fair Housing logo in program advertising, post Fair Housing posters and related information, and, in general, inform the public of its rights under Fair Housing regulations.

Suggested Activities for Landlords, Managers, Agents, and the General Public

The Rebuild Florida program is committed to affirmatively furthering fair housing through the following suggested information-based activities for landlords, managers, agents, and the general public:

- A. Information Outreach: Requesting landlords to post or provide Fair Housing Notices.
- B. Information for the General Public: Topics include overview of the Fair Housing laws, (classes, illegal acts, and penalties) rights and responsibilities in buying and selling homes, tenant selection criteria, family issues (e.g., occupancy standards, safety), and renting to the disabled, etc. See 24 CFR.50, 100.65, 100.80.
- C. Information for Rental Managers, Agents, and Landlords: Topics include overview of the Fair Housing laws, (classes, illegal acts, and penalties) tenant selection criteria, family issues (e.g., occupancy standards, safety), renting to the disabled, record keeping, advertising, and evictions.

Fair Housing Complaints

Persons alleging a violation of fair housing laws will be referred to DEO's local contact and process to file a complaint. DEO will retain a log and record all fair housing inquiries, allegations, complaints and referrals. In addition, DEO will report suspected non-compliance to HUD. The contact for Fair Housing Complaints is:

FairHousing@deo.myflorida.com

H. Citizen Complaints and Inquiries

OLTR will handle citizen complaints and inquiries through a Constituent Services Management staff. All complaints and inquiries received by the state, its contractor, and/or other program sources, will be reviewed by the Constituent Services Management staff for:

1. Investigation, as necessary;
2. Resolution; or
3. Follow-up actions.

Citizens may file a written complaint or inquiry by email to CDBG-DR@deo.myflorida.com or by postal mail to the following address:

Attention: Rebuild Florida Constituent Services
Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
Division of Community Development
107 East Madison Street
Caldwell Building, MSC 400
Tallahassee, FL 32399

The state will make every effort to provide a timely written response within 15 working days of the receipt of complaint, where practicable. The aim of the state will be to always attempt to resolve complaints in a manner that is both sensitive to the complainant's concerns and achieves a fair result.

Constituent Management staff will maintain files that include:

1. The name of the person who filed the complaint;
2. The date the complaint was received;
3. A description of the complaint;
4. The name of each person contacted in relation to the complaint;
5. A summary of the results of the review or investigation of the complaint; and
6. An explanation of the resolution (e.g., the reason the file was closed)

I. Community Consultation

The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) staff conducted stakeholder meetings in each of the 14 HUD-identified most-impacted and distressed areas. At these meetings, participants were given a brief overview of the program and an opportunity to ask questions. DEO worked with participants to identify each community's remaining unmet needs and discuss various program options that may be available to meet those needs. DEO also asked for the participants' feedback and program preference to get a sense of what types of programs would be most beneficial to communities.

Stakeholder meetings were held from March 1, 2018 through March 20, 2018 at the following locations:

- Thursday, March 1, 2018
 - o Monroe County
- Friday, March 2, 2018
 - o Miami-Dade County
 - o Broward County
- Monday, March 5, 2018
 - o Volusia County
 - o Brevard County
 - o Orange County
- Tuesday, March 6, 2018
 - o Duval County

- o Flagler County (32136)
 - Wednesday, March 7, 2018
 - o Clay County (32068)
 - o Bradford County (32091)
 - Monday, March 19, 2018
 - o Desoto County (34266)
 - o Polk County
 - Tuesday, March 20, 2018
 - o Lee County
 - o Collier County

DEO conducted a digital outreach campaign consisting of three webinars to keep stakeholders informed of the process and to solicit their feedback. DEO also developed a survey to capture feedback from communities that were outside the HUD-identified, most-impacted and distressed areas and to allow for additional input from communities that were not able to attend stakeholder meetings. Finally, DEO created an open mailing list, which provides ongoing outreach information. The mailing list is open to the public and the registration information is prominently displayed on RebuildFlorida.gov. DEO has continued its public outreach efforts and has remained available to answer questions from communities and stakeholders.

J. Community Outreach Events

Through public-private partnerships and coordination with local organizations, Rebuild Florida facilitated more than 100 public outreach events in the most impacted communities during the initial registration and application phases.



Figure 1

Outreach Tabling Event at Milagro Restaurant
(Initial Registration Period)
Big Pine Key, FL



Figure 2

Outreach Tabling Event at Northwest Branch Library
(Initial Registration Period)
Pompano Beach, FL

K. Performance Reporting

In accordance to HUD requirements, Florida will submit a Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) through the HUD Disaster Recovery Grant Reporting (DRGR) system no later than 30 days following the end of each calendar quarter. Three days before submission to HUD, Florida will post each QPR for public review and comment on www.floridajobs.org/CDBG-DR. Program QPR's will be posted on a quarterly basis until all funds have been expended and all expenditures have been reported.

L. Public Website

The Office of Long-Term Resiliency will make the following items available on www.floridajobs.org/CDBG-DR: (1) the Action Plan (including all amendments); each Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) as created using the DRGR system; (2) procurement, policies and procedures; (3) executed CDBG-DR contracts; and (4) status of services or goods currently being procured by the Office of Long-Term Resiliency (e.g., phase of the procurement, requirements for proposals, etc.). In addition to the specific items listed above, the Office of Long-Term Resiliency will maintain a comprehensive website regarding all disaster recovery activities assisted with these funds. This includes reporting information on the Office of Long-Term Resiliency's main website and additional in-depth program information on a separate site dedicated specifically to disaster recovery, rebuildflorida.gov. Both websites will be updated monthly to reflect the most up-to-date information about the use of these funds and any changes in policies and procedures.

M. Public Record Requests

Pursuant to Article 1, Section 24, Florida Constitution and Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, the Department of Economic Opportunity is subject to the Florida Public Records Law. Accordingly, unless an exemption exists, all records produced or received pursuant to law or in connection with the official business of the Department can be requested and provided for inspection. All Public Records requests will be processed in accordance with [DEO Administrative Policy 1.06](#), Processing Public Records Requests.

A Public Records Request may be verbal or take any form (e.g., email, written correspondence, in-person). The Public Records Act does not require that requests be in writing, comply with a certain form or have any specific content. A public records request may come from a member of the media, the general public, an employee, or any other individual. DEO cannot mandate receipt of the name of the requestor or purpose of the request in order to fulfill the Public Records Request.

A Public Record is defined as all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, films, sound recordings, data processing software, or other material, regardless of the physical form, characteristics, or means of transmission, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance, or in connection with the transaction of official business by any agency.

Public records include all things made or received in connection with DEO business. All such materials, electronic and on paper, regardless of whether they are in draft or final form, are open to public inspection unless exempt or confidential.

The Public Record Coordinator is the person appointed by DEO charged with the responsibility of maintaining the Office of Public Records, including processing and tracking public record requests. The Public Record Coordinator is responsible for overseeing DEO's compliance with public record/open

government requirements and maintains a complete record of all DEO public record requests and corresponding disclosures. The Public Record Coordinator also serves as the primary liaison between DEO and the Office of Open Government in the Executive Office of the Governor.

The Office of Long-Term Resiliency's Constituent Services Manager will act as a Public Record Division Liaison, and is the primary contact for all public record requests regarding the Office of Long-Term Resiliency or the Rebuild Florida Program. The Office of Long-Term Resiliency's Public Record Division Liaison will coordinate with the respective managers of each program to determine (1) what is and what is not a responsive record; and (2) where to find all responsive records.

Procedures

A. Intake and Processing

1. When an Employee receives a Public Records Request:

- a. All employees who receive a Public Records Request will immediately forward the request to the Public Records Coordinator (PRRequest@deo.myflorida.com) for acknowledgement and tracking.
- b. Employees should then immediately notify their supervisor and Division Liaison regarding the request.
- c. Any Employee receiving a Public Records Request will immediately coordinate with a supervisor and the Division's Public Records Liaison regarding questions pertaining to the request such as:(i) what is and what is not a responsive record; and (ii) where to find all responsive records.
- d. Employees will diligently and expediently work with their Division Liaison to gather all responsive records to provide to the Public Records Coordinator, however collaboration with the Public Records Coordinator is expected throughout the process.
- e. The Public Records Coordinator will remain, at all times, the point of contact between the requestor and DEO.

2. When a Division Liaison receives a Public Records Request:

- a. Division Liaisons will immediately forward the request to the Public Records Coordinator (PRRequest@deo.myflorida.com) for acknowledgement and tracking.
- b. Division Liaisons will then work with staff in their Division to expeditiously gather all responsive records to provide to the Public Records Coordinator.
- c. The Public Records Coordinator will remain, at all times, the point of contact between the requestor and DEO.

3. When the Public Records Coordinator receives a Public Records Request:

- a. The Public Records Coordinator will communicate with the requestor to acknowledge receipt of the public record request by email, letter, or facsimile, as appropriate.

b. The Public Records Coordinator will then work with Division Liaisons to gather all responsive records to complete the request.

c. If the request is from a member of the media, the Public Records Coordinator will immediately forward the request to the Office of Communications and External Affairs (media@deo.myflorida.com). The Office of Communications and External Affairs will acknowledge all media Public Records Requests. The Public Records Coordinator will be informed of all responses to media that include public records.

4. Estimates

a. The Public Records Coordinator will communicate in writing with the requestor to provide the actual cost and an estimate of the special service charge, if applicable.

b. Payment of the estimated costs is required prior to processing the records for production.

5. Review and Redaction

a. Once the requested materials have been gathered by the Division, the Division will redact confidential and exempt information before releasing the records to the Public Records Coordinator for transmittal.

b. The Division will specify and provide all citations for any redactions.

c. The Liaison and/or Division employee will consult with OGC as necessary regarding redactions.

d. Each Division is responsible for redacting records with redaction tape or electronically and, if necessary, must be prepared to assume the cost of paper copies used in the redaction process. Do not redact with a marker.

B. Production of Records to Requestor

1. Responses to Public Records Requests will be made within a reasonable time taking into account the extent and nature of the request.

2. Copies of the request, acknowledgment, response, invoice, records produced, or a record of what was produced, any related correspondences, and payments will be maintained by the Public Records Coordinator.

3. When the requestor requests in-person inspection of the records, and all necessary fees have been paid, the Public Records Coordinator and the Division Liaison, if necessary, must supervise the inspection of records to ensure confidential information is protected.

C. Public Record Requests for Email Correspondences

1. The Public Records Coordinator will review the request and consult with the requestor and Liaison as necessary, to determine possible search terms and time frames to obtain the information requested.

2. The Public Records Coordinator will provide the request for emails to IT with search terms and time frames.
3. Once emails have been retrieved by IT, an estimate will be transmitted by the Public Records Coordinator, if applicable, including the cost of retrieval and review of the emails for exempt or confidential information.
4. Upon retrieval and payment of necessary costs by requestor, the Public Records Coordinator will provide the emails to the Division Liaison for review and redaction (if required), and then provide all responsive documents to the requestor.

N. Appeals

All applications, guidelines and websites will include details on the right to file a complaint or appeal, and the process for filing a complaint or beginning an appeal. Complaints may be lodged regarding all concerns that arise related to the procedures followed and services provided by the Rebuild Florida Housing Repair and Replacement Program (HRRP). Appeals may be lodged only upon the deliverance of an adverse program decision regarding eligibility, closure of an application or denial of relocation assistance to a tenant and only within the parameters set by the Appeals procedure. No person may appeal program policy.

Housing Repair and Replacement Program - Appeals

During the course of the program's operations, decisions will be made on housing assistance applications and/or housing unit projects to be delivered. These decisions will be made based on applicable statutes, codes of federal regulation, state and local codes and ordinances, local guidelines, and program operational procedures, as each is interpreted by the State of Florida. During the course of these activities, it is possible that citizens may decide they have a legitimate reason to appeal a decision. In order to allow for such circumstances, applicants are allowed to appeal program decisions related to one of the following activities:

1. A program eligibility and/or priority determination;
2. A program assistance award calculation; and
3. A program decision concerning housing unit damage and the resulting program outcome.

Process

An appeals process initiated by the applicant or a tenant will include an informal and formal, written grievance procedure which may include but not be limited to informal hearings, third-party review or administrative review. HRRP will render a decision regarding exception reviews and formal appeals. Appeals, grievances, and exceptions will be further explained in the Complaints, Appeals and Exceptions Procedures.

1. Once an applicant is deemed ineligible following the IEM reconsideration and cure process, the applicant must submit a written request to appeal to DEO within 30 days of the ineligibility determination

- Appealable issues include: denial of application based on eligibility requirements, damage assessment, environmental review, etc.
2. The appeal can be sent via email, fax or mail
 - o CDBG-DR@deo.myflorida.com
 - o Office of Long-Term Resiliency, Appeals Lead
Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
Division of Community Development
107 East Madison Street
Caldwell Building, MSC 400
Tallahassee, FL 32399
 - o Once received, the Hearing Officer will date stamp the request for appeal
 3. The Hearing Officer will prepare and mail a Notice of Hearing to the applicant using delivery confirmation within 15 days of receiving the request for appeal.
 - The Notice of Hearing will include the date and time of the hearing as well as the issue to be addressed during the hearing.
 - o The hearing will be scheduled no fewer than 10 business days in advance of occurrence.
 - The applicant will have the option to forward additional documentation to the Hearing Officer prior to the hearing, if applicable.
 - o Any additional documentation received by the Hearing Officer will be date stamped and must be received at least 24 hours prior to the hearing.
 4. The hearing will be held telephonically on the date and time listed on the Notice of Hearing. The hearings will be recorded using the digital recording system (TBD) or a handheld recording device.
 - The hearing officer will dial the number for the applicant listed on the Notice to Appeal
 - o At least two attempts should be made to contact the applicant
 - The hearing officer will validate the delivery confirmation as to when the applicant received the Notice of Hearing on the record
 5. During the hearing, the Hearing Officer will establish the record addressing any issues of ineligibility, review all additional documents with the applicant and allow for testimony of the applicant.
 6. Following the conclusion of the hearing, a final written decision will be issued by the Hearing Officer based on the merits of the case, testimony of the applicant, additional documentation and program policy and procedure.

- The final decision will be mailed using delivery confirmation to the applicant within 30 days following the hearing.
7. The Hearing Officer will update the applicant's record and eligibility status in SERA to approve or reject the applicant from moving forward in the process.
 8. If the applicant is dissatisfied with the final decision of the Hearing Officer, the applicant has the ability to appeal with the Florida Division of Administrative Hearings (DOAH).