

Smart Move Program



The Smart Move Program (SMP) is a **housing development** pilot program that will work with eligible developers to create **quality, energy-efficient, resilient, and affordable single-family housing** in lower risk areas **within or near disaster-impacted communities**. SMP, funded by Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds appropriated by Congress for recovery from Hurricane Ida, provides up to \$15 million to support development projects that address unmet recovery and mitigation needs in affected counties.

Once the homes are constructed, the program will provide a path to homeownership for Ida-impacted residents. Smart Move will prioritize participants of buyout programs who have sold high-risk properties, as well as income-qualified, first-time homebuyers, providing them with affordable housing options and down payment assistance.

PROGRAM GOALS

1. Provide safe housing for **Low-Moderate Income (LMI)** or **Urgent Need (UN)** residents to remain near their communities after selling high-risk properties, along with first-time homebuyer opportunities for eligible households.
2. Develop resilient, affordable housing to support long-term community stability and reduce vulnerability to natural disasters.
3. Fund and provide developers the opportunity to propose new housing projects to ensure that impacted communities benefit broadly across different regions.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Developers applying to the Program must locate projects within HUD- or State-designated Most Impacted and Distressed (MID) counties: *Bergen, Essex, Gloucester, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Union, and Warren*. All entities involved in the development team must meet federal debarment and suspension requirements, be registered with System Award Management (SAM) at www.sam.gov, and possess a federal Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Projects must be within or near disaster-impacted communities participating in buyout programs.



Examples of Eligible Activities

Examples of eligible activities may include but are not limited to:

- *Land acquisition costs*
- *Clearance/Demolition*
- *Any costs that are eligible and reasonably necessary to develop and sell the housing units*
- *Soft Costs (no more than 28% of the total development cost)*
- *Hard Costs*
- *Construction Fees*

PROGRAM PRIORITIES AND SCORING CRITERIA

DCA will evaluate each application that meets minimum eligibility requirements. A detailed scoring rubric is available in the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). Project proposals will be assessed based on the following priorities.

- **Project Site:** Points are awarded based on proximity to services and amenities, as well as walkability and access to transportation.
- **Demonstrated Experience:** Experience in similar projects and federal program compliance.
- **Value of CDBG-DR Investment:** Projects maximizing square footage at the lowest CDBG-DR cost receive the highest scores.
- **Project Readiness:** Priority to site control, financial backing, and advanced design development.
- **Resilient Design:** Incorporating resilient construction features to enhance durability against climate risks.
- **Innovative Design:** Creative and advanced construction solutions for sustainable housing.
- **Community Need:** Strong local need for affordable housing receive higher scores.
- **Proximity to Buyout Properties:** Developments near buyout locations receive additional points.
- **Target Percentage:** Projects closer to a 70% LMI and 30% UN housing ratio score higher.

HOW TO APPLY

Applicants can locate all application materials at nj.gov/dca/ddrm/programs/ida/housing_resilient.shtml. All applications must be submitted by **April 30, 2025** via email to SmartMove@dca.nj.gov.

Application Requirements

Applications must include the following information:

- **Section A: Project Information-** Developer Information.
- **Section B: Threshold Review-** Insurance & Coverages, Letter of Municipal Support, HUD/MID Counties, National Objective Requirement, Demonstrated Site Control or Acquisition Plan, Outside of Floodplain, Eligible Project Model, Green Building Standards, Disaster-Impacted Communities and Project Schedule.
- **Section C: Technical Scoring-** Project Site, Demonstrated Experience, Value of CDBG-DR Investment, Project Readiness, Resilient Design, Innovative Design, Community Need, Proximity to Buyout Properties, and Target Percentage.

For More Information: Please review the Notice of Funding and Policy available on the website listed above.



Down Payment Assistance:

The amount of down payment assistance will be determined based on need during the underwriting and first mortgage loan approval process. During Phase I of the Program, funds will be allocated specifically for down payment assistance in Phase II. For each unit proposed, 20% of the sales price will be earmarked from the total Program budget to provide down payment assistance to eligible homebuyers in Phase II.

- Up to 20% of the affordable sales price for LMI households with incomes at or below 80% of AMI.
- Up to 5% of the affordable sales price for UN households with incomes between 81% of AMI and 120% of AMI.

PHASE II: HOMEBUYER ASSISTANCE

In this phase, down payment assistance may be provided to help **buyout participants** and **eligible first-time homebuyers** purchase newly built, resilient, and affordable homes in lower-risk areas, allowing them to remain in or near their communities.

Target Percentage & National Objectives:

Target: 70% of units sold to low-moderate income (LMI) households earning 80% or less of the area median income (AMI), and 30% to urgent need (UN) households earning 81%-120% of AMI. While some flexibility is allowed, at least 65% of units must go to LMI homebuyers.

Homebuyer Prioritization:

- **Priority 1:** Buyout program participants within the jurisdiction.
- **Priority 2:** Buyout program participants outside the jurisdiction.
- **Priority 3:** Ida-impacted renters or first-time homebuyers within the jurisdiction.
- **Priority 4:** Ida-impacted renters or first-time homebuyers outside the jurisdiction.
- **Priority 5:** Any affordable housing-eligible applicant.

Additional Flexibility for Developers: Developers can create homebuyer referral pools aligned with local affordable housing requirements, allowing developer-referred applicants to hold priority within each established priority level.

LEARN MORE

For more information about New Jersey's disaster recovery and mitigation efforts, visit www.nj.gov/idaprograms.

