

Spotlight

Department of Homeland Security



Office of Inspector General

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Why This Matters

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) discussion to eliminate the use of park model houses by its Temporary Housing Program will increase the costs of the program, based on our analysis, by \$76 million. In addition, this change may hinder FEMA's ability to provide shelter to disaster survivors quickly.

FEMA's Response

FEMA concurred with the recommendation. In 2012, FEMA developed and executed a contract for a one-bedroom manufactured home that is comparable in size and cost to a park model. FEMA believes the current mix of sizes now available will allow for survivors' needs to be met more effectively and efficiently. FEMA provided the OIG with documentation of solicitation for the one-bedroom manufactured homes.

For Further Information:

Contact our Office of Public Affairs at (202)254-4100, or email us at DHS-OIG.OfficePublicAffairs@oig.dhs.gov

Unless Modified, FEMA's Temporary Housing Plans Will Increase Costs by an Estimated \$76 Million Annually

What We Determined

FEMA made significant improvements in reducing formaldehyde exposure and fire hazards in its temporary housing unit program. However, our cost analysis shows that placing temporary housing units at group sites and commercial sites cost significantly more than placing them at private sites. FEMA's recent policy change to discontinue using the park model homes as a temporary housing alternative will result in a significant increase in the cost of the temporary housing program. The limited amount of space in commercial mobile home parks and the costs of developing vacant land for group sites will be even more pronounced for a large-scale housing mission. In addition, State, local, and some FEMA officials predict that the decision to discontinue the use of park model homes as a temporary housing alternative will cause delays in providing occupancy-ready temporary housing. They also predict the decision will make it difficult for future disaster survivors to reside near their own property while rebuilding their homes and make it more difficult to establish normalcy in the aftermath of a disaster. In our view, this policy change will jeopardize FEMA's ability to provide cost-effective and rapid disaster housing assistance.

What We Recommend

We recommend that the Federal Emergency Management Agency provide a comparable housing alternative to the park model unit that (1) allows disaster survivors, when possible, to stay close to their home and (2) is cost effective, saving an estimated \$76 million annually.