

# Blue Acres Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery Program



The Blue Acres program is a long-standing, voluntary buyout program run by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

The program purchases properties located in at-risk areas and provides assistance to help property owners relocate to safer locations. The goal of the program is to reduce risk and impact from future floods.

The program works in coordination with the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and uses state and Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

## **VOLUNTARY BUYOUT PROCESS**

The Blue Acres program purchases properties located in floodways, floodplains, or other at-risk areas called Disaster Risk Reduction Areas (DRRA). Owners willingly sell their property to DEP for current fair-market value. DEP will convert the property to open space or use it for recreational or wetlands management, or other disaster risk reduction practices. Participation in the Blue Acres program is completely voluntary.

## **SAFE HOUSING INCENTIVES**

In addition to the buyout award, the program offers a Safe Housing Incentive to help homeowners cover the cost of moving to a safer location. To receive the incentive, applicants must agree to move to an area that is outside the Special Flood Hazard Area or the 100-year floodplain, as defined by FEMA, The National Flood Insurance Program, or DEP's Inland Flood Rule.

Homeowners who agree to move within the jurisdiction of the buyout, may also be eligible for additional incentives.

# Blue Acres CDBG-DR Program

## Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for the program, the property must meet certain requirements including:



- Be located within one of the following disaster-declared counties: Bergen, Essex, Gloucester, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Union, and Warren.
- Be owned by the applicant.
- Have served as a primary residence as either a full-time rental or owner-occupied home. Commercial properties and second homes are not eligible.
- Property must meet at least one of the following identified disaster risk criteria:
  - Be located in the floodway or floodplain, have another quantifiable flood risk, or be located in another high-risk area designated by DEP, or
  - Have a documented flood or loss from Hurricane Ida, or
  - Be vulnerable to climate change as determined by resilience planning.

CDBG-DR buyouts will prioritize buyouts for socially vulnerable populations and homeowners who are identified as Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI).

## DISPLACED TENANTS

Tenants who are permanently displaced as a result of a buyout are eligible for assistance in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (URA), as amended.

## HOUSING COUNSELING AND LEGAL SERVICES

DCA provides free housing counseling and legal services to buyout applicants to assist in the recovery process. Property owners can receive assistance with the application, compiling documentation, and long-term housing plans. They may also receive referral services as needed.

## HOW TO APPLY

To participate in the Blue Acres Program, homeowners must complete a *Blue Acres Application* and the *Hurricane Ida Registration* to indicate their interest in selling their property voluntarily. Applications received by DEP that preliminarily meet CDBG-DR funding criteria may be sent a *HUD Eligibility Buyout Application* link. This will allow property owners to submit additional information in order to confirm HUD eligibility. Once HUD buyout eligibility is determined, the voluntary buyout process will begin.

Complete the Hurricane Ida Registration at <https://nj.gov/dca/ddrm/home/idaregistration.shtml> on the DCA website.

Apply online or print and email/mail the application to Blue Acres.



### Online

English: <https://dep.nj.gov/blueacres/application-for-blue-acres-acquisition/>  
Español: <https://dep.nj.gov/blueacres/solicitud-de-venta-blue-acres/>



### By Email

[blueacres@dep.nj.gov](mailto:blueacres@dep.nj.gov)



### By Phone

Call (609) 940-4140 to speak to a representative or leave a voicemail

## LEARN MORE

For more information about New Jersey's disaster recovery and mitigation efforts, visit [www.nj.gov/idaprograms](http://www.nj.gov/idaprograms).



DIVISION OF  
Disaster Recovery  
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