

North Dakota Low-Income Housing Credit Disaster Relief

Notice 2011-60

The Internal Revenue Service is suspending certain requirements under § 42 of the Internal Revenue Code for low-income housing credit projects in the United States to provide emergency housing relief needed as a result of the devastation caused by flooding in North Dakota beginning on February 14, 2011. This relief is being granted pursuant to the Service's authority under § 42(n) and § 1.42-13(a) of the Income Tax Regulations.

BACKGROUND

On May 10, 2011, the President declared a major disaster for the State of North Dakota. This declaration was made under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5121 *et seq.* Subsequently, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designated jurisdictions for Individual Assistance. The State of North Dakota has requested that the Service allow owners of low-income housing credit projects to provide temporary housing in vacant units to individuals who resided in jurisdictions designated for Individual Assistance in North Dakota and who have been displaced because their residences were destroyed or damaged as a result of the devastation caused by the flooding. Based upon this request and because of the widespread damage to housing caused by the flooding, the Service has determined that the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency (Agency) may provide approval to project owners to provide temporary emergency housing for displaced individuals in accordance with this notice.

I. SUSPENSION OF INCOME LIMITATIONS

The Service has determined that it is appropriate to temporarily suspend certain income limitation requirements under § 42 for certain qualified low-income projects. The suspension will apply to low-income housing projects approved by the Agency, in which vacant units are rented to displaced individuals. The Agency will de-

termine the appropriate period of temporary housing for each project, not to extend beyond July 31, 2012 (temporary housing period).

II. STATUS OF UNITS

A. Units in the first year of the credit period

A displaced individual temporarily occupying a unit during the first year of the credit period under § 42(f)(1) will be deemed a qualified low-income tenant for purposes of determining the project's qualified basis under § 42(c)(1), and for meeting the project's 20-50 test or 40-60 test as elected by the project owner under § 42(g)(1). After the end of the temporary housing period established by the Agency (not to extend beyond July 31, 2012), a displaced individual will no longer be deemed a qualified low-income tenant.

B. Vacant units after the first year of the credit period

During the temporary housing period established by the Agency, the status of a vacant unit (that is, market-rate or low-income for purposes of § 42 or never previously occupied) after the first year of the credit period that becomes temporarily occupied by a displaced individual remains the same as the unit's status before the displaced individual moves in. Displaced individuals temporarily occupying vacant units will not be treated as low-income tenants under § 42(i)(3)(A)(ii). However, even if it houses a displaced individual, a low-income or market rate unit that was vacant before the effective date of this notice will continue to be treated as a vacant low-income or market rate unit. Similarly, a unit that was never previously occupied before the effective date of this notice will continue to be treated as a unit that has never been previously occupied even if it houses a displaced individual. Thus, the fact that a vacant unit becomes occupied by a displaced individual will not affect the building's applicable fraction under § 42(c)(1)(B) for purposes of determining the building's qualified basis, nor will it affect the 20-50 test or 40-60 test of § 42(g)(1). If the income of occupants in low-income units exceeds 140 percent of the applicable income limitation, the temporary occupancy of a unit by

a displaced individual will not cause application of the available unit rule under § 42(g)(2)(D)(ii). In addition, the project owner is not required during the temporary housing period to make attempts to rent to low-income individuals the low-income units that house displaced individuals.

III. SUSPENSION OF NON-TRANSIENT REQUIREMENTS

The non-transient use requirement of § 42(i)(3)(B)(i) shall not apply to any unit providing temporary housing to a displaced individual during the temporary housing period determined by the Agency in accordance with section I of this notice.

IV. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

All other rules and requirements of § 42 will continue to apply during the temporary housing period established by the Agency. After the end of the temporary housing period, the applicable income limitations contained in § 42(g)(1), the available unit rule under § 42(g)(2)(D)(ii), the nontransient requirement of § 42(i)(3)(B)(i), and the requirement to make reasonable attempts to rent vacant units to low-income individuals shall resume. If a project owner offers to rent a unit to a displaced individual after the end of the temporary housing period, the displaced individual must be certified under the requirements of § 42(i)(3)(A)(ii) and § 1.42-5(b) and (c) to be a qualified low-income tenant. To qualify for the relief in this notice, the project owner must additionally meet all of the following requirements:

(1) Major Disaster Area

The displaced individual must have resided in a North Dakota jurisdiction designated for Individual Assistance by FEMA as a result of flooding in North Dakota beginning on February 14, 2011.

(2) Approval of the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency

The project owner must obtain approval from the Agency for the relief described in this notice. The Agency will determine the appropriate period of temporary housing for each project, not to extend beyond July 31, 2012.

(3) Certifications and Recordkeeping

To comply with the requirements of § 1.42–5, project owners are required to maintain and certify certain information concerning each displaced individual temporarily housed in the project, specifically the following: name, address of damaged residence, social security number, and a statement signed under penalties of perjury by the displaced individual that, because of damage to the individual's residence in a North Dakota jurisdiction designated for Individual Assistance by FEMA as a result of the flooding beginning on February 14, 2011, the individual requires temporary housing. The owner must notify the Agency that vacant units are available for rent to displaced individuals.

The owner must also certify the date the displaced individual began temporary occupancy and the date the project will discontinue providing temporary housing as established by the Agency. The certifications and recordkeeping for displaced individuals must be maintained as part of the annual compliance monitoring process with the Agency.

(4) Rent Restrictions

Rents for the low-income units that house displaced individuals must not exceed the existing rent-restricted rates for the low-income units established under § 42(g)(2).

(5) Protection of Existing Tenants

Existing tenants in occupied low-income units cannot be evicted or have their tenancy terminated as a result of efforts to provide temporary housing for displaced individuals.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This notice is effective May 10, 2011 (the date of the President's major disaster declaration as a result of the flooding in North Dakota beginning on February 14, 2011).

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT

The collection of information contained in this notice has been reviewed and approved by the Office of Management and Budget in accordance with the Paperwork

Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3507) under control number 1545–2213.

An Agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless the collection of information displays a valid OMB control number.

The collection of information in this notice is in the section titled "OTHER REQUIREMENTS" under "(3) Certifications and Recordkeeping." This information is required to enable the Service to verify whether individuals are displaced as a result of the devastation caused by flooding in North Dakota beginning on February 14, 2011, and thus warrant temporary housing in vacant low-income housing units. The collection of information is required to obtain a benefit. The likely respondents are individuals and businesses.

The estimated total annual recordkeeping burden is 125 hours.

The estimated annual burden per recordkeeper is approximately 15 minutes. The estimated number of recordkeepers is 500.

Books or records relating to a collection of information must be retained as long as their contents may become material to the administration of the internal revenue law. Generally, tax returns and tax return information are confidential, as required by 26 U.S.C. 6103.

DRAFTING INFORMATION

The principal author of this notice is David Selig of the Office of the Associate Chief Counsel (Passthroughs and Special Industries). For further information regarding this notice, contact Mr. Selig at (202) 622–3040 (not a toll free call).

Continuing Education Providers

Notice 2011–61

Purpose

This notice invites public comments regarding the process for individuals and entities to be approved by the Internal Revenue Service as continuing education providers. On June 3, 2011, the Treasury Department and the IRS published final regulations (T.D. 9527,

2011–27 I.R.B. 1 [76 FR 32286]) under 31 CFR Part 10 (Circular 230) that require registered tax return preparers to complete continuing education offered by qualified continuing education providers. Enrolled agents and enrolled retirement plan agents also are required to complete continuing education under Circular 230. Section 10.9(a)(1) of Circular 230 provides that continuing education providers must be:

(i) An accredited educational institution;

(ii) Recognized for continuing education purposes by the licensing body of any State, territory, or possession of the United States, including a Commonwealth, or the District of Columbia;

(iii) Recognized and approved by a qualifying organization as a provider of continuing education on subject matters within section 10.6(f) of Circular 230; or

(iv) Recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a professional organization, society, or business whose programs include offering continuing professional education opportunities in subject matters within section 10.6(f) of Circular 230.

Section 10.6(f) provides criteria that continuing education programs must meet to qualify as continuing education credit for enrolled agents, enrolled retirement plan agents, and registered tax return preparers, including that a qualifying continuing education course generally must enhance professional knowledge in Federal taxation or Federal tax related matters, must be consistent with the Code and effective tax administration, and must be conducted by a qualified instructor. See Circular 230 § 10.6(f)(1)–(2).

The IRS is developing procedures and standards to supplement sections 10.6 and 10.9 for individuals and entities seeking to be recognized and approved as continuing education providers under section 10.9(a)(1)(iv). The IRS is also developing the standards and procedures for organizations (accrediting organizations) to become qualified to accredit other individuals and entities as continuing education providers under section 10.9(a)(1)(iii) after those individuals or entities follow applicable procedures prescribed by the IRS. The IRS seeks the input of education providers, tax return preparers, the associated industry and consumer groups, and taxpayers on the procedures and standards that will govern the approval process for