

Dear FoCHAT Members,

1. Thanks to LRA and OCD for a needed improvement!

I want to thank Richard Gray, Deputy Director of OCD, and Paul Rainwater, LRA Executive Director, for making the following large improvement in transparency of the Road Home Program. Davida Finger, Staff Attorney at Loyola Law Clinic, along with CHAT has been instrumental in advocating for applicants having free access to their entire file.

At our Thurs. meeting with Mr. Rainwater and in recent emails, we discussed the need for applicants to:

receive their entire file, including JIRA notes (phone calls, other notes made by Road Home staff),

free of charge for applicants requesting information from their own file;

with a specific and reasonable mechanism and timetable to do so.

The following new posting at the Road Home website is promising that. We look forward to this working in fact and to other improvements in fairness for Road Home applicants from the LRA.

<http://road2la.org/homeowner/faqs.htm#20>

Request for File

- **How do I request my file?**

Pursuant to Louisiana Public Access law La.R.S. 44:1, et seq, all *Road Home* applicants may request a copy of their *Road Home* file. Requests should include the applicant's *Road Home* application identification number, the address of the damaged property and a current mailing address. All requests must be signed and dated by the applicant.

If an applicant is represented by an Advocate and the Advocate is requesting the file, they must provide *The Road Home* Advocate request form signed and dated by the applicant.

In accordance with Louisiana law, applicable fees will be assessed. **Fees will be waived, however, for *Road Home* applicants requesting documents included in their individual file.**

All requests should be mailed to the following address:

The Road Home Program
8282 Goodwood Blvd.
Attn: Brad D. Bradford
Baton Rouge, LA 70806

Please allow 30 days to complete the request. All questions regarding the request of an applicant file should be directed to Brad Bradford at 225-248-4972 or Linda Bodker at 225-928-6659.

- **2. Measuring Square Footage For Estimates Of Damage In Road Home Grant Calculations**

AMERICAN NATIONAL STANDARD FOR SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

SQUARE FOOTAGE—METHOD FOR CALCULATING: ANSI Z765-2003

http://user153786.websitewizard.com/files/unprotected/ANSI_GLA_standard_2003.pdf

Here is something that might be helpful to some of you kindly provided by Mr. John Murden, Louisiana certified appraiser, and great source of home-appraisal facts for CHAT.

“It seems that one of the main problems with declaring whether a home is 51% damaged is how it is measured. From my understanding, most of the CAD calculations are based upon the square foot measurement of the house. If that is wrong, then everything after that is inaccurate. Were the Road Home Evaluators qualified to measure the homes and did they follow these standards? Are they aware of these standards? If they do not know how to measure a house, how can they rely on their measurements and calculations? The evaluator who came out to measure one of my clients house had no background at all in house evaluation...He had one of those wheel measuring devices like they use to measure the skid marks at a traffic accident. The house was already torn down when he came out, so he could not measure the improvements. [How can a house with 3 foot high weeds and trees down and debris all over be measured like that?] The Road Home must have issued the evaluators with these wheel devices because I have been told by many clients that they used the wheel to measure their house.

3. A Short History of CHAT

A few FoCHAT members have asked about CHAT's relationship to the Road Home.

In short, we are an all-volunteer group, first organized by myself the last week in Sept. of 2006, with no connection to any state agency other than as advocates in our small amount of "spare time." Eight people came to our first meeting at my house, Frank Silvestri, Linda Silvestri, Laura LeBon, John Floyd, Shawn Antee, Scott Darrah, Ken Ehrlich, and myself. We have no budget. We do this work because we are concerned with fair treatment of applicants and effective rebuilding after the terrible hurricanes and associated floodwaters (largely human error-driven). Most of the active or "core" members of CHAT have already obtained their RH grants and have no outstanding issues of their own. A few of us, notably, Frank Silvestri, Co-Chairman of CHAT, did not even have an application because his house escaped appreciable damage, although nearby houses did not. We have over 800 members of our email network from many different parts of the Louisiana. In addition, two nonprofit agencies have links to our newsletters, which brings our email within reach of thousands more individuals. Our website, which were first established by the volunteer effort of Alan Gutierrez of Thinknola.com, gets about 6000 visitors per month. Our online survey which can be reached from chatushome.com or chatforfairness.org, continues to get new and importantly informative responses and has more than 1100 total responses.

Best wishes,

Melanie

<http://chatushome.com> (to sign on for our newsletter and for updated information)