I submitted my Blue Acres offer application – now what? DEP catalogs all applications submitted to Blue Acres, known as offer applications, from owners who would like to sell their property. Homeowners will receive an acknowledgement letter to assure you that your offer application has been received and logged into our tracking system. After submitting your Blue Acres offer application, but before you may receive specific guidance on next steps from DEP, your best contact for questions and updates will be your municipal government.

Blue Acres uses state and federal funds to purchase and demolish homes. Your municipal government will be a partner with Blue Acres during the buyout planning process. Should federal grant funds be involved, your municipality and the State will coordinate to develop the federal grant application, secure buyout funding, administer the buyout process and to restore the land as open space so it can act as a buffer, hold stormwater and serve as valuable community open space.

How many homes will get buyouts? How much money is available? There is no set number of homes that the state is willing to buy.

New Jersey is committed to assisting communities with resilience planning and flood-damaged property buyout opportunities to address the evolving impacts of climate change. Buyout project areas may require that NJDEP apply for federal disaster recovery or mitigation funds. New Jersey also dedicates state funding to buyouts to advance flood mitigation and community resilience. The amount of available funding is dependent upon multiple factors, including federal support allotments and state revenues that are allocated pursuant to the Preserve New Jersey Act.

What parts of New Jersey are eligible for buyouts? Blue Acres is currently evaluating storm-impacted and flood-prone communities throughout the state, including neighborhoods near the Atlantic coast as well as along New Jersey’s bay shores, rivers, and tributaries.

DEP continues to expand Blue Acres into communities that experience chronic flooding, while also working with state and local officials to plan proactively to reduce flood risk and the inequities that also adversely affect communities most vulnerable to flooding and other impacts of climate change.
How does DEP decide where to conduct buyouts? What are the criteria? The DEP evaluates neighborhoods based on several criteria, including, but not limited to:

- Communities with high risk and vulnerability to climate change.
- Environmental justice or overburdened communities that are disproportionately impacted by flooding and other adverse environmental conditions.
- A high concentration of homes that experienced the most severe damage from a recent storm especially when several homes resulted in an official declaration of substantial damage.
- Communities with homes that have submitted repeated flood insurance claims under the National Flood Insurance Program.
- Resilience interest and buyout support from the local government.
- Cost-effectiveness of the buyout according to FEMA requirements under federal law.
- Opportunity for significant environmental impact and/or improvement to public health, safety and welfare.

Will I be forced to sell my home if it was damaged by a storm? No. The buyout program is a voluntary program for willing sellers only. Property is not condemned by DEP and homeowners are never forced to sell their homes, even if severely damaged in a storm. Under several funding programs, neither the federal government nor Blue Acres is allowed by law to use eminent domain authority to acquire property for open space purposes if a homeowner chooses not to participate, or if a homeowner participates at first, but ultimately rejects the state’s offer.

Will it cost me anything to participate? Federal and state funding will cover most of the costs associated with the buyout process, including the cost of the appraisal, title search, environmental review, survey, actual purchase, and demolition. Homeowners do not pay realty transfer taxes when they sell to DEP. The homeowner must pay for an attorney to represent them at closing and resolve any outstanding environmental and title issues.
Will there be a lot of red tape? DEP has dedicated significant resources to ensure that buyout design, funding, and implementation occur as quickly and as efficiently as possible. Staff within Blue Acres will define buyout areas and work with local governments, and state and federal partners to align policy and funding. When it is time for DEP to formally purchase individual properties, acquisition experts from within the Green Acres program will step in to work with individual homeowners to guide them through the buyout process as quickly and painlessly as possible. DEP must be a responsible steward of public funds, so some degree of paperwork and documentation are unavoidable. But the state will do its best to smooth the way, be responsive, and minimize redundancies wherever possible. It is DEP’s goal that the buyout implementation process only takes 12-18 months.

What documents should I have? Homeowners interested in a buyout should retain copies of all homeowner's insurance and flood insurance claims (all pages of your proof of loss statement(s), insurance claim descriptions, and documentation of any evaluation performed that assesses the damage to the home). Any cleanup and structural repair work completed post-flood should be documented to verify expenditures and payments to avoid a Duplication of Benefits (DOB).

Duplication of Benefits is the term used to describe when assistance from more than one source is used for the same purpose. For example, if the homeowner receives an insurance payout for repairs of a damaged home and also receives public funds for a buyout of the same home.

Homeowners are not required to spend disaster assistance received, but only to keep documentation of how the money is spent.

Contact Blue Acres
For application questions or general information
609-940-4140
blueacres@dep.nj.gov

For buyout status updates
Contact your local government for status updates during the buyout planning process.