

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814

**HURRICANE KATRINA INFORMATION**

September 7, 2005

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-53-05

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
 ALL FOOD STAMP COORDINATORS
 ALL CONSORTIA REPRESENTATIVES
 ALL QUALITY CONTROL COORDINATORS

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
 Federal Law or Regulation Change
 Court Order
 Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
 Initiated by CDSS

SUBJECT: FOOD STAMP EXPEDITED SERVICE ELIGIBILITY FOR EVACUEES OF HURRICANE KATRINA

The purpose of this notice is to provide preliminary information to counties on how to handle Hurricane Katrina evacuees from areas in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi who seek refuge in California. The damage caused by Hurricane Katrina has made it necessary for people to be evacuated, not only from the areas where they live, but even from the entire state in which they lived. Evacuees who ask for benefits in California are entitled to expeditious food stamp delivery.

Federal food stamp rules have been temporarily expanded by providing a 4 month certification period for evacuees accompanied by a Quality Control "hold harmless" period for approved food stamp certifications under emergency criteria explained below. The following instructions are from the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) on the treatment of evacuees from areas impacted by Hurricane Katrina. This policy is based on authority in Section 5(h)(1) of the Food Stamp Act. [7 U.S.C. 2014(h)], which provides federal authority to "establish temporary emergency standards of eligibility for the duration of the emergency...."

When the Evacuee Is Not Currently Receiving Food Stamp Benefits

When an evacuee arrives in California, requests food stamp assistance and is not currently certified for benefits, the county will process the household under expedited service (ES) rules at Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) Section 63-301.5 through 63-301.544. Applications shall be accepted under the following policies through October 15, 2005:

- Give the application top priority.
- Verify that the evacuee was living in an area affected by Hurricane Katrina when the hurricane struck (a listing of the affected areas is attached). If the county is

unable to verify residence in an affected area, a sworn statement under penalty of perjury will suffice; and

- Check with the evacuee that he/she is not currently certified to receive food stamp benefits in that area, or any other area. Any parishes in Louisiana should be able to verify information on the family in need. Each parish in Louisiana and contact is listed on the State's eligibility system at the following website: http://www.dss.state.la.us/departments/ofs/OFS_Parish_Offices.html. Counties will need to attempt contact with Alabama and Mississippi state agencies through phone numbers they may already have on-hand until more information is forthcoming from the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). If, after making an attempt to contact the state in which the disaster occurred has failed, an affidavit signed by the evacuee that the household is not currently in receipt of food stamp benefits will suffice.
- If the evacuee believes the household will be residing in the local area permanently, or for the foreseeable future, consider the evacuee a resident of California.
- Evacuee households shall be certified for a period of 3 months plus the month of application.
- Verification may be postponed through the 4 month certification period, except for initial identification and residency from the impacted disaster area.
- A sworn statement attesting to identity of the individual and residency in an area affected by the disaster is necessary if verification is unavailable.
- If a resource is determined to be inaccessible, it is excluded from consideration per MPP Section 63-501.3(i).
- The evacuee household is subject to change reporting rules because they are considered homeless through the certification period.
- Real property owned in the disaster area shall be considered exempt as inaccessible for the duration of the certification period.
- The applicant evacuee household shall be certified as a separate household from anyone they are living and purchasing and preparing food with as a household. If the original household has split up, the separate parts of the original household may be certified as separate households.
- Exempt the evacuee from the work rules at MPP Section 63-407 (work registration and Employment & Training rules) and Able-Bodied Dependents without Children (ABAWD) requirements at MPP Section 63-410.

When the Evacuee is Currently Receiving Food Stamp Benefits

When an evacuee is currently certified in an area affected by Hurricane Katrina and asks for food stamp benefits, the county will take the following actions:

- Assure the person that he/she can use his/her current Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card in local stores, and that he/she may continue to use food stamp benefits during their certification period; and

- Assist the individual in getting a California EBT card, if eligible for benefits in California; and
- Advise the individual to call the appropriate number below to report a lost or stolen EBT card or request a replacement card:

Louisiana: 1-888-997-1117 report lost/stolen card only
1-866-334-8304 request a card replacement

Mississippi: 1-866-512-5087 report lost/stolen card only

Alabama: 1-800-997-8888 report lost/stolen card
1-866-465-2285 request a card replacement

Currently, Mississippi's state EBT policy does not permit replacement cards to be mailed to any location other than the individual's primary address on file in that state. FNS is working with the state to resolve this problem. CDSS will provide further information on this as soon as it is available.

Relaxed Procedures for Key-entered EBT Transactions

From the date of this notice through September 17, the FNS is relaxing the requirements for key-entered EBT transactions at retailers. Because many food stamp recipients have been displaced without their EBT cards, they can no longer access their food stamp benefits from their state of origin. Though the client must normally be physically in possession of their EBT in order to access benefits -- where the card number and PIN are manually entered -- FNS is relaxing that requirement for all displaced residents for this interim period only.

All impacted recipients who have lost their card and do not know their EBT card number should call the appropriate customer service number listed above to obtain their card number. Once the client has their EBT card number they can access food stamp benefits at any retail store that accepts the EBT card. Retailers will need to call the retailer customer service number at 1-866-328-4212 to obtain authorization, and at which time the customer service rep will inform the retailer that an EBT card is not necessary for this particular transaction.

Quality Control (QC) Hold Harmless in the FSP

Counties will be held harmless from QC errors when an evacuee household is certified to receive benefits in California.

Data Reporting

Counties are responsible for reporting on a daily basis the number of applications taken under Hurricane Katrina guidelines, the number of applications denied and the benefit amount of each approval. Counties are also asked to flag these cases for future

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tracking so that case data can be easily extracted upon request of the California Department of Social Services or as directed by FNS. A form for this purpose will be forthcoming; however, pending receipt of the form, report information daily to Frederick Hodges at (916) 653-7973 or Rosie Avena at (916) 654-1514.

If you have any questions regarding the contents of this letter, please call Rosie Avena, Food Stamp Bureau, at (916) 654-1514. For EBT questions, please call Stan Cagle, EBT Manager, at (916) 654-1529.

Sincerely,

CHARR LEE METSKER
Deputy Director
Welfare to Work Division

Attachments

ATTACHMENT

List of Areas Affected by Hurricane Katrina

Alabama

Baldwin, Clarke, Choctaw, Mobile, Sumter and Washington Counties

Louisiana

The parishes of Acadia, Ascension, Assumption, Calcasieu, Cameron, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Lafourche, Livingston, Orleans, Pointe Coupee, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. James, St. John, St. Mary, St. Martin, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne, Vermilion, Washington, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana Counties

Mississippi

Amite, Forrest, George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Lamar, Marion, Pearl River, Perry, Pike, Stone, Walthall, and Wilkinson Counties

Cities and Towns in Louisiana's Disaster Areas

This is an alphabetical listing of the cities, towns, and communities in the 25 parishes whose residents are eligible for the Disaster Food Stamp Program.

City, Town. Or Community	Parish
Abita Spring	St. Tammany
Addis	West Baton Rouge
Albany	Livingston
Amite	Tangipahoa
Angie	Washington
Arabi	St. Bernard
Baker	East Baton Rouge
Baldwin	St. Mary
Baton Rouge	East Baton Rouge
Belle Chasse	Plaquemines
Bertrandville	Plaquemines
Berwick	St. Mary
Bogalusa	Washington
Bohemia	Plaquemines
Boothville	Plaquemines
Braithwaite	Plaquemines
Breaux Bridge	St. Martin
Brushy	West Baton Rouge
Buras	Plaquemines
Caernarvon	St. Bernard
Carlisle	Plaquemines
Chalmette	St. Bernard
Clinton	East Feliciana
Covington	St. Tammany
Cut Off	Lafourche
Dalcour	Plaquemines
Davant	Plaquemines
Delacroix	St. Bernard
Denham Springs	Livingston
Destrehan	St. Charles
Diamond	Plaquemines
Donaldsonville	Ascension
Empire	Plaquemines
Folsom	St. Tammany
Fordoche	Pointe Coupee
Franklin	St. Mary
Franklinton	Washington
French Springs	Livingston
Galiano	Lafourche

Garyville	St. John
Golden Meadow	Laforche
Gonzales	Ascension
Gramercy	St. James
Grand Isle	Jefferson
Greensburg	St. Helena
Gretna	Jefferson
Grosse Tete	Iberville
Hahnville	St. Charles
Hammond	Tangipahoa
Harahan	Jefferson
Henderson	St. Martin
Houma	Terrebonne
Independence	Tangipahoa
Jackson	East Feliciana
Jean Lafitte	Jefferson
Jeanerette	Iberia
Jesuit Ben	Plaquemines
Kenner	Jefferson
Kentwood	Tangipahoa
Killian	Livingston
Lacombe	St. Tammany
LaPlace	St. John
Larose	Lafourche
Livingston	Livingston
Livonia	Pointe Coupee
Lockport	Lafourche
Loreauville	Iberia
Luling	St. Charles
Lutcher	St. James
Madisonville	St. Tammany
Mandeville	St. Tammany
Maringouin	Iberville
Meraux	St. Bernard
Monticello	St. Helena
Morgan City	St. Mary
Morganza	Pointe Coupee
Myrtle Grove	Plaquemines
Nairn	Plaquemines
Naomi	Plaquemines
Napoleonville	Assumption
New Iberia	Iberia
New Orleans	Orleans
New Roads	Pointe Coupee
New Sarpy	St. Charles
Norco	St. Charles

Norwood	East Feliciana
Parks	St. Martin
Patterson	St. Mary
Phoeni	Plaquemines
Plaquemine	Iberville
Pointe a la Hache	Plaquemines
Ponchatoula	Tangipahoa
Port Allen	West Baton Rouge
Port Nickel	Plaquemines
Port Sulphur	Plaquemines
Port Vincent	Livingston
Poydras	St. Bernard
Raceland	Lafourche
Reggio	St. Bernard
Reserve	St. John
Rosedale	Iberville
Roseland	Tangipahoa
St. Bernard	St. Bernard
St. Francisville	West Feliciana
St. Gabriel	Iberville
St. Martinville	St. Martin
St. Rose	St. Charles
Sebastopol	St. Bernard
Slaughter	East Feliciana
Slidell	St. Tammany
Sorrento	Ascension
Springfield	Livingston
Sun	Washington
Tangipahoa	Tangipahoa
Thibodaux	Lafourche
Tidewater	Plaquemines
Triumph	Plaquemines
Vamado	Washington
Venice	Plaquemines
Verret	St. Bernard
Violet	St. Bernard
Walker	Livingston
West Pointe a la Hache	Plaquemines
Westwego	Jefferson
White Castle	Iberville
Wilson	East Feliciana
Yscloskey	St. Bernard
Zachary	East Baton Rouge

Louisiana's Parishes with Disaster Food Stamp Programs

Ascension

Assumption

East Baton Rouge

East Feliciana

Jefferson

Iberia

Iberville

Lafourche

Livingston

Orleans

Plaquemines

Pointe Coupee

St. Bernard

St. Charles

St. Helena

St. James

St. John

St. Martin

St. Mary

St. Tammany

Tangipahoa

Terrebonne

Washington

West Baton Rouge

West Feliciana