



Department of Human Resources
311 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore MD 21201

FIA ACTION TRANSMITTAL

Control Number: 06-12

Effective Date: September 1, 2005

Issuance Date: September 6, 2005

**TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT
FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS AND ELIGIBILITY STAFF
LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS**

FROM: KEVIN M. MCGUIRE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**RE: EXPANDED HURRICANE KATRINA EVACUEE POLICY AND
UPDATED CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

**PROGRAMS AFFECTED: TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE AND FOOD STAMP
PROGRAMS (MA AND MCHP FOR TELEPHONE
NUMBERS ONLY – NO CHANGE TO POLICY)**

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF PROGRAMS

SUMMARY

This action transmittal expands the policy provided in 06-11, issued September 2, 2005. It does not replace it. For the evacuees who come to Maryland for help, our main concern is getting them food, shelter and medical care. To this end, we all must do as much as possible to provide necessary assistance.

The Food and Nutrition Service issued expanded criteria to enable states to better serve people who have evacuated Hurricane Katrina disaster areas and are applying for food stamp benefits in Maryland. Applications may be accepted under these policies through October 15, 2005.

FNS has also provided additional ways to contact Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. Until further notice and except as noted under Action Required, please follow FS guidelines for Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) evacuees.

ACTION REQUIRED

- As stated in AT 06-11, certify evacuees from states affected by the disaster under food stamps expedited service rules.
- The applicant and his/her family may be certified as a household separate from anyone they are living and purchasing and preparing food with. If the household has split up, the separate parts including children of the original household may be

certified as separate households.

- Applicants are temporarily exempt from the work requirements and the ABAWD requirements.
- Applicants are eligible under this policy for 3 full months, plus the month of application.

Please Note:

FNS will hold the State agency harmless from QC errors for these certifications.

When people other than parents come in to apply for food stamp benefits for evacuee children whose parents are not here, the adults caring for the children do not have to be included in the FS application with the children.

For TCA follow the FS rules until otherwise notified. Do not hold up benefits for work registration or up-front child support. Do ask if the family is receiving getting child support. The 3 hardest-hit states all mail paper checks for child support. Call the child support numbers listed below to give that state the applicant's new address. Child support in excess of Maryland's TCA grant should be mailed to the customer and the TCA closed.

Code WOMIS as OTL- pursuit of income supports for TCA customers.

As evacuees become settled in Maryland, they will need to meet the work and child support requirements.

EBT cards in Maryland cannot be issued until the day after benefits are authorized (after overnight batch). Please do not send people home empty handed. Here are some of the things we can do to help the evacuees:

- If your agency provides grocery store coupons, please give them out.
- If you do not have grocery coupons, please provide a referral to a food bank or food pantry.
- Take evacuees to food banks or pantries if possible or try to arrange for food to be taken to them. They may not know where anything is. Many churches or civic organizations will provide transportation. Build on or develop your community partnerships.
- Many schools have food pantries and may be willing to open them to evacuees for these extraordinary circumstances.
- Refer them to the Housing office for shelter assistance.
- Refer them to area hospitals for medical care.

Contact Numbers

The contact telephone numbers for Alabama and Mississippi that were provided in AT 06-11 have not changed. We have added email contacts and additional telephone numbers.

Alabama:

For the next 30-60 days only, to obtain information on a customer's food stamp participation status or for help in obtaining a replacement EBT card call 1-866-465-2285. The customer service representative at that number will also transfer you to the correct person to get TANF, Child Support, Child Care, or Medicaid status.

In addition, anyone needing to check on the food stamp participation status of Alabama customers or anyone needing help with getting a replacement EBT card for an Alabama customer can send an email request to: fs@dhr.state.al.us.

The Alabama Child Support office also asks to be contacted by email at: childsupportstorm@dhr.state.al.us. The phone number to report address changes is 1-800-951-1274.

Mississippi:

Anyone needing to check on the food stamp participation status of Mississippi customer's or anyone needing help with getting a replacement EBT card for a Mississippi customer's can send an email request to: mdhsdisaster@mdhs.state.ms.us For help in obtaining a replacement EBT card call 1-866-449-9488.

For Mississippi Medicaid (Medical Assistance) information: 1-800-421-2408 or 1-800-884-3222.

Child Support: 1-866-388-2836

Louisiana:

Evacuees who already receive benefits in Louisiana and have lost their EBT card can get their Louisiana EBT card number to manually access food stamp benefits in their accounts. With the EBT number and their PIN, a manually-keyed EBT transaction is possible. FNS is notifying retailers of this procedure. The process allows evacuees to purchase food during the 4 to 5 days it will take to receive a replacement card in the mail. This process is in effect until midnight on September 17, 2005. The correct toll free number that local staff or Louisiana evacuees can call for EBT card numbers and replacement EBT cards is 1-866-334-8304.

In addition, local department staff or evacuees can call: 1-888-342-6207 for Medicaid or WIC.

For Child Support call 225-922-8100 or 1-800-256-4650. Contact Louisiana Child Support by e-mail at LACSC@dss.state.la.us.

To report address changes or to obtain information about unemployment in Louisiana call: 225-219-0753.

Louisiana recipients may also call the J. P. Morgan customer service EBT help-line at 1-888-997-1117.

Please note:

If the evacuee has September benefits from his or her State that are accessible with the EBT card or accessible with the EBT number manually do not issue Maryland benefits in until October.

ACTION DUE

Effective upon receipt.

INQUIRIES

Please direct food stamp policy questions to Kay Finegan at (410) 767-7939. Direct TCA questions to Marilyn Lorenzo at 410-767-7333.

cc: FIA Management Staff
Constituent Services
DHR Help Desk