

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
**Department of  
Human  
Services**

# Memorandum

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**Field Operations Administration**

L-05-123  
INCOME SUPPORT

To: **County Directors  
District Office Managers**

Date: **September 8, 2005**

From: **Jim Nye, Deputy Director  
Field Operations Administration**

Subject: **Katrina - Update #1**

**Response Due: None**

## **FEMA**

- All displaced persons from Hurricane Katrina should register with FEMA. FIS/ES must assist with this action while the client is in the local office if possible. The phone number is 1-800-621-FEMA (1-800-621-3362), or register online at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov).

## **Housing**

- Coordination is through the Department of Human Services. Directors from each county are meeting with local mayors to determine available housing in their area and conveying that list to the state. Over 4,000 units have already been identified and more lists are coming in. Local DHS staff are doing needs assessments at Fort Custer (in the Battle Creek area where nearly 300 evacuees were airlifted) and in local offices and matching those needs to available housing on the database.

## **Reporting**

- Please submit a weekly report to your Zone AP Specialist. Include Name, Case number, and the county the evacuee is from.

## **EBT**

- The correct phone number for Louisiana recipients to contact the Louisiana Office of Family Services is 1-866-334-8304. Mississippi recipients can call 1-866-449-9488. Alabama recipients can call 1-800-997-8888. Clients can call these numbers to request their card number if they don't have their card. If they know their PIN they will be able to key in the card number and PIN at the store for FAP transactions (a keyed transaction). **Keyed transactions are not allowed for cash purchases, only food purchases with FAP benefits is allowed.** All vendors are able to do this but some may have to be reminded that it's allowed.

- Clients can also request a replacement card and it will be sent to them at their current address. However, a card replacement will deactivate their current card number, and they will have to wait the five mailing days before they can purchase food. The client is advised to get their current 16 digit card number if they don't already know it and purchase what they will need for five days or so. They can then call again and request a card replacement. Note: With a staff of only 20 workers, they may have a considerable wait.
- The FNS waiver of the requirement to have an EBT card for food transactions is only valid through 9/16/05. After that date, clients will again be required to have a valid EBT card in hand in order to process transactions.

### **State Emergency Relief**

- SER residence policy only requires that the person be in Michigan at the time of application.
- SER policy requires that we look at the income expected in the next 30 days. Most of the hurricane victims will not be able to reasonably predict that they will have income. Document in the SER packet if this is the case.
- You may consider these clients for help with relocation even if they do not currently have the ability to pay future rent, if the person is living with friends or family, if they cannot verify that required payments have been made, etc. Please e-mail [LamoreauxJ@Michigan.gov](mailto:LamoreauxJ@Michigan.gov) for a policy exception. Be sure to include all pertinent case information, including the case number. Verification or the client's statement of registration with FEMA should be obtained if possible.
- If the group has assets or income that is not accessible, a repayment agreement (DHS-2157) should be signed. Be sure to document in the case record.
- Transportation costs fall under Relocation Services, specifically moving expenses. If eligibility criteria for housing affordability and required payments are not met, request a policy exception. Be sure there is a place for the group to go. The amount to authorize is whatever the family believes they will need, up to the maximum for the group size.

### **Family Independence Program**

- Residence requirements will be met because clients have no way to estimate when/if they will be returning to their former state of residence.
- Work Participation – Most of the hurricane evacuees could qualify for a local office exception for at least a couple of months, based on the emergency situation trauma, etc.
- Joint Orientation – can be waived if the Family Independence Specialist provides an individual orientation.

### **Concurrent Receipt of Benefits**

- Send an Out of State Inquiry, DHS-3782 to the client's former state of residence. Do not hold up case processing waiting for a response. Advise evacuees applying for cash assistance that they must return any assistance they receive from the other state for the same period they received cash assistance from the state of Michigan. Failure to return benefits received for the same period could result in a 10-year federal disqualification for cash assistance, food assistance, SSI and MA.

## **Medicaid/Adult Medical Program**

- The Department of Community Health (DCH) stated if a client intends to remain in Michigan permanently, or indefinitely, they meet the resident requirement.
- Single adults will qualify for the Adult Medical Program (AMP) as long as they apply by September 30, 2005.

## **Food Assistance Program**

- 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 of the original household may be certified as separate households.
- FNS is granting temporary exemption from the work rules.
- Make sure to document all cases that have a Katrina evacuee so that they are not subject to a FAP audit.
- Louisiana issued an initial Food Stamp benefit to their clients on September 1, 2005. A supplemental allotment will be issued on September 15, 2005 to adjust the initial allotment to the maximum for the number of people in the household as of September 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **Identification**

- FIP, SDA, CDC, FAP and SER – The grantee must verify his/her identity. If an authorized representative (AR) applies on behalf of a group, the AR must verify his own and the clients identity. If ID is not available our first choice would be a collateral contact (written statement from the friend or relative that document who the person is to file in the case record.). If there is not a friend or relative to identify the client, document that this is a evacuee from Hurricane Katrina and follow-up later with verification of Id.
- MA and AMP – Client identity does not have to be verified unless it is questionable.
- PEM 221, is not all-inclusive but gives examples of acceptable forms of verification.

## **Mail**

- Staff can obtain current hurricane-related updates regarding mail service (and where not to send mail) by accessing the U.S. Postal Service website--link below:

<http://www.usps.com/>