

## **FCDJFS BENEFITS AND SERVICES AVAILABLE TO HURRICANE KATRINA EVACUEES**

As a result of the extensive devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, a limited number of evacuees have already arrived in Franklin County and many more are expected. These families and individuals will be in need of the various benefits and services that our programs offer. We would like to share the following information with you so you are aware of the role that our agency is playing in the effort to assist the evacuees and some specific information regarding programs that may be available to them. In addition, per Office of Family Stability Letter 38, Hurricane Katrina evacuees should be encouraged to apply for assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); they can apply by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or emailing <http://www.fema.gov>.

### **APPLICATIONS – TAKEN AT OPPORTUNITY CENTERS OR CENTRALIZED LOCATION**

At their option, Katrina evacuees may make an application either at the Opportunity Centers or at 750 Piedmont, which is a coordinating site for a broad array of services. Some of the other agencies that will be assisting evacuees at the Piedmont location include Child Support, Veterans Service, WIA, MRDD, CMHA, Social Security, and Office on Aging. A limited number of our staff are located at the Piedmont location to attend to the needs of the evacuees and take applications. Our staff will be at the Piedmont location from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM Monday through Saturday, and noon to 6:00 PM on Sunday. An announcement will be made when our staff are no longer at the Piedmont location. Evacuee applications are to be treated as a priority. Highlights of the various programs that evacuees may be eligible for through our agency are described below.

#### **A. THREE NEW HURRICANE EVACUEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

To provide immediate help to Hurricane Katrina evacuees, ODJFS established the Hurricane Evacuee Assistance Programs. The programs will provide benefits and services to TANF and non-TANF eligible evacuees now living in Ohio. The Hurricane Evacuee Assistance Programs include TANF Evacuee Cash Program, the Non-TANF Evacuee Cash Program, and the TANF Evacuee Support Services Program. These programs are *not* a part of the PRC program and receipt of benefits or services from any of these programs does not preclude them from receiving PRC. The highlights of these programs are explained below; additional details can be found in Office of Family Stability Letter #38.

##### **1. TANF EVACUEE CASH PROGRAM (for families or single pregnant women)**

- The application period is through 12/31/2005.
- This is a one-time non-assistance TANF cash payment of \$1,500 to each eligible evacuee family unit.
- The JFS 7200 shall be used to apply for this program.
- If verifications are not available, self-declaration is acceptable.
- There are no resource limitations applicable to this program.
- The TANF Evacuee Cash Program requirements are:
  - The evacuee family must be from the area affected by Hurricane Katrina (please see the list at the end of this memo).
  - The family's **available** income must be at or below 200% of the FPL (there is no budgeting methodology).

- The family unit is defined as a minor child(ren) living with a parent, specified relative, legal guardian or legal custodian; OR pregnant individuals.
- Notice of approval or denial to the evacuee is required.
- This program is not part of the PRC program.
- Benefits and services received from any other disaster-related agency or organization are excluded in determining eligibility for this program.
- Finance will record this payment on SFPR using code **037** = Hurricane Evacuee – Family (for the \$1,500 TANF evacuee cash payments to family units); a weekly report must be submitted to ODJFS by noon each Monday identifying information indicated in Office of Family Stability Letter #38.

## **2. NON-TANF EVACUEE CASH PROGRAM (for adults that are not in a family unit)**

- The application period is through 12/31/05.
- This is a one-time cash payment of \$500 to each eligible individual providing that funding remains available. For clarification purposes, a husband and wife are considered separate individuals and each can potentially receive \$500; a separate Transmittal will need to be submitted to Finance for each individual (using the same case number).
- The JFS 7200 shall be used to apply for this program.
- If verifications are not available, self-declaration is acceptable.
- There are no resource limitations applicable to this program.
- The Non-TANF Evacuee Cash Program requirements are:
  - The evacuee must be from the area affected by Hurricane Katrina (please see the list at the end of this memo).
  - The individual's **available** income must be at or below 200% of the FPL (there is no budgeting methodology).
  - The evacuee is an individual (i.e., is not part of a family unit eligible for the TANF Evacuee Cash Program).
- Notice of approval or denial to the evacuee is required.
- This program is not part of the PRC program.
- Benefits and services received from any other disaster-related agency or organization are excluded in determining eligibility for this program.
- Finance will record this payment on SFPR using code **038** = Hurricane Evacuee – Individual (for the \$500 Non-TANF evacuee cash payments to individuals); a weekly report must be submitted to ODJFS by noon each Monday identifying information indicated in Office of Family Stability Letter #38.

## **3. TANF EVACUEE SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM (for families or single pregnant women)**

- The program period is through 3/31/2006.
- The family's **available** income must be at or below 200% of the FPL (there is no budgeting methodology).
- The program is limited to families (including single pregnant women); individuals do not qualify for this program.
- This program is for soft services designed with the intent of addressing issues that the family is facing in relation to relocation, settling into a new environment, or difficulties resulting from the hurricane experience. Services that may be provided include such things as job preparation, job training, education, training, transportation, counseling, etc.
- The JFS 7200 shall be used to apply for this program.
- If verifications are not available, self-declaration is acceptable.
- There are no resource limitations applicable to this program.
- Notice of approval or denial to the evacuee is required.
- This program is not part of the PRC program.

- Benefits and services received from any other disaster-related agency or organization are excluded in determining eligibility for this program.
- Finance will report these soft services using the web reporting tool (WRT) using code **HEP** under the appropriate soft services categories.
- There is no dollar cap attached to the support services provided; the counties should be reasonable.

**B. NEW ENHANCED FOOD STAMP PROGRAM FOR 9/2005 ONLY**

To better serve people who have evacuated Hurricane Katrina disaster areas and are applying for food stamp benefits, for September 2005 **only**, this program will provide a one-month maximum food stamp benefit for any evacuee assistance group. The highlights of this program is explained below; additional details can be found in Office of Family Stability Letter #35B.

- The assistance group must have lived in a county or parish in Alabama, Louisiana, or Mississippi on August 29, 2005, and  
The President declared the applicant's county or parish a disaster area, and  
The assistance group has moved to another state.
- The assistance group must apply by October 1, 2005.
- The JFS 7200 shall be used to apply for this program.
- The assistance group will receive the maximum allotment for its assistance group size for September 2005 **only**.
- The evacuee will be asked about the assistance group size and that information will be used to calculate the allotment. The assistance group will be treated as a separate assistance group even if the assistance group purchases and prepares meals with others.
- There are no income, resource, or non-financial tests.
- The evacuee will not be asked about deductible expenses for this program (because they will receive the maximum allotment for their assistance group size).
- The applicant's identity will be verified to the extent possible; if not available, self-declaration is acceptable. For other criteria, other documentation, collateral contacts, or the applicant's self-declaration will be sufficient.
- If food stamps have already been issued for the month of September, a supplement for the month of September can be issued to bring the food stamp benefit up to the maximum allotment for the assistance group size.
- The same JFS 7200 will be accepted for the initial and subsequent three months to apply the policy in Office of Family Stability Letter #35A (please see "Food Stamps" in "Section C-Regular Programs" below).
- Recipients should be provided training on the loading process for accessing EBT food stamp benefits and told the EBT card needs to be loaded monthly.

**C. REGULAR PROGRAMS – PRC, OWF, DFA, Food Stamps, Medicaid, WIA, and Transportation**

The following touches on how our regular programs may be affected.

**1. PRC**

- PRC benefits/services may be provided to families affected by Hurricane Katrina.
- Receipt of benefits under the TANF Evacuee Cash Program or TANF Evacuee Support Services Program do not preclude eligibility for PRC.
- Residency is not a requirement.
- The evacuee will need to complete a FCDJFS 3800, PRC Application.
- Families may not have verifications available to document eligibility requirements. A signed affidavit, a third-party statement, or a notarized statement can be accepted.
- Among the PRC requirements that apply are the following:
  - The PRC assistance group must include, at a minimum, a pregnant woman or a minor child in the home.

- There must be evidence of economic need (i.e., income that is at or below 165% of the FPL for the assistance group size, or 185% for auto repairs)
- The PRC assistance group must meet all of the other requirements that are applicable to the PRC program, including, but not limited to: citizenship/qualified alien status and prohibition against making fraudulent statements with respect to place of residence in order to receive assistance simultaneously from two or more states.
- CLRC should be documented stating that the individual is a Hurricane Katrina evacuee and provide the evacuee's previous address in Alabama, Louisiana, or Mississippi along with the county to verify they are from a disaster county.
- Upon approval of PRC for an evacuee, the Transmittal should be annotated by the case manager with **"HURRICANE"**. Finance will code the PRC need with code "H" in MUNIS so the PRC funds can be tracked.

## 2. OWF and DFA

- A JFS 7200 and Job Seeker Profile (for OWF) will need to be completed.
- On the AEICI screen in CRISE, enter the evacuee's Franklin County local address (please disregard prior instructions to enter the evacuee's Gulf state address in the address field).
- In order to identify Katrina evacuees, it is very important to "red flag" them in CRISE. The case manager will enter two red flag codes on the AEIIA screen for each individual that qualifies as a Hurricane Katrina evacuee.
  - In the first field, enter one of the following two new codes:  
**HF** = Hurricane Evacuee-Family  
**HI** = Hurricane Evacuee-Individual
  - In the second field, enter the code of the Gulf state that the individual evacuated:  
**AL** = Hurricane Evacuee-Alabama  
**LA** = Hurricane Evacuee-Louisiana  
**MS** = Hurricane Evacuee-Mississippi
- CLRC should be documented stating that the individual is a Hurricane Katrina evacuee and provide the evacuee's previous address in Alabama, Louisiana, or Mississippi along with the county to verify they are from a disaster county.
- An individual or family must reside in Ohio with the intent of making Ohio home. We may presume there is intent to remain if the applicant is from an affected area and is uncertain whether they intend to remain.
- The family should be informed that they are prohibited against making fraudulent statements with respect to residence in order to receive OWF simultaneously from 2 or more states.
- If verifications are not available (e.g., enumeration, income, resources, etc.), self-declaration is acceptable.
- Only **available** income should be considered in determining financial eligibility.
- All other requirements for DFA and OWF must be met in order for individuals or families to be eligible.
- OWF requirements including assignment of child support, work requirements and time limits are applicable. An evacuee may not be able to immediately engage in work-related activities when they arrive. Other activities that would stabilize their living situation should be considered in order to meet the work requirement for alternative work activities (e.g., finding housing, enrolling children in school, etc.).

## 3. FOOD STAMPS

- A JFS 7200 will need to be completed.
- Verify that the evacuee was living in an area affected by Hurricane Katrina when the hurricane struck (please see the list at the end of this memo).

- In order to identify Katrina evacuees, it is very important to “red flag” them in CRISE. The case manager will enter two red flag codes on the AEIIA screen for each individual that qualifies as a Hurricane Katrina evacuee.
  - In the first field, enter one of the following two new codes:
    - HF** = Hurricane Evacuee-Family
    - HI** = Hurricane Evacuee-Individual
  - In the second field, enter the code of the Gulf state that the individual evacuated:
    - AL** = Hurricane Evacuee-Alabama
    - LA** = Hurricane Evacuee-Louisiana
    - MS** = Hurricane Evacuee-Mississippi
- CLRC should be documented stating that the individual is a Hurricane Katrina evacuee and provide the evacuee’s previous address in Alabama, Louisiana, or Mississippi along with the county to verify they are from a disaster county.
- If the evacuee has a current EBT card with a remaining balance, make them aware that the EBT card can be used in local stores.
- On the AEICI screen in CRISE, enter the evacuee’s Franklin County local address (please disregard prior instructions to enter the evacuee’s Gulf state address in the address field).
- Applications for Katrina evacuees should be processed as Expedited Food Stamps with self-declaration (since verification of items such as income and other items that normally require verification may not be available).
- Evacuees will be treated as a separate household even though they may temporarily be staying with a household that receives food stamps.
- Evacuees subject to ABAWD requirements will be temporarily exempt from the work rules.
- Evacuee applicants are eligible for food stamp benefits for three full months, plus the month of application.
- Recipients should be provided training on the loading process for accessing EBT food stamp benefits and told the EBT card needs to be loaded monthly.
- Contact information to obtain evacuee’s certification status and for help in obtaining replacement EBT cards is below:
  - **Alabama**
    - To obtain information on food stamp certification status or for help in obtaining a replacement EBT card, call 1-866-465-2285
    - To check on program certification status, please send an email to [fs@dhr.state.al.us](mailto:fs@dhr.state.al.us)
  - **Louisiana**
    - Louisiana residents who have lost their EBT card and do not know their EBT card number should call 1-866-344-8304 or the JPMorgan toll-free number for Louisiana at 1-888-997-1117
    - To check on program certification status, call 1-888-524-3578
  - **Mississippi**
    - Mississippi residents who have lost their EBT card and do not know their EBT card number should call 1-866-449-9488
    - To check on program certification status, please send an email to [mdhsdisaster@mdhs.state.ms.us](mailto:mdhsdisaster@mdhs.state.ms.us)

#### **4. MEDICAID**

- A JFS 7200 will need to be completed.
- In order to identify Katrina evacuees, it is very important to “red flag” them in CRISE. The case manager will enter two red flag codes on the AEIIA screen for each individual that qualifies as a Hurricane Katrina evacuee.

- In the first field, enter one of the following two new codes:
    - HF** = Hurricane Evacuee-Family
    - HI** = Hurricane Evacuee-Individual
  - In the second field, enter the code of the Gulf state that the individual evacuated:
    - AL** = Hurricane Evacuee-Alabama
    - LA** = Hurricane Evacuee-Louisiana
    - MS** = Hurricane Evacuee-Mississippi
  - CLRC should be documented stating that the individual is a Hurricane Katrina evacuee and provide the evacuee's previous address in Alabama, Louisiana, or Mississippi along with the county to verify they are from a disaster county.
  - An individual or family must reside in Ohio with the intent of making Ohio home. We may presume there is intent to remain if the applicant is from an affected area and is uncertain whether they intend to remain.
  - If verifications are not available (e.g., enumeration, income, resources, etc.), self-declaration is acceptable.
  - Evacuees may have had Medicaid coverage from one of the counties of the affected states (please see the list at the end of this memo). As they may be seeking services from Ohio Medicaid providers, these providers may have questions about reimbursement issues. The providers should be referred to the following websites:
    - **Alabama** – <http://www.dom.state.ms.us/>
    - **Louisiana** – [www.dhh.louisiana.gov/oofices/?ID=92](http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/oofices/?ID=92)
    - **Mississippi** – <http://www.dom.state.ms.us/>
- In addition, ODJFS Provider Network Management can assist providers; their phone number is 1-800-686-1516.
- Per video conference on 9/14/05, Ohio Health Plans (OHP) will issue further details, procedures, and instructions regarding a waiver request for processing applications for medical assistance once the waiver is approved and the information is available.

## **5. WIA**

A WIA staff member is stationed at a table at the Piedmont location to provide job search and job support information.

- When providing services to evacuees under WIA or Labor Exchange, self-declaration should be used.
- A new website (<http://www.scoti.ohio.gov/katrina>) is available to connect Ohio employers with evacuees seeking temporary employment while in Ohio. Job seekers without computer access can obtain these postings by calling the SCOTI Help Desk at 1-888-385-2588.

## **6. TRANSPORTATION**

Evacuees are entitled to Transportation services (e.g., EMT, Title XX, LEAP, and Pregnancy Related Services) provided they meet the regular program requirements.

## **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.

**Mississippi**

Adams, Amite, Attala, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Claiborne, Clarke, Clay, Copiah, Covington, Forrest, Franklin, George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Hinds, Itawamba, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson Davis, Jones, Kemper, Lamar, Madison, Marion, Monroe, Neshoba, Newton, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Pearl River, Perry, Pike, Rankin, Scott, Simpson, Smith, Stone, Walthall, Warren, Wayne, Webster, Wilkinson, and Winston Counties

**FURTHER HURRICANE KATRINA INFORMATION:**

For further information regarding Hurricane Katrina evacuees, please reference the following Office of Family Stability Letters: #35, #35A, #35B, #36, #37, and #38. In addition, a memo was sent 9/7/2005 by the Bureau of Workforce Services entitled "Providing WIA Assistance to Hurricane Katrina Evacuees". Lastly, Ohio Health Plans issued an email on 9/9/2005 entitled, "Hurricane Katrina".