

DATE: September 26, 2017

TO: Subscribers

SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION: Commissioners, SNAP and TA Directors

FROM: Jeffrey Gaskell, Assistant Deputy Commissioner
Employment and Income Support Programs

SUBJECT: Treatment of Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma Evacuees Applying for
SNAP

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

CONTACT PERSON: SNAP Bureau: (518) 473-1469

Purpose

The purpose of this GIS is to inform social services districts (districts) about how to treat households applying for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits who identify themselves as evacuees of either Hurricane Harvey or Hurricane Irma.

Background

The federal government recently offered the states three options for treating households applying for SNAP who self-identify as evacuees from either Hurricane Harvey or Hurricane Irma. The options were as follows:

1. to treat the evacuees according to regular SNAP eligibility rules, but automatically confer eligibility for expedited processing on all evacuee households, or
2. to evaluate evacuee households applying for SNAP according to the Disaster SNAP (D-SNAP) rules, or
3. to treat the evacuees according regular SNAP eligibility and processing rules.

The federal government permitted states to choose one option to apply consistently throughout the state. **New York State has selected the first option.**

This policy only applies to evacuee households applying before October 1, 2017, and only applies to evacuees from Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. After September 30, 2017, all evacuee households applying for SNAP must be evaluated for eligibility according to regular SNAP eligibility processing rules. **The federal government has not yet issued special rules for evacuees from Hurricane Maria.**

Program Implications

- The district will consider applicants identifying themselves as evacuees from either Hurricane Harvey or Hurricane Irma to have met the criteria for expedited service **if an application is received by September 30, 2017.**

- The district will process these applications using existing procedures and timeframes for households eligible for expedited processing.
- Applications received from households claiming to be evacuees must be screened for duplicate participation, and must contact the home state prior to issuing benefits. (See below for procedures specific to Texas (for Hurricane Harvey) and Florida (for Hurricane Irma). For help with verification in other states, please consult with the attached National Directory of Contacts to verify duplicate participation.
- The district must report to OTDA the number of evacuees (persons and households) served under this special procedure, and the amount of benefits issued on the attached spreadsheet.

State-Specific Duplicate Participation Confirmation Contact Information and Procedures **Florida**

To verify duplicate SNAP participation with the State of Florida, send an e-mail to the following address: SNR.D11.SFL.CallCenter@myflfamilies.com

Please use the subject line “Hurricane IRMA Verification”.

Texas

To verify duplicate participation with the State of Texas, call 1-877-541-7905, then select the following options from the Interactive Voice Response System:

- Option 1 for English;
- Option 2 for Your Texas benefit information;
- Option 1 for Medicaid, SNAP, and TANF information;
- Option 1 to enter Social Security number for someone on your case; –OR–
- Option 2 to enter your case number; –OR–
- Option 3 if information is unknown or for help with the YourTexasBenefits.com website; (caller will be routed to the next available agent)

To obtain replacement EBT cards for ongoing SNAP households that are certified in Texas but have evacuated to another State, individuals should contact the Lone Star Help Desk at: 1-800-777-7EBT (1-800-777-7328) to request a replacement card and one will be mailed.