POLICY BULLETIN #18-68-ELI

TREATMENT OF HURRICANE FLORENCE EVACUEES APPLYING FOR CASH ASSISTANCE (CA), SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) BENEFITS AND MEDICAID

Date: October 17, 2018	Subtopic(s): CA and SNAP

	The purpose of this policy bulletin in to inform Job Center and Non-Cash Assistance Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (NCA SNAP) Center staff of how to meet the needs of individuals and families displaced by Hurricane Florence who apply for Cash Assistance (CA), SNAP benefits, and Medicaid.
	
	The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) provided guidance on meeting the needs of those persons who identify themselves as evacuees of Hurricane Florence.
	
	OTDA has provided guidance on the following:
	
	A. Cash Assistance for:
	  o Documentation requirements
	  o Treatment of receipt of CA benefits received in the home state
	  o Not applying the 125 % gross income test for eligibility to receive emergency Safety Net Assistance (ESNA)
	  o Budgeting of income received by the individual or family
	
	B. SNAP for:
	  o Eligibility and application processing rules
	  o Allowing those households who purchase and prepare meals with another household to be considered separate households
	  o Documentation and the use of self-declaration and collateral sources
	
	C. Medicaid for:
	  o Documentation of residency
	  o Attestation of no income

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Distribution: X

D. <u>Welfare Management Systems (WMS) for:</u>
   o The creation of a CA opening code for Hurricane Florence evacuees

A. <u>Cash Assistance</u>

1. <u>Application requirements</u>

Many of the Hurricane Florence affected individuals or families who apply for emergency or ongoing CA will not have documentation or access to documents to support the eligibility requirements.

Self-declarations and collateral sources

If a Hurricane Florence applicant presents with no documentation and states that they do not have access to the documents, staff should use the applicant's self-declarations and collateral sources (e.g. attestations from family and friends) to satisfy the following eligibility requirements:

- identity
- income
- resources
- citizenship status
- relationship
- category of assistance

SSN Validation

Staff should also use the Social Security Number Validation to assist in establishing the applicant's identity.

Do not delay providing ongoing benefits

Staff should not delay providing these applicants with ongoing benefits pending actual verification/documentation of application requirements because of a delay or inability of the applicant to provide documents.

2. <u>Income</u>

Safety Net Assistance

Some applicants will have income that may cause them to be ineligible for ongoing Safety Net Assistance (SNA).

Income received is budgeted

Income that these applicants receive should be budgeted using normal budgeting procedures

If the individual or family does not qualify for ongoing SNA the household's immediate needs may be met with ESNA.

Gross Income test

As these persons or families are applying for assistance because of a catastrophe, the 125% gross income test for ESNA <u>does not</u> apply.

CA from applicant's home state	Another type of income the applicants may have received is CA benefits from their home state. When an applicant advises staff that they received benefits from their home state, staff should <u>not count</u> this CA as income or resources.
Determining category of assistance	Until documentation is available, the staff should ask the individual or family how long they have received CA in order to determine which category of assistance for which they qualify.

<u>B. SNAP</u>

    1. Application requirements

Regular eligibility rules apply	Regular SNAP eligibility and application processing rules apply to Hurricane Florence affected applicants.
Separate SNAP household	However, if the applicant or family resides with another household, the evacuee individual or family may be treated as a separate SNAP household even if the households purchase and prepare food together.
	Similar to the CA guidance above, if a Hurricane Florence applicant presents with no documentation and states that they do not have access to the documents, staff should use the applicant's self-declarations and collateral sources (e.g. attestations from family and friends) to satisfy the documentation requirements. The staff should also use the SSN Validation to assist in establishing the applicant's identity.
	Staff should not delay providing these applicants with ongoing benefits pending actual verification/documentation of application requirements because of a delay or inability of the applicant to provide documents.

<u>C. Medicaid</u>

    1. Application Requirements

Residency	Many Hurricane Florence affected applicants will not know how long they will remain in New York. If the applicant expresses an intent to stay in New York for an unknown period of time, the applicant is considered a resident of New York.

2. Income

Staff will conduct wage matches as per regular procedure. An applicant may be identified on the Resource File Integration (RFI) as having income.

As a result of Hurricane Florence a displaced applicant or family may no longer have income.

Attestation of no income

An individual or family from one of the affected areas may attest to no longer having income even if there is a wage match on RFI.

The individual with the identified income must provide a written statement attesting to having no income due to his or her displacement by Hurricane Florence. The staff must scan the written attestation into the case record.

These applicants may have received disaster relief payments from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Disaster relief payments received from FEMA are not considered in determining Medicaid eligibility.

D. Welfare Management Systems (WMS)

New CA case opening and line opening code

A new CA case level and CA line level opening code was created for Hurricane Florence affected applicants, **Y74** (Eligible as a result of Hurricane Florence).

Can be used on existing cases

Staff can also use code **Y74** to add individuals to existing cases.

Effective Immediately

References:

GIS 18 TA/DC036
12 INF 06