

**GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM**  
**DIVISION: Employment and Transitional Supports**

September 14, 2005

Page: 1

**TO:** Commissioners; TA & FS Directors; WMS Coordinators; CAP Coordinators

**FROM:** Russell Sykes Deputy Commissioner, Division of Employment & Transitional Supports

**SUBJECT:** Updated Food Stamp Instructions for Evacuees from Hurricane Katrina (NYC HRA Version)

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** September 14, 2005

**CONTACT PERSON:** FS Questions – Food Stamp Bureau (518) 473-1469  
TA Questions-Temporary Assistance Bureau (518) 474-9344

This GIS transmits recently received information regarding issuing maximum Food Stamp benefits to displaced citizens from the Hurricane Katrina disaster.

The Food Stamp Program is implementing a new, one-month policy for certifying evacuees who have left Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi because of Hurricane Katrina. This policy applies in all districts only during the month of application. **The policy requires issuance of a full, one-month maximum food stamp benefit to any evacuee household for the initial month of application.** Eligibility is based solely on evacuee status.

**Applicability** – This policy applies to an applying household that meets all of the following requirements:

- The household lived in a county or parish in Alabama, Louisiana, or Mississippi on August 29, 2005, (see attached list for these counties or parishes), and
- The President declared the applicant's county or parish to be a disaster area (Districts must accept households' self attestation statements that they lived in the disaster affected area, and districts are not required to contact the disaster areas to verify the former residence or current benefit status, but should check information against the current local caseload), and
- The household has moved to New York State and is applying in your district. (This policy does not apply to a household that did not move or moved within a disaster state), and
- The household applies by October 31, 2005.

**Allotment**

- The household will receive the maximum allotment for its household size.
- The district will **not** prorate the allotment. New systems instructions are issued below to insure that an initial maximum pay line is issued for the month of application.
- One monthly allotment may be issued (for September or October) based on these rules.

**Household Size**

- The District will ask about household size and use that information to calculate the allotment.
- The State will treat each household as a separate household. As stated in GIS 05 TA DC 027, special separate household composition rules apply in these cases.
- This households are deemed separate even if the household purchases and prepares meals with others.

**GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM**  
**DIVISION: Employment and Transitional Supports**

September 14, 2005

Page: 2

**Eligibility:**

**There are no income or resource eligibility tests. There are no other non-financial tests.**

**Income in Subsequent Months:**

For recurring benefits issued beyond the initial maximum benefit application month, subsequent benefits must be issued considering the household's initial self-attestation of income through the end of the December 2005 certification period. Income cannot be counted if the amount or date of receipt is uncertain, i.e., a basis has not been established. In this situation many sources of income have been terminated or are uncertain. If the exact amount of the income is not known, only that portion that can be anticipated with reasonable certainty must be considered as income. Districts are reminded to inquire if the household has monthly income which may be terminated due to the disaster. Do not assume that income will continue uninterrupted. For these reasons it is expected many of the evacuee cases will have the subsequent months issued with \$0 income.

**Certification Periods and Notices:**

Federal direction on waiver of QC standards for these cases applies through December 2005. For this reason, initial certification periods for these households will be through December 31<sup>st</sup> 2005.

NYC/HRA will establish a certification period on the manual acceptance notice which expires on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2005. The notice must reflect the following:

- the initial maximum benefit for the month of application, and
- the amount of recurring benefits in the months up to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2005, and
- Due to system limitations placed on initial certification periods in NYC/WMS, the WMS/HRA system certification period will be longer than December 31<sup>st</sup>. However the use of the "064" opening transaction code will both enable automated reports and a system generated "Request for Contact" to be issued to households. USDA procedures require a December contact with the household to obtain verification. Meeting the verification requirement will be necessary to continue benefits beyond December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2005.

**Deductions:**

At application the district will not need information about deductible expenses for the initial maximum benefit month, because an entitled household will receive the maximum allotment for its household size. However, the district will attempt to solicit any information available about deductions in order to issue recurring benefits for the subsequent months.

**Verification:**

The local district will verify every applicant's identity to the extent possible. For other criteria, the other documentation, collateral contacts, or the applicant's self-declaration will be sufficient. The \$2,000 debit card issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency will, for instance, be sufficient for proof of identity, or lacking that proof, a collateral statement from a source who knows the identity of the applying member, or lacking that, a statement from the evacuee.

**Separate Determination Upon TA Closure:**

Districts must separately determine FS eligibility (they are not eligible for TBA) using above rules for the balance of 2005 for households where TA is terminated prior to December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005.

**GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM**  
**DIVISION: Employment and Transitional Supports**

September 14, 2005

Page: 3

**Restored Benefits for Any Evacuee Issuances Prior to this GIS:**

If a district has already issued a pro-rated or partial benefit issuance for September for any evacuee, the district must supplement that benefit to the full maximum for that family's size.

**NYC Systems Specifications:**

For NYC NTA/FS Cases:

In order to issue a maximum FS benefit for the household size, cases should be opened to SI status with an Application Date of September 1, 2005. FS opening reason code 064 should be used. The manual notice sent to the client should have a recertification period from September 1 to December 31, 2005 (4 months.)

Workers should data enter a FS single issuance for September based on the maximum FS allotment for the household size. All income and resources should be data entered on the budget but ignored when determining the single issue amount for September. Income and resources should be counted for subsequent months.

FS Single issue code 55 – Expedited Service Not Verified should be used for September. These cases should then be changed to AC status with code 064 to receive recurring benefits for October and beyond.

For NYC TA/FS Cases:

In order to issue a maximum FS benefit for the household size, cases should be opened to AC status with an Application Date of September 1, 2005. PA and FS opening reason code 064 should be used. The manual notice sent to the client should have a recert period from September 1 to December 31, 2005 (4 months.)

Workers should data enter a FS single issuance for September based on the maximum FS allotment for the household size. All income and resources should be data entered on the budget but ignored when determining the single issue amount for September. Income and resources should be counted for subsequent months.

FS Single issue code 54 – Expedited Service Not Verified should be used for September. For NPA/FS cases, FS Single issue code 55 – Expedited Service Not Verified should be used for September.

**Issuance Systems :**

Districts must be cognizant of the fact that these recipients may not be aware that New York issues a Common Benefit Identification Card (CBIC). Other issue separate EBT cards for TA/FS and MA. District must aware that they must educate the household new to NYS in New York card usage.

PIN selection should be done in the office or center before the client leaves the building if they are issued a vault card. PIN selection must be done in the office or center at the existing PIN selection device.

**GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM**  
**DIVISION: Employment and Transitional Supports**

September 14, 2005

Page: 4

Attachment: List of Affected Areas  
Revised 9/7/05

## **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, Jefferson Davis, Jones, Kemper, Lamar, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Leake, Lee, Lincoln, Lowndes, Madison, Marion, Monroe, Neshoba, Newton, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Pearl River, Perry, Pike, Rankin, Scott, Simpson, Smith, Stone, Walthall, Warren, Wayne, Webster, Wilkinson, and Winston Counties