



Food and
Nutrition
Service

SEP 01 2017

Park Office
Center

SUBJECT: 2017 SNAP Disaster Evacuee Policy for Hurricane Harvey Disaster Area Evacuees

3101 Park
Center Drive
Alexandria
VA 22302

TO: All Regional Directors
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is issuing this policy to provide States with flexibility to serve Hurricane Harvey evacuees. States may choose to either serve evacuees through expedited SNAP rules or through the simplified program rules in the Evacuee Policy, as described in this memorandum. When applying the Evacuee Policy, States must use the criteria detailed in this memorandum for determining eligibility, household composition, verification, benefit allotments, and duplicate participation. This memorandum also outlines the reporting and Quality Control processes for cases processed under the Evacuee Policy.

All State agencies processing evacuee cases must notify FNS in writing of which option they select to serve evacuees.

FNS is committed to providing technical assistance to State agencies serving participants who have evacuated areas impacted by Hurricane Harvey. Please distribute this guidance to your State agencies and advise them to contact their respective FNS Regional Offices with any questions. FNS Regional Offices should contact Lizbeth Silbermann at Lizbeth.Silbermann@fns.usda.gov with any question concerning this memorandum.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey N. Cohen
Acting Associate Administrator
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Attachments

2017 SNAP Hurricane Harvey Evacuee Policy (Evacuee Policy)

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is committed to providing States with flexibility to serve Hurricane Harvey evacuees. State agencies may either (1) serve applicants through expedited Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) rules; or (2) serve applicants through the Evacuee Policy.

These procedures apply to people who at the time of the disaster or mandatory evacuation order:

- Were residents of a county that received a Presidential disaster declaration for Individual Assistance (current disaster declarations can be found at <https://www.fema.gov/disasters>);
- Evacuated to another State; and
- Did not receive SNAP benefits in the month of August 2017.

Option 1: Serve Evacuees through Expedited SNAP Rules

States may choose to serve evacuees through SNAP expedited service provisions. A State agency that selects this option must notify FNS in writing and must stipulate that:

- The State agency will consider applicants identifying themselves as evacuees from Hurricane Harvey to have met the criteria for expedited service if an application is received from evacuees by September 30, 2017;
- The State agency will process these cases using its existing procedures for expedited households;
- The State agency will screen applicants for duplicate participation through its eligibility system and contact the home State prior to issuing benefits (see below for State-specific procedures); and
- The State agency will report to FNS the number of evacuees (persons and households) served and the amount of benefits issued on a weekly basis using the attached report form.

Option 2: Serve Evacuees through Evacuee Policy

States may choose to serve evacuees through the Evacuee Policy, as described in the next page. A State agency that selects this option must notify FNS in writing and must stipulate that:

- The State agency agrees to the terms and conditions of assistance under the Evacuee Policy;
- The State agency will indicate whether the Evacuee Policy will be applied statewide or in limited areas;
- The State agency will only process applications received from evacuees by September 30, 2017; and
- The State agency will report to FNS the number of evacuees (persons and households) served and the amount of benefits issued on a weekly basis using the attached form.

2017 SNAP Hurricane Harvey Evacuee Policy (Evacuee Policy)

Terms and Conditions of Option 2: Evacuee Policy

A State agency that selects Option 2 must serve evacuees under the terms and conditions below. This policy applies to applications received by September 30, 2017.

Eligibility

- Evacuating from an area is considered evidence of a disaster-related adverse effect.
- The State agency will use the 2017 Disaster Standard Expense Deduction (DSED) Income Guidelines attached.
- The applicant must list all members wishing to receive evacuee benefits and provide their Social Security Numbers, if available.
- The household must attest under penalty of perjury that its available income and liquid assets, after taking into account disaster-related expenses, do not exceed the disaster income guidelines for its household size. The household must also attest that it is not currently receiving benefits from SNAP, D-SNAP, or other benefits under the Evacuee Policy.

Household Composition

- The State agency will accept the household's statement about its current evacuee household size to determine the benefit allotment. The evacuee household is any group of persons evacuated from the disaster who take shelter together. The current household configuration might not reflect its pre-disaster household composition.
- The State will treat the evacuee household as a separate household from any non-evacuee persons sheltering them, even if the evacuee household purchases and prepares meals with others.

Verification

- The State agency must verify every applicant's identity. Typical verification procedures for identity apply.
- Residency on August 25, 2017, must be verified where possible.

Benefit Allotment

- Evacuee households will receive the maximum allotment for their household size.
- Benefits will not be prorated based on date of application.
- Households will receive two month's allotment under the Evacuee Policy.

Duplicate Participation

- The State agency must check for duplicate participation by contacting the evacuees' home State prior to issuing benefits (see below for State-specific procedures).

Reporting

- The State agency must identify the benefits issued to evacuees as disaster benefits;
- The State agency must report to FNS the number of persons and households served and the amount of benefits issued on a weekly basis using the attached form; and
- The State agency must submit a Form FNS-292B at the end of the evacuee program.

Quality Control

- Cases processed under the Evacuee Policy are not subject to Quality Control review.

2017 SNAP Hurricane Harvey Evacuee Policy (Evacuee Policy)

- Cases processed under the Evacuee Policy are subject to audit and review by Federal and State audit agencies. FNS may require State agencies to review a sample of these cases.

State Specific Duplicate Participation Procedures:

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.