

DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES

EFS_FNS_AL-03-2017

(Food and Nutrition Services)

TO: County Directors of Social Services

ATTENTION: Food and Nutrition Services Managers and Supervisors

DATE: September 12, 2017

SUBJECT: Hurricane Harvey Evacuee Policy

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon Receipt

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

North Carolina may experience an influx of families who evacuated areas impacted by Hurricane Harvey. This letter provides policy for assisting those families who come to local agencies seeking food assistance. This guidance must be used to assist these self-declared evacuees during this difficult time. This policy does not include evacuees from Hurricane Irma.

II. POLICY PROCEDURES

The following procedures must be followed to determine eligibility and issue Disaster Food and Nutrition Services (DFNS):

How to determine if household is eligible:

When a household has evacuated a disaster area because of Hurricane Harvey to North Carolina, use the following steps to determine eligibility:

- Complete a Disaster Food and Nutrition Services (DFNS) Application (DSS-1432)
 - Applications must be taken through September 30, 2017
 - Process all DFNS applications within three business days from the date of application
 - All applications must be processed by October 4, 2017
- The applicant must list all members wishing to receive evacuee benefits
- Provide Social Security Numbers, if available
- Determine the evacuee's disaster related expenses
- If the evacuees' disaster related expenses are less than \$100 the household is eligible for actual expenses
- If the evacuees' only disaster related expense is food loss the household is ineligible
- If the evacuees' disaster related expenses are equal to or more than \$100, use the Disaster Standard Expense Deduction (DSED) chart to determine the Disaster Gross Income Limit and Disaster Expenses for the household size
- Manually determine eligibility by using the 2017 DSED Income Guidelines chart attached
- The DSNAP application must be entered into NC FAST once eligibility or ineligibility is determined
- Once the application is ready to be entered into NC FAST, contact NCFAS Help Desk at 919-813-5400, select DSNAP option
- Help Desk attendant will assist each county thru the remaining keying steps until further notice

- Upload the paper application and budget calculation to the Income Support case in NC FAST
- NC FAST will use the normal batch processing to create and mail approval notices
- The household must attest under penalty of perjury that its available income and liquid assets, after considering 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 another state

Duplicate Participation

- Check for duplicate participation by contacting the evacuees' home state prior to issuing benefits, for those coming from Texas call 1-877-541-7905. For other affected states use regular procedures to check for duplicate participation
- The National Directory of Contacts is attached

Household Composition

- 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 size may not reflect its pre-disaster household composition
- 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
- If an evacuee voluntarily states that a member of the household is a member of an ineligible class, such as an ineligible alien, fleeing felon, student working less than 20 hours a week, etc., that household member is ineligible to receive benefits

Verification of Residency and Identification

- Verify each head of household's identity
- Apply regular FNS verification procedures for verifying identity
- Verify residency to the extent possible, as of August 25, 2017

Disaster Related Expenses

Eligible expenses may include the following:

- Home or business repairs
- Temporary shelter expenses
- Evacuation expenses
- Home/business property protection
- Medical expenses due to personal injury
- Disaster-related funeral expenses
- Disaster-related pet boarding fees
- Expenses related to replacing necessary personal and household items, such as clothing, appliances, tools, and educational materials
- Fuel for primary heating source
- Clean-up items expense
- Disaster-damaged vehicle expenses
- Storage expenses

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 a two-month allotment under the Evacuee Policy
- The system will issue 1st month when the application is approved and 2nd month on October 1st
- The benefit months will be September and October 2017
- NC FAST will systematically create new EBT accounts and issue a card from the EBT vendor to eligible evacuee households
- Once benefits have been issued, active DFNS cases will be closed by normal case termination batch processing at the end of October

If household is ineligible:

- If the household is ineligible due to excess income, enter the income amount that exceeds the income limit
- NC FAST will use the normal batch processing to create and mail denial notices

Quality Control

- Cases processed under the Evacuee Policy are not subject to Quality Control review
- Cases processed under the Evacuee Policy are subject to audit and review by Federal and State audit agencies
- USDA may require State agencies to review a sample of these cases

Evacuees with Pending Regular FNS Applications in NCFAST

- Evacuees may opt to continue the FNS application process if they intend to remain in NC or
- Withdraw the FNS application and apply for DSNAP
- For evacuees that applied for FNS and have been approved, no further action is needed

Evacuees who are current recipients

- Current recipients receiving benefits from Texas who need assistance in replacing a lost, stolen, or damaged EBT card, may contact 1-800-777-7328
- Recipients that are currently receiving benefits in Texas, certification periods have automatically been extended for an additional six months
- Recipients that are receiving from out of state can use their EBT card in North Carolina

If the evacuees that apply for DFNS believe they will be residing in the local area permanently, or for the foreseeable future, the evacuee can apply for regular benefits when DFNS certification period ends.

Thank you for your cooperation during this difficult time. Submit any questions regarding this policy to the DHHS Operational Support Team (OST) via the Policy Questions link located in the Integrated Eligibility Manual, <https://economicbenefits.nc.gov>.

Sincerely,



David Locklear, Deputy Director
Economic and Family Services
Division of Social Services

Attachment (5):

[Disaster Standard Expense Deduction Option \(DSED\) - FY 2017](#)

[Disaster Standard Expense Deduction Option \(DSED\) - FY 2018](#)

[Disaster Food and Nutrition Services \(DFNS\) Applications, DSS-1432](#)

[Disaster Food and Nutrition Services \(DFNS\) Applications, DSS-1432SP](#)

[National Directory of Contacts](#)