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Field Operations Memo 2005-46A
September 14, 2005

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff

From:  Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

Re: Hurricane Katrina Evacuees

Background

Hurricane Katrina evacuees have sought out family and friends in Massachusetts, and have gone to TAOs seeking cash or food stamp assistance. Others have arrived at Camp Edwards (Otis) Air National Guard Base.

Field Operations Memo 2005-46 transmitted procedures for handling requests for assistance in TAOs. However, in an effort to simplify the application process for Hurricane Katrina evacuees, standardized cross program procedures have been developed.

An initial one month benefit package will be issued to applicants from the affected areas, regardless of income, assets, or nonfinancial eligibility factors. AU Managers need not ask any other eligibility questions except those listed on the Self-Declaration and Disaster Benefit Application form (Attachment A). Applications may be accepted under these revised procedures through October 31, 2005.

These procedures apply to evacuees from areas devastated by Hurricane Katrina, including counties in the Gulf Coast region in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi. The original list from Field Operations Memo 2005-46 has been expanded. See Attachment B: Hurricane Katrina Disaster Areas.

No case is to be denied until the TAO Director, who will act as the TAO's Hurricane Katrina liaison, first calls the Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478.

**Benefit
Application for
Evacuees**

The Commonwealth is offering an array of services to disaster evacuees, including employment services, housing services, and MassHealth benefits, in addition to cash and FS benefits.

To facilitate this process, evacuees are being referred to the nearest Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) office to obtain Massachusetts photo identification cards. These cards are initially issued as temporary paper cards. They will be identified as Hurricane Katrina issued cards by an expiration date of 2006. Cards issued from Otis will have "Otis ANG" printed on the card.

Some evacuees on RSDI or SSI have gone to SSA for replacement checks and have inquired about FS benefits. SSA has agreed to complete the one-page FS Application form with the applicant, identify it as "Hurricane Katrina," and send the applicant with the form to the appropriate TAO. (Under normal circumstances these applications are faxed to the TAO.) These applications should also be processed as outlined in the following sections.

**FS & Cash
Assistance
Evacuee
Application
Procedures**

Effective, 9/14/2005, Hurricane Katrina evacuees who present themselves at a TAO will be processed as follows:

- ***If the Evacuee has a Massachusetts Photo Identification Card issued by the RMV:***
 - ◆ The AU Manager must interview the evacuee and have the Self-Declaration and Disaster Benefit Application form completed;
 - ◆ The AU Manager must circle the benefit(s) amounts to be issued on the back of the form;
 - ◆ The AU Manager must give a copy of the form to the recipient;
 - ◆ The CIS Card Issuer must issue an Emergency MASS EBT Card by:
 - √ Entering the RMV number as the case number on EPPIC;
 - Note:** The RMV number is a 9 character identifier which begins with a letter. **Be sure to replace the alpha character with the number 8 for data entry purposes.**
 - √ Adding the evacuee's name, DOB and address in the disaster area; and
 - √ Saving the case information.
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**FS & Cash
Assistance
Evacuee
Application
Procedures
(continued)**

- ◆ The CIS Card Issuer must then:
 - √ add the new Emergency MASS EBT card number into EPPIC;
 - √ complete the **For TAO Use Only** section of the Self-Declaration and Disaster Benefit Application form; and
 - √ Fax both sides of the completed form to Todd Chapman, Financial Program Management Unit at 617-348-5585.
- ◆ The CIS Card Issuer must allow the evacuee to select a PIN.

Upon receipt of a faxed Self-Declaration and Disaster Benefit Application form, the Financial Program Management Unit will add benefits to the case.

- √ FS benefits will be added immediately;
- √ cash benefits will be added immediately; and
- √ complete the **For Central Office Use Only** section of the form.

No additional TAO action is required to issue these benefits.

➤ ***If the evacuee has proof of identity other than a Massachusetts Photo Identification Card issued by the RMV, including a collateral contact or “self-declaration”:***

- ◆ The AU Manager must interview the evacuee and have the Self-Declaration and Disaster Benefit Application form completed including marking the appropriate FS and cash benefit amounts to be issued on the back of the form. No further eligibility questions need to be asked.
 - ◆ The CIS Card Issuer must issue an Emergency MASS EBT Card by:
 - √ Entering the evacuee’s SSN as the case number.

Note: If the evacuee does not know, does not have or cannot remember his/her SSN enter a facsimile number from the TAO log.

 - √ Adding the name, DOB and evacuee’s address in the disaster area; and
 - √ Saving the case information.
 - ◆ The CIS Card Issuer must then:
 - √ add the new Emergency MASS EBT card number into EPPIC;
 - √ complete the **For TAO Use Only** section of the Self-Declaration and Disaster Benefit Application form; and
 - √ Fax both sides of the completed form to Todd Chapman, Financial Program Management Unit at 617-348-5585.
 - ◆ The CIS Card Issuer must allow the evacuee to select a PIN.
 - ◆ AU Managers must assist the Evacuee by identifying the nearest RMV to obtain a Massachusetts Photo Identification Card so that all state disaster related services can be accessed (including the disaster cash benefits from DTA). The nearest office can be found by going to www.mass.gov/rmv.
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**FS & Cash
Assistance
Evacuee
Application
Procedures
(continued)**

Upon receipt of a faxed Self-Declaration and Disaster Benefit Application form, the Financial Program Management Unit will add benefits to the case.

- √ FS benefits will be added immediately;
- √ cash benefits will be added to the case once an RMV number is obtained and RMV has entered the number in the database; and
- √ complete the **For Central Office Use Only** section of the form.

No additional TAO action is required to issue these benefits.

Inform the evacuee in either of the two situations listed on the previous pages that benefits will be available the same day if the application is submitted before 4:00 P.M. Benefits will be available the next day after 10:00 A.M. if the application is made after 4:00 P.M.

- *If the evacuee has no proof of identity, and the information provided is inconsistent or questionable, have the TAO Hurricane Katrina liaison call the Policy Hotline.*

**Other Support
Agencies**

AU Managers must make every effort to assist evacuees in applying for additional benefits whenever possible. A telephone and/or PC should be made available in each TAO for evacuee use.

AU Managers should ask if the individual or family has registered with FEMA. This registration may be done online at: www.fema.gov or by calling the toll-free registration number **1-800-621-3362** for 24 hours per day/7 days per week. Other useful telephone numbers are:

- Massachusetts FEMA office at **617-223-9450**;
- Louisiana FEMA office at **817-898-5104**;
- Alabama and Mississippi FEMA office at **770-220-5200**.

FEMA offers assistance regarding housing, repairs, new construction, SBA Disaster Loans, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, relocation, etc.

HUD (www.hud.gov) at **1-800-955-2232** offers assistance to displaced public housing residents and Section 8 voucher holders in identifying vacant housing.

**Other Support
Agencies
(continued)**

Additionally, a Massachusetts toll-free telephone number has been established to connect Hurricane Katrina Evacuees to other available services and programs. The telephone number is **1-800-293-4031**. The hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For evacuees who are not receiving their social security check, please refer them to: <http://www.ssa.gov/emergency/> or **1-800-772-1213**.

Housing Supports

- The Department of Housing and Community Development has state and federal public housing, rental assistance, private housing, homelessness prevention and poverty prevention programs administered by a network of 243 local housing authorities, 8 regional non-profit housing agencies and 25 community action agencies. Please call **617-573-1150** for assistance.
- Katrina evacuees (including any former Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Holders or former federal public housing residents) should call DHCD at **617-573-1150** and ask for a Katrina Emergency Housing Team Member who will be assigned to assist them in getting in touch with the appropriate provider agencies and in applying for housing.

Nutritional Supports

In addition to FS Benefits being offered by the Department of Transitional Assistance, the Department of Public Health and WIC (Women, Infant's and Children's Nutrition) program will provide nutritional assessment and checks for free food for pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children under 5.

These checks can be used to purchase nutritious foods including milk, eggs, cheese, cereal, peanut butter, and formula. WIC has 36 programs with 150 sites. The family should call **1-800-942-1007** to locate the nearest site or if unable to get to a site arrange for a place and time to meet with a WIC staff person.

Employment Supports

There are 32 One Stop Centers throughout the Commonwealth that can assist evacuees with job search and job placement. The location of the nearest Career Center can be found by calling **617-626-5300** or at: www.detma.org/WSCareercenters.htm.

For a complete listing of Support Agencies, see Attachment C.

**Final
Instructions**

Evacuees may also apply at the same time for TAFDC/EAEDC/EA and/or FS benefits. In these situations:

- the applicant must meet all program eligibility rules;
- the emergency cash payment is noncountable income for cash and FS; and
Note: Applications taken in TAOs for Hurricane Katrina evacuees prior to September 14, 2005 are entitled to the emergency benefits
- if eligible for FS benefits, the certification period would begin the month after receipt of the emergency FS benefits following established certification criteria.
- if eligible for cash benefits, the effective start date would begin the month after the receipt of the emergency cash benefits on the first cyclical date.

Evacuees who present themselves as homeless at the TAO should go to Otis Air National Guard Base if the evacuee has their own transportation. If the evacuee does not have his or her own transportation, the TAO Director or designee should call the Central Office Housing Unit for further instructions.

EBT replacement cards may be issued following normal procedures. The exception to this is EBT replacement cards being requested by evacuees at Otis Air National Guard Base. In this situation, Department personnel at Otis should contact Field Operations for further instructions.

Obsolete Memo This Field Operations Memo obsoletes Field Operations Memo 2005-46.

Questions If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478.



Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

Attachment A

SELF-DECLARATION FORM
(For Hurricane Katrina Evacuee Use)

I, _____ certify that I fled from _____
County/Parish

_____, an identified disaster area.
Street City State

The information contained in my application for benefits is true to the best of my knowledge. Please accept this self-declaration as verification(s) needed for my eligibility/benefit determination. (Please see reverse for additional information).

My current address in Massachusetts is: _____.

Applicant's Name (Please Print)

Date of Birth

Applicant's Signature

Today's Date

AU Manager's Name (Please Print)

AU Manager's Telephone Number

Mass RMV # _____

SSN # _____

Facsimile SSN # _____

Disaster Benefit Application

Household Information

Name	Social Security Number (if known)	Date of Birth

Based on your family size, this amount will be deposited in your EBT account:

<u>Family Size</u>	<u>Food Stamps</u>	<u>Cash</u>
1	\$149	\$300
2	\$274	\$400
3	\$393	\$500
4	\$499	\$600
5	\$592	\$700
6	\$711	\$800
7	\$786	\$900
8	\$898	\$1,000

AU Manager or other TAO Staff person must circle on the above table the benefit(s) amount to be given to applicant.

For TAO Use Only: EBT Case # _____ DOB _____
 Emergency Card # 600875 _____

(To be Completed by CIS Issuer Only)

For Central Office Use Only:

FS Amount: \$ _____ Authorization # _____
 Cash Amount \$ _____ Authorization # _____

Attachment B

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Areas (Updated as of 9/9/2005)

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

Attachment C

OPERATION HELPING HANDS KEY SERVICE PROVIDERS CONTACT INFORMATION

ORGANIZATION	TELEPHONE NUMBER	WEBSITE
Alabama Unemployment Assistance	1-866-234-5382	http://dir.alabama.gov/
American Red Cross	1-800-975-7585	http://www.redcross.org/
American Red Cross (MA)	1-800-564-1234	http://bostonredcross.org/Hurricane
Battered Women's Hotline	1-800-992-2600	
Commission for the Blind	1-800-989-4411	
Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	1-800-882-1155	
Community Health Centers – Primary Care		www.massleague.org
Department of Housing	1-617-573-1150	http://www.mass.gov/dhcd
Department of Mental Health	1-617-626-8000	http://www.mass.gov/
Department of Mental Retardation	1-617-727-5608	http://www.mass.gov/
Department of Veterans' Services	1-617-210-5480	http://www.mass.gov/
Department of Social Services	1-800-543-7508	http://www.mass.gov/
Disaster Resource Center	1-800-293-4031	
Domestic Violence Hotline – SafeLink	1-877-785-2020	
Executive Office of Elder Affairs	1-800-243-4636	http://www.mass.gov/
Federation for Children with Special Health Care Needs	1-800- 331-0688	
FEMA	1-800-621-FEMA (3362) 1-800-462-7585 (Hearing Impaired)	http://www.fema.gov/
Greater Boston Food Bank	1-617-427-5200	www.gbfb.org
HIV Hotline	1-888-855-9324	
Hospitals		www.mhalink.org/public/mahospitals/index.cfm
Louisiana Unemployment Assistance	1-800-818-7811	http://www.laworks.net
Massachusetts Unemployment Assistance	1-877-626-6800	http://www.detma.org/
MassHealth (Medicaid)	1-800-841-2900	http://www.mass.gov/masshealth

OPERATION HELPING HANDS KEY SERVICE PROVIDERS CONTACT INFORMATION
(continued)

ORGANIZATION	TELEPHONE NUMBER	WEBSITE
One Stop Centers (Training/Employment)	1-617-626-5300	www.detma.org/WSCareercenters.htm
Parental Stress Hotline	1-800-632-8188	
Project Bread	1-800-645-8333	www.projectbread.org/katrina
Rape Crisis Counseling	1-800-870-5905	
Rape Crisis Counseling – Boston Area	1-617-492-7273	
Rape Crisis – Llamanos – Spanish	1-800 -223-5001	
Registry of Motor Vehicles	1-617-351-4500	http://www.mass.gov/rmv/
Samaritans	1-800-893-9900	
School Enrollment	1-781-338-6294	
Social Security Administration	1-800-772-1213	http://www.ssa.gov/
Substance Abuse	1-800-327-5050	
United Way	1-800-231-4377	
WIC Program	1-800-942-1007	