

September 19, 2017

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER (ACWDL)

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

FROM: TODD BLAND, Deputy Director  
Family Engagement and Empowerment Division

SUBJECT: CALFRESH APPLICATION PROCESSING FOR EVACUEES FROM  
HURRICANE IRMA

The purpose of this letter is to provide County Welfare Departments (CWDs) with guidance on processing CalFresh applications submitted by evacuees from Hurricane Irma. Due to the conditions and mandatory evacuations throughout Florida, evacuees have begun or will begin to arrive in counties across California. In an effort to effectively serve these households, California has opted to process evacuee applications under expedited service (ES) CalFresh rules. The attached Administrative Notice (AN) 17-42 issued by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) on September 15, 2017, provides additional guidance on the topic.

**CalFresh Expedited Service Policy for Evacuees**

The CWDs will consider CalFresh applicants identifying themselves as evacuees from Hurricane Irma as having met all the ES criteria if the application is received by September 30, 2017. CWDs will process evacuee applications using existing ES procedures. Additionally, CWDs must screen these applicants for duplicate participation by contacting the home state (i.e. Florida) before issuing benefits. Evacuee applications that are processed using ES will be subject to quality control review.

It is important to note that an evacuee may not receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in two states in the same month, whether or not the application is entitled to ES. As mentioned, the CWD will screen applicants for duplicate participation before issuing benefits. If necessary, CWDs should assist evacuees with an active SNAP case certified in Florida to obtain a replacement

Electronic Benefit Transfer card. Relevant instructions for doing so are included in the attached AN.

CWDs will report to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) the number of evacuees served (persons and households) and the amount of benefits issued on a weekly basis until all evacuee applicant households have been issued benefits. (Such applications must be received by the CWD by September 30, 2017.) CWDs will use the report template provided by CDSS. In order to accurately track evacuee applications, CWDs will need to flag the case for each evacuee applicant's household so that it can be clearly identified as such.

CDSS is currently working with each Statewide Automated Welfare System consortium to update the case flagging method that was developed to track evacuees from Hurricane Harvey to also track evacuees from Hurricane Irma.

CWDs are encouraged to inform evacuees of the availability of CalFresh under ES rules in CWD offices, websites, and other appropriate channels.

In the attached materials FNS has outlined two different options for serving evacuees from Hurricane Irma. At this time, California has opted to serve evacuees under ES CalFresh rules. If Disaster-SNAP is activated within the affected areas in Florida, CDSS will provide CWDs with updated application processing instructions.

If you have any questions about this ACWDL, or if you would like additional guidance on how to properly process a case should evacuees apply for CalFresh benefits in your county, please contact the CalFresh Policy Bureau at (916) 651-8047.



**United States Department of Agriculture**  
Food and Nutrition Service

Western Region

September 15, 2017

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Administrative Notice 17-42

**Subject:** 2017 SNAP Disaster Evacuee Policy for Hurricane Irma Disaster Area Evacuees

**To:** State SNAP Directors

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is issuing this policy to provide States with flexibility to serve Hurricane Irma evacuees through regular SNAP rules, 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 Irma. If you have any questions about this memo or need technical assistance, please contact your State Program Officer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shahdy Monemzadeh", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Shahdy Monemzadeh  
Policy & Integrity Team Lead  
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program  
Western Region

Attachments

## **2017 SNAP Hurricane Irma Evacuee Policy (Evacuee Policy)**

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is committed to providing States with flexibility to serve Hurricane Irma evacuees. State agencies may either (1) serve applicants through expedited Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) rules; or (2) serve applicants through the Evacuee Policy. If a State does not choose one of these options, applicants shall be served under the regular SNAP rules, with no additional or special reporting requirements to FNS.

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 September 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 Irma 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. The State must report in a manner that differentiates between Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma evacuees.

### **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. The State must report in a manner that differentiates between Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma evacuees.

### **Quality Control Implications**

Cases under both Options One and Two are considered disaster authorizations and should be treated as Not Subject to Review in accordance with Sections 333 and 1332 of FNS Handbook 310.

## **2017 SNAP Hurricane Irma 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 September 4, 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 one 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 in a manner that differentiates between Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma evacuees; 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.
- 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.

## **2017 SNAP Hurricane Irma Evacuee Policy (Evacuee Policy)**

### **State Specific Duplicate Participation Procedures:**

#### **Florida**

To verify duplicate participation with the State of Florida, email  
SNR.D11.SFL.CallCenter@myflfamilies.com.

Please use the subject line “Hurricane IRMA Verification”.

#### **Other States**

Consult the attached National Directory of Contacts to verify duplicate participation.