

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814

**HURRICANE KATRINA INFORMATION**

October 19, 2005

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-69-05

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CalWORKs COORDINATORS
ALL FOOD STAMP COORDINATORS
ALL CONSORTIA REPRESENTATIVES
ALL QUALITY CONTROL COORDINATORS
ALL WELFARE TO WORK COORDINATORS

SUBJECT: MORE INFORMATION ON CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND
RESPONSIBILITY TO KIDS (CalWORKs) ELIGIBILITY FOR EVACUEES
OF HURRICANE KATRINA

REFERENCE: ACIN I-52-05, ACIN I-53-05

The purpose of this notice is twofold: to provide additional information to counties on treatment of Hurricane Katrina evacuees who apply for CalWORKs benefits in California, and to respond to Katrina-related CalWORKs questions received from counties.

Additional/New InformationDiversion Services

Based on recent federal guidance, counties are encouraged to explore CalWORKs Diversion eligibility for Katrina evacuees. Diversion payments are designed to deal with a specific crisis situation or item of need, and may be appropriate for displaced families. Since Diversion payments are short-term, non-recurring benefits, they are not considered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) "assistance." As such, Katrina evacuees who receive CalWORKs Diversion payments are not subject to federal requirements for individuals receiving TANF assistance, including child support assignment, 60-month time limits, and work requirements.

Treatment of Disaster Relief Payments and Assistance in CalWORKs

CalWORKs (and Food Stamp) regulations exclude federal disaster and emergency assistance and comparable disaster assistance provided by the state, local governments and disaster assistance organizations from consideration as income or property/resources (MPP 44-111.61(i), 42-213.515 and 63-507(a)(10), ACIN I-20-99). Therefore, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and American Red Cross relief will not impact Katrina evacuees' CalWORKs eligibility.

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- ☐ State Law Change
- ☐ Federal Law or Regulation Change
- ☐ Court Order
- ☐ Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- ☒ Initiated by CDSS

Other States' Contact Information

In addition to contacting the three states directly impacted by Hurricane Katrina by phone to verify receipt of TANF benefits, counties may also contact these states at the following e-mail addresses:

ALABAMA: FAD@DHR.STATE.AL.US

LOUISIANA: kmathern@dss.state.la.us with cc's to:
jdroddy@dss.state.la.us
stucker@dss.state.la.us
squillor@dss.state.la.us
twillia6@dss.state.la.us

MISSISSIPPI: mdhsdisaster@mdhs.state.ms.us

Flagging Cases

Counties are requested to continue flagging Katrina evacuee CalWORKs cases as directed in ACIN I-52-05, and to also identify evacuee families who receive CalWORKs Diversion payments. The California Department of Social Services is currently reviewing all available federal information to determine impacts to the state, and the information that will be needed regarding the families affected by Hurricane Katrina.

Questions and Answers

1. Will evacuees have to meet work requirements and will the months count against their clock?

If evacuees are eligible for CalWORKs cash aid (rather than CalWORKs Diversion), they are subject to work requirements and time limits. However, as discussed in ACIN I-52-05, many evacuee families are in a state of crisis and will not be able to participate in welfare-to-work (WTW) activities. Counties should make a WTW good cause or exemption determination as appropriate.

2. Do we continue to follow normal regulations in regard to evacuees who are drug felons and fleeing felons?

Yes. Evacuee applicants for CalWORKs must meet all conditions of eligibility.

3. We are seeing an influx of hurricane victims and need directions regarding verifications from clients (birth certificates, SSNs, etc). They obviously will not be able to provide most of those items. How do we verify whether they are truly victims or can we just have them sign an affidavit?

As discussed in ACIN I-52-05, if the applicant and county make a good-faith effort to obtain verification of the evacuee's identity, TANF eligibility, time on aid, and linking and non-linking conditions of CalWORKs eligibility, and are unable to make contact with the evacuee's home state, financial institutions, or any other entity/institution, the county shall accept the evacuee's statements signed under penalty of perjury.

4. How do we discontinue a TANF case in the evacuee's home state?

Counties should employ the same process used for all other CalWORKs applicants who have been receiving benefits from another state when requesting the other state to discontinue benefits. Affected states may be contacted by e-mail as well as by phone (see e-mail addresses listed above).

5. What do we do with evacuees who not only don't have a social security card, but don't know their social security number (SSN)?

As a condition of CalWORKs eligibility, applicants/recipients are required to furnish SSNs. Individuals who are unable to furnish SSNs must apply to the Social Security Administration (SSA) and supply verification of their completed application before aid may be authorized (MPP 40-105.2).

6. Homeless evacuee families are change reporters for Food Stamps pursuant to ACIN I-53-05. Are these families subject to quarterly reporting requirements for CalWORKs?

Yes. It is anticipated that the majority of homeless Assistance Units (AUs) will obtain permanent housing via the Homeless Assistance program. Regardless of their housing status, however, all AUs are CalWORKs quarterly reporters.

7. Are evacuees subject to Statewide Fingerprint Imaging System (SFIS) requirements?

SFIS is a condition of CalWORKs eligibility for persons listed in MPP 40-105.32. However, an applicant shall not be required to go to a SFIS workstation site for the sole purpose of imaging. If any person required to be fingerprint and photo imaged is not present at the county office during the intake interview process, they should be imaged when they come to the office for any other purpose or at redetermination.

For CalWORKs applicant evacuees residing at a large holding facility, the county should make efforts to utilize portable SFIS stations. Many counties have portable workstations, and the Office of Systems Integration has reserve portable stations that can be loaned to a county to assist with SFIS compliance. If a county does not have a portable SFIS station during the intake process and no surplus portable is available, then cash aid should be authorized without delay and SFIS compliance attempted at a later date when a portable station is available, the individual comes to the county office for any other reason, or at redetermination.

8. What is California's Plan for pre-loading Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards up to \$50?

California is not issuing pre-loaded Food Stamp benefits as part of our response to the Katrina Disaster. Counties should assist evacuees in establishing access to Food Stamp benefits from their state of origin and assist them in getting a California EBT card, if eligible for benefits or cash aid in California. See below for the appropriate number to call for card replacements.

9. If a person needs a new EBT card from their prior state of residence, is there an 800 number they can call?

Advise the individual to call the appropriate number below to report a lost or stolen EBT card or to request a replacement card:

Louisiana: 1-888-997-1117 report lost/stolen card only
1-888-524-3578 request a card replacement

Mississippi: 1-866-512-5087 report lost/stolen card only
1-866-449-9488 request a card replacement

Alabama: 1-800-997-8888 report lost/stolen card only
1-866-465-2285 request a card replacement

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact your county CalWORKs consultant. For EBT questions, please contact Stan Cagle, EBT Manager, at (916) 654-1529. Food Stamps questions may be directed to Rosie Avena, Food Stamps Analyst, at (916) 654-1514.

Sincerely,
Original Document
Signed By Charr Lee Metsker
On 10/19/05
CHARR LEE METSKER
Deputy Director
Welfare to Work Division