

Waivers and Funding Related to Hurricane Katrina

ACYF Administration on Children, Youth and Families	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES Administration for Children and Families	
	1. Log No. ACYF-IM-HS-05-04	2. Issuance Date: 09/07/2005
	3. Originating Office: Head Start Bureau	
	4. Key Word: Funding; Waivers; Hurricane Relief	

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

TO: Head Start and Early Head Grantees and Delegate Agencies

SUBJECT: Waivers and Funding Related to Hurricane Katrina

INFORMATION:

Many Head Start grantees have seen large numbers of families moving into their community in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) continues to urge all affected programs to do all they can to be of service to these families. ACF is moving aggressively to remove any impediments to making such assistance possible. Following is a discussion of those areas in which ACF will be seeking to make your job easier as you reach out to meet the needs of evacuee children and families.

Funding

ACF is making available \$15 million to cover ACF costs incurred over the next 30 days by those Head Start grantees providing services to evacuee children and families. There will be no non-Federal share required for any of these funds. As necessary and appropriate, contact your responsible ACF Regional Office to discuss any funding needed by your agency to serve these children. We will advise you should additional funding become available through supplemental appropriations.

Eligibility

Any family which declares it has been forced to leave its home because of Hurricane Katrina should be considered an evacuee. As such, the pre-school age children of these families are to be considered as income eligible for Head Start. If a family does not have a child's birth certificate, programs should accept the family's information about the child's birth date. A note should be included in each such child's file that age and/or income eligibility was determined based on information provided by the child's family.

Facilities

As programs strive to meet the needs of displaced children and families, facility space will clearly be an issue. In order to allow grantees to optimize the use of any space they may currently have access to, we will authorize waivers to grantees to exceed the class size requirements of 45 CFR Part 1306.32(a), so long as the grantee maintains appropriate adult to child ratios and complies with state and local licensing requirements. We will also, on an interim basis, authorize any impacted grantee to serve children in a double session model and to waive the requirements of 45 CFR Part 1306.32(c)(2) so that these children can be served five days a week.

Teacher Credentials

Some programs will likely choose to serve Katrina evacuees by adding additional classrooms. If you are unable to find teachers with Head Start required credentials (i.e., at least a Child Development Associate (CDA)), to staff new classes, you should inform your Regional Office. Any displaced Head Start teachers in your community should be given priority when hiring new classroom staff.

Hours of Service

Should grantees find that their specific circumstances warrant a waiver from the minimum home visit time (i.e., 1 ½ hours) or the minimum classroom time (i.e., 3 hours) such requests should be submitted to their Regional Office, together with an explanation as to why the waiver is being requested.

Health Services

In recognition of the impact of enrolling evacuee children in your program, we understand there could be delays in meeting some of the requirements of 45 CFR Part 1304.20 that mandate the delivery of health services within prescribed time periods. We will work with your program to assure all evacuee children are provided required health services as quickly as possible. Programs should, where possible, acquire any relevant records about health services previously provided to any enrolled child and share those records with appropriate health providers. (Programs should also, where possible, try to acquire the Individualized Education Plan (IEPs) of formerly enrolled Head Start children.)

Early Head Start

As together we strive to serve these children and families, we must be sure to do so in ways that will not put any children at risk. Accordingly, only Head Start programs which currently have an Early Head Start program will be authorized to serve infant- and toddler-age children. Programs without Early Head Start should refer any such children to the child care programs in their community. Particularly in these vulnerable times, it is important to assure that only those with expertise in serving the youngest of our children are authorized to do so.

As other issues come to our attention, we will provide whatever support we can to assist all of you in serving the children and families impacted by Hurricane Katrina. Should you have any questions on anything related to helping evacuee families in your community, please contact your ACF Regional Office.

Thank you for doing all you can to help those families who have lost so much.

Wade F. Horn, Ph.D.

Assistant Secretary for Children and Families

Waivers and Funding Related to Hurricane Katrina. ACYF-IM-HS-05-04. DHHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB. 2005. English.