



Sept. 14, 2005

Expanded Disaster Evacuee Policy

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

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Center Drive

Alexandria, VA
22302-1500

This version replaces the guidance published on September 2, 2005. It has been revised to extend the application period to the end of October and clarify that normal program rules apply beginning with January 2006 issuances.

FNS is setting forth expanded criteria to enable State agencies to better serve people who have evacuated Hurricane Katrina disaster areas and are applying for food stamp benefits in areas where the Disaster Food Stamp Program is not operating. Applications may be accepted under these policies through October 31, 2005.

- State agencies are to certify evacuees from areas affected by the disaster under expedited service rules; however, States will postpone verification through the December 2005 issuance.
- The applicant and his/her family may be certified as a household separate from anyone they are living and purchasing and preparing food with. If the household has split up, the separate parts of the original household may be certified as separate households.
- We are granting temporary exemption from the work rules at 7 CFR 273.7 (work registration and E&T rules) and the ABAWD requirements at 7 CFR 273.24 for victims of the disaster.

Applicants are eligible under this policy for up to 3 full months, plus the month of application. So a household certified in October may be issued 3 months of benefits through the end of December 2005 under this policy. Beginning with January 2006 issuances, participating households will have to satisfy the verification requirements which were postponed and household members subject to the work and ABAWD requirements cited above must comply with these rules. FNS will hold the State agency harmless from QC errors for such certifications.

These policies are based on authority in Section 5 (h) (1) of the Food Stamp Act. [7 U.S.C. 20149h)], which gives the Secretary authority to “establish temporary emergency standards of eligibility for the duration of the emergency....”