



**State of Florida
Department of Children and Families**

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carroll
Secretary

DATE: October 5, 2017 **TRANSMITTAL NO.:** P-17-10-0020

TO: Economic Self-Sufficiency Operations Managers
Economic Self-Sufficiency Program Offices

FROM: Tonyaleah Veltkamp, Chief, Program Policy
(Signature on File)

SUBJECT: Evacuees from Puerto Rico due to Hurricane Maria

EFFECTIVE: Upon Receipt

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information on how to identify and process applications for evacuees from Puerto Rico due to Hurricane Maria. Evacuees can complete an online or paper application and should answer the following question during the application process: "Has anyone in your home received food, cash, or medical assistance from another state or source in the last 30 days?"

Staff must review the response to this question and during the interview determine if the individual/household is an evacuee from Puerto Rico. If the individual/household is an evacuee from Puerto Rico, follow the instructions for each program below:

Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA):

Current policies apply when determining eligibility for Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA). Households must pass all eligibility rules to receive TCA. Staff must continue to refer mandatory work participants to the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), cooperate with Child Support Enforcement (CSE), apply time limits, and meet citizenship and residency requirements.

If an individual/household reports they were receiving cash assistance in Puerto Rico, do not count benefits from Puerto Rico when determining eligibility for cash assistance. Puerto Rico issues cash assistance to recipients on an Electronic Benefit Card (EBT) that will not work in Florida.

Based on the extensive destruction that Puerto Rico suffered from Hurricane Maria, verification for loss of income, immunizations, and Learnfare might be difficult to obtain. If the household is unable to verify loss of income, use the best available information. If the household does not have immunization records or Learnfare verification, accept the client's statement and postpone verification until the next recertification.

1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

Food Assistance:

Applications from Puerto Rican evacuees will be served through the regular Food Assistance Program under regular eligibility rules, including expedited procedures, if applicable. The individual/household is not eligible to participate in the Food For Florida disaster sites for Hurricane Irma because they were not living in one of the 48 counties at the time of the disaster.

If an individual/household reports they received food assistance in Puerto Rico, do not count benefits from Puerto Rico when determining eligibility for food assistance. Puerto Rico issues food assistance benefits through the Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP). The NAP benefits from Puerto Rico are the same as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in Florida, however, the NAP benefits are considered inaccessible and can only be used in Puerto Rico.

Due to the current infrastructure and limited communication with Puerto Rico, current NAP recipients are unable to close their benefits in Puerto Rico. NAP recipients must attest orally that they understand that no member of the household may receive benefits from both NAP and SNAP simultaneously, and that the household will close its NAP case as soon as possible. Staff must read the following statement and document CLRC that the individual/household made a verbal attestation:

“I understand that each member of my household may not receive benefits from the Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at the same time. If I am found eligible for SNAP benefits, I attest under penalty of perjury and disqualification that I will not participate in both programs simultaneously and will close my household’s NAP case at the earliest possible opportunity.”

Medicaid:

If an individual/household reports they are an evacuee from Puerto Rico, apply current policies and procedures when determining eligibility for Medicaid Programs. Evacuees from Puerto Rico who have the intent to reside in Florida, meet the residency requirement. Residency is not contingent on the length of the stay. If the individual/household states an intent to return but has no plans to do so in the foreseeable future, they can be considered a resident of Florida.

Residency does not exist if the evacuee states they are temporarily staying in Florida and have plans to return to Puerto Rico; and, therefore the individual/household is not eligible for Medicaid. All other financial and technical criteria must be met when determining eligibility for Medicaid.

Verification Requirements:

Verification of eligibility factors will be obtained, when possible; however, if verification is not available, self-declaration or best available information for all technical and financial

factors of eligibility will be accepted for evacuees, unless questionable. Document CLRC with all actions taken.

FLORIDA Instructions:

When evacuees report during the interview they are from Puerto Rico, update the flag code on AIIA with "PR" – Hurricane Maria Puerto Rico Evacuees.

If there are policy questions for TCA or food assistance, Region offices may contact Jacinta Murphy at Jacinta.Murphy@myflfamilies.com. If there are policy questions for Medicaid, Region offices may contact Nathan Lewis at Nathan.Lewis@myflfamilies.com.

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