

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER
FAMILY SUPPORT AND CHILD WELFARE SERVICES 09-05
WORK FIRST**

TO: Dear County Director of Social Services

ATTENTION: Work First Supervisors

DATE: October 5, 2005

SUBJECT: Work First Procedures for Hurricane Evacuees

I. Background

In response to the destruction resulting from Hurricanes Rita and Katrina, Work First is helping to coordinate efforts to provide essential services for Work First recipients who have evacuated to North Carolina from Louisiana (LA), Mississippi (MS), Alabama (AL) and Texas (TX). This letter is revised to give information on how to handle Hurricane Rita evacuees. Each county DSS must take and process applications for Work First or Benefit Diversion for these individuals. This letter supersedes DSS Administrative Letter #02-05.

A. Information Concerning Hurricane Katrina Evacuees

Because applicants who are approved for Work First or Benefit Diversion receive Medicaid and applicants who are denied are evaluated, we must follow certain Medicaid procedures.

1. The Medicaid application period for evacuees of Hurricane Katrina has been extended through January 31, 2006. Katrina evacuees have until January 31, 2006 to apply for Medicaid coverage. This means any Katrina evacuee who applies for Work First or Benefit Diversion through January 31, 2006 must be evaluated for Medicaid and given five months of eligibility.
2. The application processing time standard for Katrina Emergency Medicaid applicants remains five work days. This means any Work First or Benefit Diversion application taken on a Katrina evacuee that is not dispositioned within five work days, must have a Medicaid spin-off application completed within five work days.
3. Katrina evacuees who meet North Carolina eligibility requirements are now eligible for up to five months of Medicaid or North Carolina Health Choice (NCHC) coverage.

4. Katrina cases authorized for Work First or Benefit Diversion must receive five months of Medicaid eligibility beginning with the first month of eligibility and the month of August is not included in the five months of eligibility.

Special Use field and payment review period must indicate the fifth month of eligibility. For example, an evacuee applies in October for Work First and is found eligible. October is the first month of coverage. The original payment review period would be through 03/2006. The end date for the special use field would be 02/2006.

For example, an evacuee applies in October for Benefit Diversion and is found eligible. October is the first month of coverage. The original payment review period would be through 12/2005. This person is still eligible for two additional months of Medicaid.

5. Retroactive months are included in the five-month eligibility period, with the exception of August. For individuals whose Work First or Benefit Diversion began in August, begin counting the five-month Medicaid eligibility period with September. These individuals will actually receive six months of Medicaid coverage.

6. In the fourth month of the payment review period complete a review.

a. Begin the review process in time to allow a timely notice period to expire prior to the pull check cut off date in the last month of the payment review period.

b. Terminate the case at the end of the payment review period when the recipient has not provided required information. Allow for timely notice.

B. Information Concerning Hurricane Rita Evacuees

1. Applications for individuals who are displaced by Hurricane Rita, are to be handled as regular Work First applications.

2. Treat applications taken for Rita evacuees in the same manner as an application taken for any individual moving to North Carolina from another state.

a. Verify Texas benefits by calling 1-512-438-3280.

b. Verify Louisiana benefits by calling 1-888-524-3578.

3. The normal processing period applies; however, counties are urged to act on these applications as quickly as possible.
4. Enter the applicant's address on the DSS-8125. If the applicant is in a shelter, use the address of the county DSS agency. Applicants residing in a shelter must pick up their Medicaid card and Work First check each month at the county DSS.

II. Policy Principles

A. Waived Medicaid Requirements

The following requirements are waived for Katrina Emergency Medicaid applicants.

1. Medicaid termination in AL, MS or LA,
2. Verifications requirements excluding possible online verifications, and
3. State residency.
4. Accept applicant's statement for income and assets if verification is not available. Use SOLQ to verify SSA and SSI.

B. Waived Work First/Benefit Diversion Requirements

The following requirements are waived for Katrina evacuees

None

III. SPECIAL POLICY PROCEDURES FOR KATRINA AND RITA EVACUEES

A. Accept the applicant's statement for county/parish and state residence. The applicant must complete and sign the Application for Temporary Medicaid for Hurricane Evacuees, Attachment 1.

B. If a social security number is unknown or unavailable, use zeros. Verify the social security number using SOLQ. Follow procedures in the Enumeration Procedures section of WF-110.

C. Document a local contact address in the case file, if needed, for future notifications.

D. Applicants for Emergency Medicaid for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita are exempt from Carolina Access. Enter the exempt code 9900030 in EIS. Mecklenburg County should enter the exempt code 9900040.

E. Special Indicator Code

1. Katrina Evacuees

a. At the individual level in EIS, enter an Individual Special Use Code of AL (for Alabama), MS (for Mississippi), and LA (for Louisiana).

b. In the Date field beside the Individual Special Use code, enter the first and last month of eligibility. For example, an application taken in September with September eligibility would have dates entered 092005012006.

c. Records must be pulled and corrected on any Work First cases approved without an end date in the Date field beside the Special Use code.

Workers may use the DHREJ TANF EVACUEES REPORT or DHREJ TANF EVACUEES BENEFIT.DIV reports to verify all cases that were keyed for tracking purposes.

2. Rita Evacuees

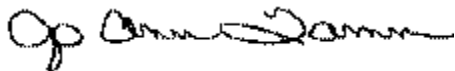
a. At the individual level in EIS, enter an Individual Special Use Code of LR (for Louisiana evacuees from Hurricane Rita) or TX (for Texas evacuees from Hurricane Rita).

b. In the Date field beside the Individual Special Use code, enter the first and last month of the payment review period. For example, an application taken in October with October eligibility would have dates entered 102005092006.

IV. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy is effective October 1, 2005. Should you encounter situations in which you need additional guidance, please contact your Work First Representative.

Sincerely,



Jo Ann Lamb, Section Chief
Family Support and Child Welfare Services Section

JAL/ds

ATTACHMENT

cc: Work First Representatives

Family Support and Child Welfare Monitors

Family Support and Child Welfare Services Team Leaders

Pheon Beal

Sherry Bradsher