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Guidance For Assisting Katrina Clients Not Located at Camp Edwards

Background: The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is now serving 208 Hurricane Katrina evacuees at Camp Edwards (Camp Edwards Evacuees). The Camp Edwards Evacuees were relocated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) from Louisiana on September 8th and 9th. In addition to the Camp Edward Evacuees, other Hurricane Katrina evacuees have relocated to Massachusetts by their own means (Non-Camp Edwards Evacuees). Typically, the Non-Camp Edwards Evacuees are staying with family and/or friends, and will be in need of federal, state and charitable assistance.

The purpose of this memorandum is to explain the process for assisting individuals or families that identify themselves as Hurricane Katrina evacuees, whether they are located at Camp Edwards or elsewhere.

Evacuees Access to Federal, State and Charitable Services

Many Non-Camp Edwards Evacuees will be unable to travel to Camp Edwards because they are staying with family and friends in other areas of the Commonwealth. As such, the following steps should be followed to assist them with federal, state and charitable services:

MASSACHUSETTS TOLL-FREE NUMBER

A Massachusetts toll-free telephone number has been established to connect Hurricane Katrina Evacuees to other available services and programs. The telephone number is **1-800-293-4031**. The hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

AMERICAN RED CROSS

Evacuees may want to register with the American Red Cross for services. This gives them access to funds to meet their immediate emergency needs. Registration also allows them access to future programs added by the American Red Cross for Hurricane Katrina victims. To access these services, Evacuees should contact the local American Red Cross chapter. This information can be found on www.redcross.org or by calling 1-800-975-7585. Additionally, the American Red Cross of Massachusetts Bay has opened a service center to assist with this unprecedented response to Hurricane Katrina. Those currently in the area who were displaced by Hurricane Katrina and need access to Red Cross services (Evacuees at the OTIS Air Force Base will have their own caseworkers down there) are urged to stop into the center for assistance. No appointment is necessary but please note there are multiple dates available below as there may be heavy turnout.

The Red Cross service center is located at 285 Columbus Avenue, Boston, and its hours of operation are:

Monday, September 12, 2005	12:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Thursday, September 15, 2005	12:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Friday, September 16, 2005	12:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Red Cross family assistance workers can assist with immediate disaster caused needs. All American Red Cross disaster assistance is free to disaster victims thanks to generous contributions from the public. In the days and weeks to come, Red Cross disaster relief workers will continue to work with families to meet their immediate disaster caused needs.

All Evacuees **must** register with FEMA to receive access to important Federal benefits. There are three ways to register with FEMA:

- Calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or 1-800-462-7585 for the hearing impaired or
- On-line via the fema.gov website
- At the DRC on base at Camp Edwards

Both systems tend to experience overload at times. Please encourage evacuees to try again as it is the only way to access the FEMA programs.

Federal Programs available through FEMA

Temporary Housing (a place to live for a limited period of time): Money is available to rent a different place to live, or a government provided housing unit when rental properties are not available.

Repair: Money is available to homeowners to repair damage from the disaster that is not covered by insurance. The goal is to make the damaged home safe, sanitary, and functional.

Replacement: Money is available to homeowners to replace homes destroyed in the disaster that are not covered by insurance. The goal is to help the homeowner with the cost of replacing their destroyed home.

Permanent Housing Construction: Direct assistance or money for the construction of a home. This type of help is available only in insular areas or remote locations specified by FEMA, where no other type of housing assistance is possible.

Other Needs: Cash assistance or Financial Assistance is available for necessary expenses and serious needs caused by the disaster. This includes medical, dental, funeral, personal property, transportation, moving and storage, and other expenses that are authorized by law.

Your office should attempt to make available a computer and/or telephone to Evacuees to allow them to register with FEMA.

SOCIAL SECURITY: For Evacuees that are not receiving their social security check, please refer them to <http://www.ssa.gov/emergency/> or 1-800-772-1213

FOOD STAMP BENEFITS

The Department of Transitional Assistance can provide expedited Food Stamp benefits to individuals and families, often on the same day of application. DTA provides a network of 26 local offices in the Commonwealth (see mass.gov/dta for office location information or call 1-800-249-2007).

STATE BENEFITS

PRIOR TO EVACUEES RECEIVING ANY STATE BENEFITS, EVACUEES MUST GO TO THE LOCAL REGISTRY OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND GET A MASSACHUSETTS IDENTIFICATION CARD. PLEASE REFER TO WWW.MASS.GOV/RMV WEBSITE FOR THE NEAREST BRANCH LOCATION. EVACUEES WHO GO TO CAMP EDWARDS WILL RECEIVE THEIR ID AT THE CAMP.

For Evacuees with a temporary or permanent Massachusetts identification card, the following services are available:

Housing Supports

- The Department of Housing and Community Development has state and federal public housing, rental assistance, private housing, homelessness prevention and poverty prevention programs administered by a network of 243 local housing authorities, 8 regional non-profit housing agencies and 25 community action agencies. Please call 617-573-1150 for assistance.
- Katrina evacuees including any former Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Holders or former federal public housing residents should call DHCD at 617-573-1150 and ask for a Katrina Emergency Housing Team Member who will be assigned to assist them in getting in touch with the appropriate provider agencies and in applying for housing.

Nutritional Supports

- The Department of Transitional Assistance can provide expedited Food Stamp benefits to individuals and families, often on the same day of application. DTA provides a network of 26 local offices in the Commonwealth (see mass.gov/dta for office location information or call 1-800-249-2007). It is important to note that under federal guidelines, a state ID may not be necessary to issue Food Stamp benefits to evacuees.
- The Department of Public Health, WIC (Women, Infant's and Children's Nutrition) program will provide nutritional assessment and checks for free food for pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children under 5. These checks can be used to purchase nutritious foods including milk, eggs, cheese, cereal, peanut butter, and formula. WIC has 36 programs with 150 sites. The family should call 1-800-942-1007 to locate the nearest site or if unable to get to a site arrange for a place and time to meet with a WIC staff person.

Financial Services

- The Department of Transitional Assistance will provide a one month emergency cash benefit for evacuees (see mass.gov/dta for office location information or call 1-800-249-2007).

Employment Supports

There are 32 One Stop Centers throughout the Commonwealth that can assist you with job search and job placement. You can find the location of the Career Center nearest to you by calling 617-626-5300 or at www.detma.org/WSCareercenters.htm.

To file for unemployment assistance and for disaster unemployment assistance with the state in which you worked, you can

- Contact the Massachusetts Division of Unemployment Assistance at 1 (877) 626-6800
- Contact one of the One Stop Career Centers
- Directly contact the state in which you worked
 - For Alabama: you must file by telephone at 1 (866) 234-5382
 - For Louisiana: by telephone between 3 pm and 7 pm at 1 (800) 818-7811 and by Internet at www.laworks.net
 - For Mississippi: you must file the claim through the state in which you reside at the time of filing – Contact the Massachusetts Division of Unemployment Assistance at 1 (877) 626-6800

Medical Assistance

- Evacuees are eligible for MassHealth benefits. Please contact 1-800-841-2900 for further information.

DISASTER RECOVERY CENTER (DRC) at Camp Edwards for HURRICANE KATRINA EVACUEES

Under the direction of the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), a Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) has been established at Camp Edwards. The purpose of the DRC is to provide a “one-stop” location for federal, state and charitable services available to the Hurricane Katrina evacuees. Evacuees are welcome to visit the DRC. If evacuees wish to travel to the DRC, please **call 1-800-293-4031** for further instructions. Hours at the base are 9am- 5pm and directions are below. Evacuees should identify themselves as clients of the DRC (Disaster Resource Center), and they will be escorted to the appropriate building.

It is not necessary for people to travel to the DRC. All local Registry of Motor Vehicle offices can supply a Massachusetts Identification Card that will make Katrina Evacuees eligible for state benefits. (See page 3 on accessing State Benefits)

Below is a list of the agencies, which will be present to support the evacuees’ needs.

Federal Agencies at the DRC

Housing and Urban Development
Social Security Agency (Medicare, SSI, SSDI etc)
Federal Emergency Management Agency
United States Postal Service
Social Security Administration
Internal Revenue Service
Veterans Affairs

State Agencies/Charitable Organizations at the DRC

American Red Cross
Department of Transitional Assistance
State Department of Elder Affairs
Department of Workforce Development
Division of Unemployment Assistance
Mass Health (Medicaid)
Department of Veterans Services
Department of Mental Health
Department of Public Health
Salvation Army (If individual assistance programs are available)*

Each agency will have a table set-up with a sign, chairs, phones and computers. There will be daycare available while parents are working with the agencies as well as mental health services. There will also be a phone-bank and computers available to use to apply for various programs through tele-registration numbers or online relief programs.

Directions to Otis Air Force Base

From Points North:

Take Route 3 South to the first roundabout (Sagamore Bridge). Enter Roundabout and take first exit onto 6West/ Scenic Highway.

Stay straight onto US-6. Continue on 6 West. Enter Roundabout and take first exit.

Stay straight onto MA-25E/ MA-28S.

Continue to follow 28S (over Bourne Bridge). Enter next roundabout and take second exit (continuing straight through). At second roundabout (Otis Rotary), go 2/3 around and enter Otis Air Force Base.

From Points West:

Take the MA turnpike West to exit 11A/ 495 South. 495 South becomes MA-25E.

MA-25E becomes MA-28S. Continue to follow 28S (over Bourne Bridge). Enter next roundabout and take second exit (continuing straight through). At second roundabout (Otis Rotary), go 2/3 around and enter Otis Air Force Base.