

ORR Populations Displaced or Affected by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma

Policy Letter 17-03

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Several states continue to feel the effects of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. For ORR populations impacted by the hurricanes, ORR encourages state and nongovernmental organizations to connect affected individuals with federal, state and county disaster assistance. In addition, states and nongovernmental organizations may, as a last resort and after other options have been exhausted, implement the waivers listed below on a case-by-case basis after making a determination that the individual seeking assistance has already received available disaster relief.

Social Services Funding

States may use Refugee Social Services (RSS) funding for additional, immediate emergency services, such as transitional housing assistance and emergency cash assistance due to income loss caused by business closure or disruption, authorized under 45 CFR 400.155(h). States should provide this funding on a case-by-case basis after determining that the individual seeking assistance has already received all available disaster assistance. For more information on the use of RSS funding for additional services under 45 CFR 400.155(h), please see [Policy Letter 16-07](#).

60-Month Limitation on Social Services

On a case-by-case basis after determining that the individual seeking assistance has already received all available disaster assistance, agencies submit a request for the ORR Director to waive the 60-month limitation at 45 CFR 400.152(b) on the provision of social services, pursuant to 45 CFR 400.300.

This case-by-case waiver applies to all ORR eligible populations, and will remain in effect through September 30, 2018 for all states and Wilson/Fish grantees participating in the refugee

resettlement program. Waiving this provision will allow victims of the hurricanes to receive critical social services whether they return to their original communities or relocate elsewhere.

Documentation and Eligibility Guidance for ORR Benefits and Services

When determining eligibility for ORR benefits for individuals that have been displaced by the hurricanes and do not have the required documentation, eligibility workers should ask the applicant for a written declaration, under penalty of perjury, containing name, date of birth, Alien Registration Number, immigration status, date of entry, most recent address, and an acknowledgement that he or she has been displaced as a result of Hurricane Harvey or Hurricane Irma.¹ If the declaration indicates that the applicant is within an immigration status that would confer eligibility for ORR benefits and services, and the individual has been displaced as a result of the hurricanes, the eligibility worker may conclude that the applicant is eligible for ORR benefits and services.

Disaster Assistance Payments

Many of those impacted by Hurricane Harvey or Hurricane Irma, including populations served by the ORR, may have received or will receive various forms of disaster assistance, including cash payments, from federal, state and local governments as well as numerous non-profit organizations. If necessary to ensure that an individual receives needed assistance, agencies should disregard any forms of disaster assistance received from any source by an ORR applicant who has been displaced or evacuated as a result of the hurricanes during any income/asset analysis for the purposes of determining eligibility for ORR benefits and services.²

ORR Discretionary Grants

Grantees in the ORR Preferred Communities (PC) Program should consider that clients whose situations may not have warranted intensive case management previously may now be in need of those services because of the hurricanes. With the displacement and relocation of thousands of people to other sites, ORR PC providers should explore how PC services, including emergency assistance, may be extended to refugees affected by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, in the case that available assistance is somehow inadequate.

Medical Screening

If an individual has missed the 90-day window for medical screening under 45 CFR 400.107, the state may request a waiver of the requirement for determination of the individual's eligibility.

ORR Contacts for Hurricanes Harvey and Irma

Matching Grant grantees may contact Thomas Giossi, the ORR Matching Grant Project Officer, at 202.401.5720 or Thomas.Giossi@acf.hhs.gov.

Please direct any questions about **Social Services** Funding and the waiver of the 60-month limitation on services to Carl Rubenstein, Director of the Division of Refugee Assistance, at carl.rubenstein@acf.hhs.gov.

If a service-provider is having difficulty determining **eligibility** of an individual for benefits or services, please contact Thomas Pabst at 202.401.5398 or Thomas.Pabst@acf.hhs.gov.

For waivers on **medical screening**, states should contact Curi Kim at curi.kim@acf.hhs.gov.

E. Scott Lloyd
Director

Footnotes

1. Please note that an individual does not need a Social Security Number in order to be eligible for ORR programs and services.
2. See Waiver of Administrative Condition, 42 U.S.C. 5141.