



Center for Public Policy Priorities

How Texas is Helping Hurricane Katrina Victims with Food and Housing

FOOD

Food Stamps

- Families displaced by the hurricane are eligible for **Emergency Food Stamps** provided they have limited or no income. There is **no** resource test.
- Displaced families must show proof of identity or sign an affidavit if they do not have personal identification. **No** other documentation is required.
- Families are being certified for 3 months of benefits. There are **no** work requirements for Hurricane victims.
- The maximum benefit is the same as for the regular food stamp program. For example, a family of three with no income may qualify for \$393 in food benefits per month.
- Displaced families that are temporarily living with a host family may qualify for food stamps, even if the host family does not qualify.
- Families should get their EBT card and benefits within 24 hours.
- Displaced families need to go to a local office to apply (call 2-1-1 to locate an office). **Note:** The state has also sent staff and volunteers to help people apply at the disaster recovery centers located near or within most major refugee shelters around the state. Some of these centers are already “wired” to take food stamp applications on site; others will come online as soon as the technology has been set up to enable an Internet connection.

School meals

- Displaced children are eligible for free meals if they enroll in a Texas public school (or private school if the school participates in the federal school local program).
- If a displaced family moves in with a host family, the displaced family is considered homeless and its children are automatically eligible for free meals regardless of the income of the host family.
- Meal applications from the displaced family are **not** required. If a school is unable to collect a meal application from the displaced family, school officials may complete the application on behalf of the child based on the best available knowledge of the household's economic circumstances. Schools also may feed directly from a list provided by the district's “homeless liaison.”
- Households certified for emergency food stamps are automatically eligible for free school meals.

WIC

- Residents of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama who are eligible for WIC in their home state and are forced to relocate to Texas will be eligible to receive WIC benefits here.
- People who had WIC benefits in those states and any other displaced family that qualifies for WIC should contact the nearest local WIC clinic or call the Texas WIC Program at 1-800-942-3678 for local WIC clinic locations.'
- State officials are working on ways to get WIC to hurricane victims who are staying in large shelters and are unable to get to a local WIC clinic to enroll.
- WIC provides nutrition education, food, formula and other services for low-income pregnant women, new mothers, infants and children under 5. WIC clients get and vouchers for certain food items that they can use at grocery stores throughout the state. Food packages vary depending on the needs of the client, but may include infant formula, milk, cheese, cereal, juice, eggs, peanut butter and beans.
- 2,500 WIC stores in Texas may accept vouchers previously issued in Louisiana or Alabama to WIC clients who have evacuated to Texas.

WIC Income Limits	
Household Size	Maximum monthly gross income
1	\$1,476
2	1,978
3	2,481
4	2,984
5	3,486
Each additional person	+503

Child and Adult Care Food Program – CACFP

CACFP is a federally funded food program that reimburses homeless shelters, child care centers, and adult day homes for meals they serve to eligible children and adults in their care. In general, these institutions must be located in low-income areas or serve low-income individuals. For more information see <http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/programs/snp/index.html>.

CACFP in Emergency Shelters

- State agencies may designate any appropriate facility as an emergency shelter and may waive the application requirements for an agency to participate in CACFP in these situations.
- When a facility is designated as an emergency shelter, all children through age 18 and functionally impaired adults or persons age 60 years or older may receive up to three free meals (breakfast, lunch, and supper, or two meals and a snack) per day.
- If a school is providing educational services and also housing displaced persons eligible for CACFP, the school may sign an agreement to serve up to three meals per day without charge to such persons, as described above. The state agency may also waive the application requirements for these schools.

CACFP in Child and Adult Care Facilities

- If a facility cannot obtain income information or an enrollment form a displaced person, the provider may complete an application on behalf of the displaced participant, based on the best available knowledge of the household's economic circumstances. Providers may provide free meals to these displaced persons and should keep a list of the people they serve as an alternate means to document their eligibility for free meals.
- Displaced families certified for emergency food stamps are automatically eligible for free meals in child care centers and certain family day care homes.
- Displaced individuals may be considered homeless and therefore eligible for free meals even if they are temporarily residing with another family and that family does not qualify for CACFP.

HOUSING

For information about **emergency shelter** or **temporary housing** for families displaced by the hurricane, the Texas Low-Income Housing Coalition has a list of resources. This list may be viewed and downloaded at www.texashousing.org/txlihis/hurricane.html. In addition, the Texas Homeless Network has created a comprehensive database of shelter space available in Texas, located at www.thn.org. This database will be updated at least twice a day.