



*Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Transitional Assistance*

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Secretary

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Commissioner

**Online Guide Transmittal 2017-82  
September 1, 2017**

**To:** Department of Transitional Assistance Staff  
**From:** Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management  
Paul Sutliff, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations  
**Re:** Cross Programs – Hurricane Harvey-related applications

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**Overview**

On August 25, 2017 Hurricane Harvey made landfall in Texas and proceeded to severely impacts areas of Louisiana. While the full extent of damages and loss has not yet been realized, the severity of this storm has made it necessary for people to evacuate the devastated areas. Some evacuees have sought out family and friends in Massachusetts.

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**Purpose**

Some residents of Texas and Louisiana have reached out for assistance. An applicant must be physically present in Massachusetts to apply for assistance here. Residents must be referred to call their state's applicable number:

- **Texas:** 1-877-541-7905 to apply for assistance or request a replacement of SNAP benefits due to household misfortune
- **Louisiana:** 1-888-524-3578 to preregister for D-SNAP, apply for benefits or request a replacement of SNAP benefits due to household misfortune.

The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to advise staff of potential requests for assistance by new-to-Massachusetts residents.

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**Eligibility**

While the eligibility for DTA-administered benefits has not changed, the devastation from Hurricane Harvey is extraordinary. Applicants who have fled the storm affected areas may have few, if any verifications with them. Case managers must use every means possible to assist the applicant in obtaining necessary verifications. This includes utilizing data matches and sources, collateral contact (such as a family member to establish identity) or the applicant's self-declaration, if no other verification is available. Staff are reminded to be detailed in their narratives as to steps taken to assist in the verification process.

**Reminder:** Staff are reminded that there is no durational requirement for Massachusetts residency nor is a client required to intend to live here permanently.

**Tracking**

Applicants who have relocated to Massachusetts due to Hurricane Harvey must have this reason for application recorded on BEACON. In the Request for Assistance workflow, effective August 31, 2017 a new type has been added to the Primary reason list: Hurricane Harvey and must be selected for these applicants.

**SNAP-only applicants**

SNAP-only applications will be directed to a centralized unit when the Source is listed as Hurricane Harvey for processing. Clients applying in a TAO for this reason must sign a paper application and have an RFA completed. The signed application must be scanned into the client's case record and an EBT card issued, if verification of identity has been established, before leaving the TAO. TAO staff must contact the Central Office personnel at 617-348-5125 or 844-786-5777 who will complete the interview with the client and process these applications.

SNAP applications not made in-person will likely not have Hurricane Harvey identified as the reason for applying. These applications will be processed following established procedures. If during the course of the interview, Hurricane Harvey is identified as their reason for relocating to Massachusetts and applying, TAO staff must contact the Central Office personnel at 617-348-5125 or 844-786-5777 as soon as the interview has been completed.

**Cash and combo applications**

Hurricane Harvey clients applying for both SNAP and cash assistance or cash only will be processed and evaluated through established procedures. Before a cash or combo case is denied, the TAO Director must email the Cash Policy Director and Associate Commissioner for Change Management.

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**Central Office Staff**

These pending applications and associated actions will not appear in the FAW model if Hurricane Harvey is selected as the Source. These cases will appear on a view for centralized processing the day following the application.

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**Questions**

If you have any policy or procedural questions, after conferring with the appropriate TAO personnel, please have your Systems Information Specialists or TAO management email the DTA Mailbox.

Systems issues should be directed to the Systems Support Help Desk.

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