



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

CHARLES D. BAKER  
Governor

MARYLOU SUDDERS  
Secretary

KARYN POLITO  
Lieutenant Governor

JEFF McCUE  
Commissioner

**Online Guide Transmittal 2017-82A  
September 29, 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 – Applications as a Result of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria

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**Overview**

On August 25, 2017 Hurricane Harvey made landfall in Texas. Approximately a week later Hurricane Irma hit several Caribbean islands before making landfall in Florida. While the full extent of damages and loss has not yet been realized, the severity of these storms 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**

The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to advise staff of potential requests for assistance by new-to-Massachusetts residents and systems changes to support the tracking of such applicants.

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## Eligibility

While the eligibility for DTA-administered benefits has not changed, the devastation from Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria is extraordinary. Applicants who have fled the storm-affected areas may have little or no documentation. 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 documentation 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, Hurricane Irma or Hurricane Maria must have the appropriate reason recorded on BEACON. Effective August 31, 2017 a new type, Hurricane Harvey was added to the Source list on BEACON. Effective September 12, 2017 Hurricane Irma was added and effective September 22, 2017 Hurricane Maria was made available. It is critical that the correct type be selected for these applicants to ensure accurate tracking.

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## Verification of Duplicate Participation

Requests for termination of cash assistance and/or SNAP benefits can be sent to the following emails by state:

- Florida: email SNR.D 11.SFL.CallCenter@myflfamilies.com.
- Georgia: ga.paris@dhs.ga.gov
- Louisiana: cara.shields@la.gov
- Virgin Islands: emmanueline.archer@dhs.vi.gov

Use the subject line "Hurricane IRMA Verification".

For termination of benefits in Texas call: 1-877-541-7905 and follow the prompts.

Request for termination of cash assistance in Puerto Rico can be directed to: 787- 289-7600, Ext. 2377. Staff are reminded that for SNAP, duplicate participation is not a concern as Puerto Rico operates a separate Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP). It is considered to be inaccessible for the SNAP eligibility process. Therefore, verification of NAP benefits or case closure for customers who were previously participating in Puerto Rico must not be requested.

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**Obsolete  
Transmittal**

This Online Guide Transmittal obsoletes 2017-82

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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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