Memorandum

#21-035

TO: WIC Regional Directors
    WIC Local Agency Directors

FROM: Amanda Hovis, Director
      Nutrition Education/Clinic Services Unit
      Nutrition Services Section

DATE: May 3, 2021

SUBJECT: Procedures for Disaster Victims – Hurricane Season

Hurricane season officially begins June 1, 2021. The following procedures are included in the Texas Disaster Plan and outlined in this memo as a quick reference.

Follow these procedures serving current WIC clients affected by a disaster. These clients shall be given first priority for appointments and benefit issuance. Every effort should be made to see them as soon as possible.

Replacement of Participant Benefits

WIC will replace food benefits for clients from areas impacted by a disaster, unless they are residing in a shelter where food is being provided. WIC can issue formula if formula or specialty formula is not being issued at the shelter. If cards were lost, or food was damaged or left behind, benefits can be replaced. All participants affected by a disaster must have a completed electronic WIC Self-Declaration Form for Disaster Victims in order to obtain replacement benefits.

I. Families transferring to another Local Agency Within their Certification Period and with a Texas WIC Card

1. Transfer family to gaining clinic
2. To reissue current month’s benefits, place family in disaster mode. Select the Disaster Type and enter the disaster name

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under Disaster Type Details. WIC staff will review the *WIC Self-Declaration Form for Disaster Victims* with the family and complete it in TXIN.

3. Modify benefits for current month, write to the card and provide the Shopping List

II. **Families transferring to another Local Agency and lost the Texas WIC Card**

1. Transfer family to gaining clinic
2. Lock card as lost
3. To reissue current month’s benefits, place family in disaster mode. Select the Disaster Type and enter the disaster name under Disaster Type Details. WIC staff will review the *WIC Self-Declaration Form for Disaster Victims* with the family and complete it in TXIN.
4. Expedite benefits, assign a new card, modify benefits for current month, write to the card and provide the Shopping List, link to the Vendor List on the WIC website, and information on the Mobile Shopping App which includes a list of vendors.

III. **Families transferring to another Local Agency Without Benefits**

1. Transfer family to gaining clinic
2. Process as usual

IV. **Assisting Out-of-State Disaster Victims**

A. Individuals presenting an out of state *Verification of Certification* (VOC), *WIC ID card*, or other state food instruments, shall be treated as an out-of-state transfer. Assign risk code 502 (*Transfer of Certification*), if their VOC does not indicate risk codes that were assigned during the out of state certification, provide a certification end date at the end of the current month (i.e., May 31, 2021) and issue current month benefits.

B. For those individuals who do not have any proof of being an out of state WIC client, they shall be certified per procedure V. Certifications below. Staff shall request the **highest level of documentation available** from all disaster victims. Self-declaration and written statements may be used. Staff shall ensure that minimal or no barriers are presented to these clients. Benefits shall be provided for **one month at a time**.
V. Certifications

Applicants from the disaster areas requesting WIC services will be processed using the *WIC Self-Declaration Form for Disaster Victims* when there is lack of proof for identification, residency, and/or income. When proof exists, the following procedures should be followed.

Proof of Identification – Obtain one of the following in the order listed:

- Verification of Certification
- WIC EBT card
- Any of the acceptable documents listed in *WIC Policy CS:05.0 T*
- Applicant, with staff assistance, should complete the Identification statement on the *WIC Self-Declaration Form for Disaster Victims*

Proof of Residency – Obtain one of the following in the order listed:

- Proof of residency per *WIC Policy CS:06.0 T*
- Letter from individual/shelter where the client is living
- Applicant, with staff assistance, should complete the Residency statement on the *WIC Self-Declaration Form for Disaster Victims*

Proof of Income – Obtain one of the following in the order listed:

- Proof of income per *WIC Policy CS:07.0 T*
- Written statement that client is living with cash-on-hand and request that the client document the amount
- Applicant, with staff assistance should complete the Proof of Income statement on the *WIC Self-Declaration Form for Disaster Victims*

Certifications

- Certify applicant.
- Anthropometrics and blood work may be deferred for 90 days on a case-by-case basis

- Those who are staying with relatives or residing in shelters are considered homeless. Therefore, policy CS:35.0 Certification of Those Living in Shelters and Institutions may apply. If the client self-reports as homeless, use risk code 801, *Homelessness*.

- Review *WIC Policy FD:12.0 T, Food Packages*, to assist in issuing the appropriate food package to meet each individual’s needs. No Refrigeration food packages may be appropriate but are not mandatory.
**Nutrition Education**

- Participants may be offered lessons they can complete at home such as self-paced, web-based, or take-home lessons
- Clients do not need to provide documentation of completion of class

**VI. Breastfeeding Clients**

Breast pumps can be issued to any evacuated breastfeeding WIC clients currently enrolled in the Texas WIC Program. It is essential that WIC staff determine access to electricity prior to issuance.

Both the multi-user and single-user pumps have battery and car adapter capability and can be used without electricity. If your local agency does not have car adapters in stock, the SA encourages using lactation service funding to purchase some for these purposes.

Multi-user electric pumps can be loaned to evacuees who are separated from their infants; however, it is recommended that single-user electric pumps be issued in place of the multi-user pumps unless displaced evacuees are living with family at a permanent address in the area. When issuing a single-user pump, please make sure to inform participants that any local agency in Texas can troubleshoot and/or replace the pump if it seems to lose suction or malfunctions.

Manual pumps can be issued for any reason and may be helpful for evacuated participants who do not have access to electricity. An electric pump can be issued at a later date if needed. If an evacuee was issued an electric breast pump at a previous appointment but is now without electricity and cannot rely on batteries or car adapters, the local agency can issue a manual pump.

The FY20 Texas Disaster Plan is located on [Egnyte Connect](https://egnyte.com). If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Information Response Management Group (IRM), at (877) 341-4491 option #6, option #4, followed by option #2 or e-mail IRM Policy Inbox at IRM-Policy@hhs.texas.gov.

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