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	3. Originating Office: Office of Head Start	
	4. Key Word: Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria; Disaster Relief; Response and Recovery Efforts; Disaster Assistance; Natural Disaster	

**PROGRAM INSTRUCTION**

**TO:** Head Start and Early Head Start Programs Impacted by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria

**SUBJECT:** Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria Disaster Assistance Funds

**INSTRUCTION:**

This Program Instruction (PI) outlines the process used to request Disaster Assistance funds to restore Head Start and Early Head Start services following Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, including replacement of damaged or destroyed property and facilities. It is also intended to assist governing bodies and key management staff in determining the amount and types of assistance needed.

President Trump signed the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (the Act) on February 9, 2018. The Act provides \$637,500,000 in emergency funding for necessary expenses directly related to the consequences of hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, including making payments under the Head Start Act. This funding is available for obligation by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through September 30, 2021.

The 2017 hurricane season was among the most destructive in history, with Harvey, Irma, and Maria affecting Florida, Texas, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The extent of service interruption and damage to property as a consequence of these hurricanes varies dramatically. It is not possible to identify in advance all of circumstances in which Disaster Assistance funds may be needed to address the consequences of the 2017 hurricanes.

Grantees are not limited to a single application and can be funded incrementally based on specific project needs. Funding decisions will be made based on information in the application and depending upon overall funding availability and comprehensive needs. Disaster recovery needs may not fully reflect how services were delivered prior to the 2017 hurricanes, but will be responsive to current understanding of communities.

**Funding Requests**

Grantees should engage in a careful assessment of current programmatic and community needs that takes into consideration the immediate, temporary, and long-term consequences and

associated costs resulting from these hurricanes. Application narratives should clearly explain which of the following categories of funding are included in the request:

1. Facilities
2. Materials, Supplies, and Equipment
3. Program Operations
4. Additional Health, Mental Health, Dental, and Nutrition Services
5. Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA)
6. Disaster Recovery Expenses Incurred Prior to Availability of Funds under the Act

Each proposed grant activity should have clear timelines for execution and completion. Project completion timelines, including major activities within each phase, need to be clearly stated in the application. We have provided a brief description of each area to assist programs in preparing funding requests.

### *1. Facilities*

Disaster Assistance funds may be requested to cover costs associated with repairs, renovations, purchase, and construction of facilities. Requests for funds to cover planning costs, including assessments; architectural and engineering services; and requests for bids, may also be submitted. Grantees are encouraged to make a thorough assessment of their temporary and long-term facility needs, including outdoor play areas. Structural damage and environmental problems not properly identified and addressed can create hazards and health risks months after initial damage occurs. We encourage programs to consider obtaining the services of a structural engineer, architect, and environmental consultant during the assessment phase so that all costs necessary to ensure full restoration are identified. Programs should take into account the costs of meeting current building codes. Facilities activities within the scope of Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) at [Subpart E—Facilities, 45 CFR § 1303](#) must be supported by an application, as required, and all projects must comply with applicable building regulations, requirements, and codes. Grantees must provide assurance that requested funds will not be used for costs reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), under a contract for insurance, or by self-insurance.

***Please note:*** Administration for Children and Families (ACF) grantees that purchase, construct, or renovate facilities with Head Start funds are required to submit standard form (SF)-429 Real Property Status Report and its attachments. As such, in addition to the 1303 application for the Disaster Assistance fund request, SF-429-B Request to Acquire, Improve, or Furnish must be submitted in the Online Data Collection (OLDC) system. See [Discretionary Post-Award Requirements, ACF-PI-HS-17-03 Electronic Submission of Real Property Standard Form \(SF\)-429 and Attachments](#), and the applicable administrative requirements 45 CFR [§75.318](#) and [§75.343](#) for additional information. Also, as per 45 CFR § 1303.42 (a)(1) and (b), before a grantee can apply for funds to purchase, construct, or renovate a facility under § 1303.44, it must establish, among other things, that the proposed purchase, construction, or major renovation is necessary because of a lack of suitable facilities in the grantee's service area will inhibit the operation of the program.

## *2. Materials, Supplies, and Equipment*

Some grantees have reported significant losses in materials, supplies, furnishings, and equipment. Programs should conduct a thorough review of each impacted center to ensure funding requests cover all costs necessary to replace lost or damaged vehicles, equipment, materials, furnishings, and supplies. Reviews of program losses should include outdoor play areas, kitchens, program and administrative offices, and any other service areas. Programs may also request vehicles, equipment, materials, furnishings, and supplies needed to support the delivery of temporary services until program services can be fully restored. Refer to [ACF-IM-HS-17-02 Disaster Recovery from 2017 Hurricanes](#) to ensure that needed approval is obtained prior to purchase of equipment exceeding \$25,000 through May 31, 2018, and subsequently for the purchase of equipment exceeding \$5,000.

**Please note:** ACF grantees that purchase any tangible personal property, equipment with a unit cost of \$5,000 or more, or residual supplies with an aggregate fair market value exceeding \$5,000 are required to submit SF-428 Tangible Personal Property Form. As such, the SF-428 Attachment C—Disposition Request for equipment and supplies must be submitted to your assigned Regional Grants Office for processing and approval. See [Discretionary Post-Award Requirements](#) and [ACF-PI-HS-17-04 Federal Reporting of Standard Forms \(SF\) 425 and 428](#), and the applicable administrative requirements 45 CFR [§75.320](#) and [§75.321](#) for additional information.

## *3. Program Operations*

We are aware some families relocated as a consequence of the 2017 hurricanes. Others remained in their community, but may be displaced from their homes. Many more families are experiencing homelessness than before the hurricanes. Programs should make every effort to assess the immediate and ongoing service needs of communities in their service area.

Programs may consider home-based services, double sessions, and increasing hours per day or days per year to meet community needs. For example, offering double sessions can serve more children on a temporary basis, but longer days and summer services may better meet the continuity needs of children who are homeless or in temporary housing. Lowering teacher-child ratios to temporarily increase the number of teachers per classroom may also be needed to safely support evolving program schedules and transitions in services. Programs should consider the full range of services and supports for families that are necessary to support or supplement program operations until full services can be restored.

## *4. Additional Health, Mental Health, Dental, and Nutrition Services*

Children, families, and staff have endured significant disruption and stress as a result of the 2017 hurricanes. In some areas, homes may still be without power or safe drinking water. Families may not be able to fully meet their health and nutritional needs under such circumstances. Post-hurricane conditions also enhance the risk of wound infections and the spread of diseases, such as leptospirosis, a bacterial infection. Programs must consider actions they can take in collaboration with community partners to address health, mental health, dental, and nutritional needs resulting from the hurricanes. This could include hiring or contracting with qualified practitioners who can work in centers directly with children, families, and staff. Programs may

also determine they need to hire additional family workers or other staff to support recovery post-hurricanes.

#### *5. Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA)*

The Office of Head Start (OHS) will develop strategies and resources, including through the T/TA system, to support programs impacted by the 2017 hurricanes. We recognize that each program has learned a lot as a result of experiencing these disasters. Programs have identified actions and strategies needed to strengthen and build emergency response procedures, staff capacity, facilities, and professional development. This is also an opportunity for local programs to collaborate with relief organizations and other early childhood programs in their communities. If requesting T/TA funding in accordance with the Head Start Act § 648(d), grantees should clearly state the activities for which this funding will be used.

#### *6. Disaster Recovery Expenses Incurred Prior to Availability of Funds under the Act*

OHS provided flexibility for grantees to modify their operating budgets to utilize operating funds to initiate disaster recovery activities. Grantees may apply for Disaster Assistance funds to reimburse the cost of necessary expenses directly related to the consequences of the hurricanes that were previously paid with operating funds. Disaster Assistance funds paid as reimbursements are not unrestricted funds and must be used for allowable program or disaster recovery expenditures.

When submitting requests for Disaster Assistance, grantees must explain how the funds relate to a consequence of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, or Maria. They also must provide assurance that requested funds will not be used for costs reimbursed by FEMA, under a contract for insurance, or by self-insurance.

### **Award Information and Restrictions**

Eligible grantees will receive Disaster Assistance funds as a separate grant award from their base Head Start and Early Head Start operations grant(s). Disaster Assistance funds must be awarded by OHS by September 30, 2021. During the period of funding availability, grantees may request needed Disaster Assistance funds all at once or make subsequent requests for needed funds.

All Disaster Relief funds must be expended by recipient grantees within 24 months of their award date, unless a class waiver has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Any funds not expended must be returned to HHS.

None of the Disaster Assistance funds awarded to grantees will be included in the calculation of the grantee's base grant in subsequent fiscal years. Disaster Assistance funds are not subject to the allocation requirement of Section 640(a) of the Head Start Act.

Obligations incurred for expenses directly related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, or Maria prior to receipt of Disaster Assistance funds, if otherwise allowable, may be charged to the grantee's Disaster Assistance award.

Disaster Assistance funds are not available for costs that are reimbursed by FEMA, under a contract for insurance, or by self-insurance. Any OHS Disaster Assistance funds awarded that are subsequently paid by FEMA, commercial insurance, or self-insurance must be reported by the recipient and repaid to the awarding agency.

OHS will closely monitor Disaster Assistance grant awards. Reporting content and frequency requirements will be established by OHS, and on-site visits may be required prior to expenditure of certain funded activities. Financial and programmatic reporting of Disaster Assistance-funded activities and expenses will be required of all recipient grantees.

In addition to all the information included in this PI, grantees must also comply with all award terms and conditions.

### **Submission of Funding Applications**

All funding requests must be submitted in Head Start Enterprise System (HSES) in accordance with Regional Office guidance using the following standard forms and back-up documents:

- [SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance](#)
- [SF-424A Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs](#)
- A narrative that describes the proposed use of funds
  - All activities and projects must include a timeline clearly indicating when significant project milestones or activities will be executed or occur and when the overall project or activity will be completed
- Governing body and Policy Council decisions
- Non-federal share waiver request, if necessary
- If requesting funds for major renovation, construction, or purchase of facilities, you must also submit:
  - An [SF-429 Real Property Status Report—Cover Page with Attachment B](#)
    - Submission instructions can be found at <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/pi/acf-pi-hs-17-03>
  - An application fully compliant with the requirements under [HSPPS Subpart E—Facilities, 45 CFR § 1303](#)

Additional project or activity information may be required depending on the proposed use of funds.

Please contact your program and grant specialists if you have any questions about submitting a funding application. We are committed to supporting your program throughout this rebuilding and restoration phase.

Thank you for your work on behalf of children and families.

/ Ann Linehan /

Ann Linehan

Acting Director  
Office of Head Start

See also:

[ACF-IM-HS-17-02 Disaster Recovery from 2017 Hurricanes](#)