

Initial Disaster Response and Recovery for 2017

Ann Linehan: And we have a PowerPoint here that really is devoted to talking to some of the initial disaster recovery and response activities, and flexibilities. And really our, our major, major goal here is to be supportive to you throughout this grueling process of, of recovery. We are still working hard every day to get accurate information. We rely a lot on sources, resources, and partners. And of course, the best information we're going to get about your program is from you, and we know that you have been in constant contact with your regional offices. And I know that some folks, particularly our colleagues in Puerto Rico that haven't even been able to reach out because they don't have any internet, or any electricity, or, or phone.

So we will continue to reach out, again, to get the best profile of where you are in your own recovery and what your needs are. I will say this is about what you can do now within your own current budgets, and we hope and we expect that soon we will know what Congress has appropriated to support longer-term recovery efforts. But this is just not focusing on what will come with Congress, but this is the here and now. I think our major goal and we know it is yours, is to reconnect children and families to services and support as quickly as possible, and we know those services and supports may be, look different than what we typically do as Head Start operations. But we believe that we can be creative and resourceful, and provide some level of normalcy to children and their families, hopefully quickly. I mentioned now organizations. We have been in touch with Save the Children, with Urban Strategies, who is working with World Visions. And we are working with our own emergency and response division here, and we want to try to leverage obviously the resources and knowledge that they have. And we will share information with them. Again, we want to leverage the resources and make sure that we're not duplicating efforts.

We also know that from other hurricane, that we are very mindful that your staff, including those of you that are listening today, are supporting your families, but your staff has also suffered enormous losses. We know just of one situation where one of our programs in Puerto Rico reported that 50 percent of the staff have lost their own homes. So we want to be mindful of supporting our staff, as well as our families. The other thing that we all know is that recovery is a very long process, and again, as I stated earlier, this, this IM focuses on immediate steps. I was just at a ribbon cutting a couple of weeks ago in Hoboken, New Jersey, for their new building that was built after their building was destroyed in Hoboken, New Jersey. So that is five years later. So we know that recovery is a very long process. So this is the initial steps in our journey to support you. Late last week, we had the IM was issued. And that's really what we're basing this PowerPoint on today. We also want to mention that this IM was also issued in Spanish, I think, I believe on Monday of this week. It's -- we hope it's detailed. We hope it's clear. But we also hope that as you are listening today, there is an opportunity for you to type in your questions along the way. We will try to get to those, also. We also know that in addition to those folks that have been impacted by the hurricane, you have neighboring Head Start programs, or we may have families that are relocating from one state to another. So we are calling out to your neighboring Head Start programs, or other programs that might find that they have families moving into their services area, and consider, "Hey what is that we can do within our existing services to support those families who now have maybe no home, or certainly no, no Head Start program to go to?"

As part of the consideration as, you know, can you stretch it? Is there any stretching that you can do with your physical resources, be it supply, equipment, obviously facilities, and we can talk a little bit

about some of the flexibility around regulations so we can hopefully find ways, creative ways to serve more children. And of course, the human aspects, from you staff to your social workers, position and mental health personnel. I think the major thing that you're going to see throughout is we really need to rely on the judgement and leadership of the governing bodies and management. It's vital for recovery. We don't know what you're experiencing. You are going to have to make intentional decisions, and we want provide as much flexibility, and know that we know that you have the knowledge to do what's best within your community. We also want, we will review the Head Start requirements that are going to be waived, but we also want to clear that we can't waive something that could be ever endanger the health and safety of children, or increase the risk or misuse of federal funds. And we say that not only as protection for children, but also as a -- an advocacy position for not putting guy in harm's way. I'm going to turn I over to, I think Fran. Yep. Fran is going to talk about, more about program operations.

Fran Majestic: Thank you, Ann. And before I jump into that, I do want to acknowledge that there may be folks on the phone who aren't able to see this webinar. And if you have questions, we've set up a special email address. It's called hurricanewebcast@hsicc.org. So if you need that --

Ann: Can you repeat that, Fran?

Fran: Sure. It's hurricanewebcast, all one word, at hsicc.org. And we really do want to hear from you if you have questions, we're here to help. So I'd like to start by talking a little bit about the eligibility recruitment selection and enrollment. And some of the flexibilities that we have there based on what have been published in this IM. If you are a program that could be, have Head Start and Early Head Start, you are no longer restricted to the current funded enrollment for each of those programs for this program year. So if you have more preschoolers, or more infants and toddlers, that you can serve, you can go ahead and do that. And we'll talk a little bit more about base and ratios in a moment. If you do not operate Early Head Start at this time but in fact you operate another program for infant and toddlers. So it means that you have the appropriate base and qualified infant-toddler staff to be able to serve some our youngest children, contact your regional offices. We'd like to help you support those very young kids.

Ann: I think that Fran, also, even if they weren't running another program, if they found, that they had, you know, what would be adequate infant-toddler space, and in fact they are claiming that they teachers, infant-toddler teachers from places that are impacted that are not working, we would certainly want to encourage that, also.

Fran: Oh, that's absolutely right, Ann. There could be staff in the near area who have those kinds of qualifications, and you could put something together rather quickly. That's a perfect point. Also if you have age-eligible children who have lost their homes or abandoned their rooms, they now meet the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless. So take a look at that. We want to provide some flexibility. If our misplaced families don't have documentation in hand. If they've lost their homes, they likely don't have access to the kind of paperwork that will speak to their eligibility, but we know by virtue of the fact that they don't have their home, or if they're having to bunk-in with other family members they now meet that definition. So take a look at that.

Ann: And I think here -- and I know further than you, we can think about [Inaudible] monitoring. Right? So whether or not you are an impacted program, or a neighboring program that can help out, we will

make accommodations around monitoring these things and understanding that you're meeting an urgent need, and trying to provide services to children and families.

Fran: I think that's an excellent point. And also, for the programs that have been directly impacted, we are, we don't want you to worry about monitoring at this point. We're, we'll make some accommodations for that, as well. Alright. So let's move on and talk a bit about program options. And hours of operations. So, if you are a program that's been directly affected or you are nearby, you can serve impacted or displace children in any program option without prior approval for this school year. So for example, you only in the past served center-based children. You haven't done home-based. But in fact, you have some families who can benefit from that. If it's an operating program option you haven't run before, you can now move to that option without prior approval. You could also add hours or days, or reduce the hours or days if you are working to accommodate those impacted children.

And what we ask that you do is notify your regional office through the Head Start enterprise system, that you will be making those accommodations so that we are aware of it. In terms of space, class size, and ratios. In the IM, we indicate that you can exceed the class and groups size, but we don't want to make accommodations around ratios. Ratios are critically important. We have children who have been effected by disasters. We don't want to reduce the number of staff that would be available for those children. But we understand that due to space, we may need to exceed the class and group size a little bit. The other point that you have to remember if you are considering that is that you'll still have to meet licensing requirements. And we know that those requirements vary pretty dramatically across different areas that have been impacted by the, by the hurricane.

Ann: So I think -- And when, when we say that about the local licensing, its very possible that some states, and territories, and municipalities, may make some wayward accommodations around their own licensing, and if they do, I mean, we can follow that, too. Because we're saying meet, meet what basically the local licensing is. So if they make adjustments to accommodate, I think we're saying we will follow along with that.

Fran: Yeah. And I think, too, you know, if you want to do this, and there are some real barriers, please do let us know about that. I think we'd want to hear. And I remember that last year we were able to work in partnership with the State of Louisiana around some of these kinds of issues. So if you are going to do the space-class size ratios, in any of these cases, if you are doing a change of scope, or exceeding the class or group size, or those types of things, do work directly with your regional office. And again, we ask that you document that in correspondence so that others of us can also be a part of the conversation. Alright. In terms of additional classrooms staffing, and teacher credentials, there may be grantees or neighboring grantees who can open additional classrooms to serve displaced children. And we ask that if you're going to do that, take a look at displaced staff, if at all feasible. We know that our staff are suffering, as well. And some of them are very worried about their jobs.

There may not be a center where they were working previously. And employment will be critically important if they are stable enough to get to work and they've got the qualifications, we want to bring them in as soon as possible. So, please do look around and coordinate with other programs to the extent you can. And we are not going to make accommodation around background checks and state child care licensing requirements. So the background checks that we're asking you to take a look at are the background checks that you have always been doing that are within the current Head Start Act. So

we want to make sure safety is number one for our children So with that, I believe I am going to turn it over to Marco to speak little bit to safety within the environments that children are being served.

Marco Beltran: Thank you Fran. Ensuring a safe environment is critical, considering that children are particularly sensitive to [Inaudible] exposures to a variety of contaminants. We know that children undergo many different and rapid stages of growth and development that can easily be disturbed by environmental contaminants. It is in our nature to get out, to get our programs up and running after an emergency, because we know that establishing routines and bringing back normalcy is important to the mental health of children and families that we serve, but we have to ensure that the environments that our children are in are going to be safe. What we have learned from previous disasters is that flood water carried contaminants that can cause illness in young children, and that do not declare themselves for months after an event.

Grantees are cautioned to be sure services are resumed only when children can be safely served in their centers and outdoor play area. As it relates to flood water, exposure to excess water brings about increased risk of mold, deterioration of lead paint at present, chemical petroleum spills and leakage of present, and soil contamination. With flood waters, we may also encounter exposure to sewage, which leads to also increased risk of infectious and diarrheal diseases, as well as soil contamination. If centers or playgrounds were flooded, grantees should test indoor air quality and playground soil to be sure that contaminate levels are safe for children birth, birth -- birth through age 5. Course objects such as wood, paper, bedding, books, etc., should be carefully cleaned and inspected to ensure that they do not harbor contaminants that pose a danger to children. All state child care license requirements related to reopening centers post disaster must also be met before, before service at centers is resumed. And I'm going to turn it over to Sangeeta to talk about health and mental health services.

Sangeeta Parikshak: Yes.Thanks, Marco. So, what we know from past experience, such as Sandy and, is that -- and also from current research is that children, families, and we can't forget about Head Start staff may experience fear, stress, and even physical trauma related to a hurricane or other natural disaster. We also know that the impact and effects can really vary across individuals and they can be short-term or long-term in nature. What we are hearing anecdotally that Ann alluded to at the beginning of this webinar is that the mental health of Head Start children and families are a big concern in the region. And particularly that stories that staff, that Head Start staff are hearing can be very taxing on them. And they also have -- staff have their own personal stress and fears to cope with. And so, we've been getting a lot of questions as to how we can really support children and families, as well as staff. Which -- And we're hoping that these next few slides will really help you with that. One of the things that we've said in the IM is that grantees are strongly encouraged to work with local agencies and partners to ensure that all effected children receive both health and mental health services in tandem as quickly as possible. We know that it cannot always happen as soon as you want it to, so we're going to give some tips that you can use in the short term, as well.

One of the things to really note is that individuals that are impacted the most severely around health and mental health are those that may have lost their homes, they may be misplaced, living in a shelter. They may be living with friends, but their children are not used to being in that particular environment. So it can be really difficult for them. Those individuals who have fewer resources that really severely impacted. Those who really don't have social support, or very little social support, so they have really no one to connect with. And you know, others that we're really concerned about are those that has past

traumatic experiences. So they may have gone through similar types of natural disasters in the past, loss a lot of their valuables, often or family members that they care about. And so, we're really concerned about, about those individuals first and foremost. Other individuals that we really need to pay attention to are children, including infants. And we put this in here because one of the common beliefs is that young children don't really remember traumatic experiences that have occurred early in life, and that often times, you know, people are worried that if they talk to children about traumatic events, that it's going to become more difficult for them. In fact, that is a belief that comes from a good place, but in fact is not really based in research or experience.

In fact, what we know is that if we ignore what children are going through, then that can actually have detrimental problems in the long term. The third thing that you can do to, now, as you are waiting for other resources, is that really make sure you pay attention to the needs of children, families, and program staff who may have suffered losses. So don't really impose your own assumptions and thoughts around what they need, but take some time to really listen to what they are saying that they need. Encourage people to return to a sense of normalcy, routine, and the familiar. So this can be difficult if individuals are displaced, living somewhere they're not -- somewhere where they're not comfortable with. But there are things you can do, things -- One example that comes to mind is routines. Adults can try to go to bed at the same time every day, wake up at the same time every day, try to do things that they would normally do on the day-to-day basis. For children, we can often be a struggle. They can have nightmares. They could just have problems falling asleep, staying asleep. So, making sure that you have consistent routines for them, whether that's reading a book, telling a story if you don't have a book with you, having a stuffed animal. Whatever it is that can link to what is familiar for them.

Other things that you can do is providing social support or encouraging people to seek social support even if they don't want to talk about what's going on. Just having people around can really improve the mental health status, providing opportunities to share experiences and to be heard, if that's what people really need. And then, using this opportunity to address system issues. So making those connections with local agencies and partners that can help with children's health and mental health, getting those supports in place now, to aid in any long-term impact. Here's a list of resources. The first four we've outlined in the IM for you, and the last one is an additional one that we've added. So in addition to these being in the IM, they are going to be up on the ECLKC, if you have access to the internet, by the end of the week. It will be in the Mental Health section. We have the Head Start Emergency Preparedness Manual. So this can be used to support children and families before, during, and after an emergency. Psychological first-aid is an evidenced- informed approach for assisting children, families, and adults after the disaster. There are handouts that you can pull out in there to assist parents, caregiver, as well as children birth to five. You do not have to be a clinician at all to use this manual. And in fact, it's for people who are on the ground working with children and families every day.

The next two: Children's Responses to Crises and Tragic Events, and Helping Your Child Cope After a Disaster. Those are meant to go together. The first one is really to help adults understand what to look for in children's behavior after they've gone through a tragic event. Often times, it's very difficult to understand why a child is behaving a certain way, so this tip sheet helps you with that. And the other one, the Helping Your Child Cope, just talks about what adults can do to really support children after a crisis. And the last one is about really taking care of yourself as an educator or a staff member. It talks

about compassion fatigue. What to look for. What does compassion fatigue mean, and how you can help yourself in the short term and long term. And now, I'm going to turn it back over to Marco.

Marco: [Inaudible] You must be included in services has provided additional flexibilities for child nutrition programs. In addition, recipients of benefits have also been provided flexibility such as they can obtain replacement benefits for households that lost their food in the disaster. It is important to visit the website that's listed on the IM for the latest information on the disaster-related flexibility in your service area. We know that some of the flexibilities that were granted for Hurricane Harvey, individual is set to expire on September 30. And so, they're frequently updating the site. So please visit that, that link that was provided for you in the IM. We know that this is difficult to do, but when serving displaced children, programs should, where possible, acquire the individualized education plan, the IEP, the Individualized Family Service Plan, to ensure that the latest possible disruption of these critical services continue. We -- one of the things that we know is very important, as described by Sangeeta, is the idea of normalcy in establishing routines. And it's also about individualizing, to make sure that the services that were originally being provided are continued. So if it all possible, please obtain the IEPs, and IEPs. And I'm going to turn it over to Belinda.

Belinda Rinker: Thanks, Marco. I'm going to talk a little bit about finances. And finances are important primarily because they can support the initial response, and then recovery efforts of programs. And we know that grantees are going to need to draw on resources to locate parents, to start to resume services, and to initiate the, the long process of full recovery. And we, we hope that programs are recognizing their early stages to the recovery and response that they engage in. So immediately, grantees may need to move some money into supplies, they may need to pay a little bit of overtime for staff to locate parents so that they really just find out where people are, and make sure that any facilities where children are being served, or at least secure, so that they are not faced with problems of looting, and additional damage after these tragic events. Beyond that, we get to the point, and I think Marco talked a lot about that, where we need to be able to serve children at least on a temporary basis, in the safest possible environment. And that may look very different, but it's important that programs focus on how they can create that environment and what kind of funding will they need to make that happen.

So at that point, it may be things like plastic sheeting. It may be tarp. It may be plywood. It may be drywall that is used to cover an area, even knowing that probably somewhere down the line, the mold is going to bloom back through that drywall, and it's going to have to be replaced on a more permanent basis. But what can be done to remove those things from the environment that are dangerous children. So, if they're soaked books, there's soaked toys. In many cases, those can't be adequately cleaned and removed, the mold removed from them, unless they can be fully dried and the humidity is below 50 percent. So in many cases, it may just mean hiring workers who are going to set aside all of those damaged items to create at least a few spaces within a facility where children can be served safely on a temporary basis. And you know because, you know, we know that when flooding occurs when soil is disturbed, there are additional contaminants that occur. It's going to be important to make sure that you have the safest physical environments so kids aren't getting scratches, and scrapes because of the danger of infection, which can move very quickly.

And that you're watching for, you know, any signs of illness in children. So. All of those things are going to take funding, and we have tried in the IM to establish as much, much flexibility around funding as we

possibly can. So up -- Just remember that up to \$250,000 or 25 percent of the annual budget can be moved between budget categories without prior approval. So if you're needing those supplies to do a temporary fix in a facility so you can start bringing families in, you can shift from maybe savings that you're having on, personnel or in other areas to cover those costs. And up to \$250,000 in total does not require a budget modification or prior approval. If you go more than \$250,000 between categories, you will need to work with your regional office to get prior approval for those more major changes. The information Memorandum makes it clear that in this immediate period following the disaster, it's going to be necessary, possibly, to pay some overtime. You may have to pay overtime to some of the few staff who are available, recognizing that you're understaffed. So in order to meet program needs, it's understandable that you might need to take overtime.

Ann: I just want to mention here. When you say that if it's over \$250,000 or 25 percent, then they, they need Regional Office approval. Where can they expedite those approval processes.

Belinda: Absolutely. So. I think even a call to the regional office if folks who don't have access, we can -- I know regional office staff during Hurricane Sandy took calls and actually created requests for grantees, and then uploaded them into these system. There are -- Don't feel like if you can't get access to HSCS, or you can't get access to grant solutions, that somehow you can't do business. It just needs to be a process of communicating with your regional office to the full extent possible. That they'll do everything they possibly can to facilitate getting that into the system for you, and getting a response virtually on the spot. So it will move quickly. And also, around staffing and wages, we did in the Information Memorandum pre-authorize the payment of two weeks of additional salary to staff, even if they are not able to work, post disaster. So, we know that's not a lot, but it does give families some security. If possible, either the phone line or internet access that the program can provide, to support staff who may need to make unemployment compensation requests. Many of the states have changed their unemployment requirements to accommodate folks who are laid-off because of these disasters. And as an employer, it's important to be mindful of those opportunities for staff.

Ann: I think it's also, would you also agree that programs can look at utilizing staff in atypical ways. Meaning: I was a teacher assistant or a classroom teacher. Classrooms are no longer there, but there's still things that they can do. Either to be reaching out with families, supporting them, doing home visits. Helping, to the extent it's safe to help clean-up the center when it's not a major thing. I think that if they can keep staff engaged, even in atypical roles until they, sort of, get back to some sense of normalcy, that that would, that would be sort of income for the employee. But also would help the program in its recovery.

Belinda: Exactly, Ann. So you may need staff who need a supervised volunteer. You know, know, we're starting to have people on the ground in many of these communities. And it's important that they understand what is really needed of them in a program. So supervising volunteers. Assisting in clean-up. You know, we want to make sure they have safety gear, and there is somebody there to make sure that, that, that everything is handled safely. Contacting parents. Helping salvage items from the classroom. Helping, if there is an opportunity to dry things. If they have some fans, if they can work on that. So yes, I think repurposing staff into other positions that there -- And we know that there are some limitations on qualifications for classroom staff, but there are many things that employees can do either on-site or from their home that can be supported, and for which they do need to be paid.

David Jones: Belinda, also -- This is David Jones. Post Sandy, what some grantees did while the centers were being, sort of, cleaned and set up to move back in, they had socializations of two times a week. And that enabled staff to do some work that was meaningful, and to maintain some connection and contact with children and families.

Belinda: Exactly. That's a great idea, David. And we know that families may be in very unusual locations. They may be in shelters. There may be opportunities to partner with other organizations that are providing safe spaces for children, and some level of service can be associated with those activities, as well. You know, we know that this may not look like traditional Head Start, but the, the connections between qualified Head Start staff and children, you know, regardless of where it occurs, is certainly important.

Ann: I think the other thing that staff can redirect their time and energy, is that they know if an agency director or if the governing body says, you know, "We're not going to be up and running for the rest of this program year." They can turn a lot of their staff into transition managers, helping families transition to other services, be it another Head Start program, an Early Head Start program, while helping them with relocation. I mean, we're really trying to provide them with services that you would comprehensively to a parent on any given day, but they may not be teaching for a while, but even in the transition, the way in which the transition would be done in supporting the parents, would be nurturing the relationship and modeling.

Belinda: Absolutely. Absolutely. I think there are many ways that programs have a lot of flexibility, we think, under this IM to be creative for, you know, financially and how they utilize their staff as resources. I do want to remind programs, however, to keep in mind the possibility of insurance coverage. You don't want to let that go for a long time. Be sure that you check your policies. If you can make a claim -- And we know that sometimes takes a long time. But don't forget to do that. Don't assume that you don't have coverage under any of your insurance policies because even if, for example, you don't have flood coverage. And there was flooding, there may have also been power outages. There may have been electrical issues. So not every part of the damage may have been caused by the flooding. So you may still be able to make a claim. So, I would encourage all programs as soon as possible to make the insurance claim on all of the policies that may have coverage. And don't assume that you don't have coverage. One of the other fiscal flexibilities in the IM is the, around replacing equipment that was damaged or destroyed during the hurricane. So this is limited to replacement of things you need to get back, up, and running. It's not equipment that is unrelated to the hurricane, but there is blanket approval to purchase replacement equipment valued at up to \$25,000. And then, once that purchase is completed, you would need to let your regional office know that you have made that purchase, because then they need to line that up with the blanket --

Ann: And that's the unit. So for example, I might spend \$50,000 in a variety of supplies or, or a couple pieces of equipment that don't add up to one thing. It's per unit. Correct?

Belinda: Yes, so this is per unit, Ann. That's exactly right. So you could buy, you know, a stove for \$10,000. You could buy a replacement equipment for the classroom. Each of that could be \$22,000. The total of the equipment could be quite substantial. You know. It could be, you know, several hundreds of thousands of dollars by the time all of the supplies, and the equipment, and similar kinds of items are replaced. As long as no individual item is more than \$25,000, that could be done without prior approval. Be sure for all expenditures that are hurricane related, to keep good records. Keep your invoices. Keep

your receipts. And even if you just have to put them in a box somewhere, so that either insurance, or in the event at some later date there's appropriations, we'll know what extensions were made in response to the hurricane. And then the other flexibility that, I think, is important is that sole-source procurement is allowable, and that, in this case we have three authorized, noncompetitive proposals for services, for construction, for clean-up, so that grantees don't have to go through the traditional bid process to get workers.

Ann: So I have a question related to that. So while, while they have the flexibility to sole source, in this case -- I think about it, and I'm going to get very bureaucratic. We need to sole source for a roof. Or, when something is considered a major renovation, when does the 1303 fit in? 1303 Applications?

Belinda: Right. So 1303 Application would still be required for purchased construction or major renovation. So these are really more on that temporary, to get the equipment back in. But if you're at a point where you are completely updating the building You're putting on -- I mean, a roof is a repair. So there is some opportunity to do repairs based on the definition of a repair. And then the new Head Start Program Performance Standards. In rare instances, repairs might exceed \$250,000. But this grantee needs to remember that minor renovations -- So anything under that \$250,000 threshold, as well as repairs don't require a 1303 application. Once you get over that \$250,000, or you're starting a brand new construction, or you need to buy a different building because the one you were working, using just doesn't work anymore, then we got to have that part 1303. That's an area if you have questions, again, talk to your regional office.

David: You know, also with the roof. That's a great example, Ann. Most roofs have some sort of warranty. So before they do anything, to have a [Inaudible] repair anything on a roof, they need to find out what repairs are a part of that initial contact. Because if they do anything to that roof, they're going to void that warranty.

Belinda: To the extent that they can get the records, certainly you want to do that. And also remember there is the temporary. So that, what they may be doing in some cases is just patching, and they may be putting in plastic and sheathing, until they actually can get the 1303. So in the ideas that this gives them some flexibility to do quite a bit, short of a part 1303, short of, you know, full competition. But because the Davis-Bacon Act. I want to make sure we're clear on this. The Davis-Bacon Act is part of the Head Start Act. And because of that, unless Congress does something later on, the Davis-Bacon Act continues to apply to covered activities done with, in response to the disaster.

Ann: And we will commit to immediately letting grantees know if Congress, you know, passes a relief package, and waives Davis-Bacon, in any measure. Yeah. You'll be the first to know.

Belinda: Yes. Because we know the record-keeping under these circumstances, and finding qualified contractors is a significant challenge. So. We, we definitely will keep an eye on that. I mean, those are some of the most important fiscal flexibilities. Certainly if you have questions, contact your regional office. Check with your grants specialist. But hopefully this will allow some of the shifting of resources and the utilization needed to make a full recovery.

Ann: So I'm just going to reference back to what Fran said in the beginning about monitoring, and will also add in an issue of competition. We don't want any impacted grantee to be fretting about the fact they think they have an upcoming monitoring. There may be some sectors that have little impact and

are going to be fine by January. But we're going to evaluate this on a case-to-case basis. And folks, we can promise that we will be reasonable and supportive. This is the time when it's not appropriate for us to, you know, continue to conduct our regularly scheduled activities. Also, there are some areas that are up for re-competition, or replacements, as an area, as a service area. If you thought, "Gee, I'm going to have to be worrying about preparing an application when the building is gone that children needs to be in." We will be the delaying those competitions, be it for replacement or designation renewal, again, on a case by case basis. But if is an affected area, folks will not even have the energy or the resources, or the equipment needed to even think about applying for a, you know, for applying. I think the same thing that we did mention here. There are going to be some grantees that will not be able to use HSCS for even uploading their refunding applications. We said we'll accept the paper applications. All of those accommodations will be made. So we don't want folks to be worried about those administrative requirements that are, literally, impossible for you to comply with.

Fran: And I think, I want to mention that that includes enrollment reporting , as well. The best -- Communicate with us how you can, but we certainly don't expect that you're going o have to this directly entered in the system.

Ann: And actually, I think someone, at a previous -- when we, when we did this discussion with our own federal staff, someone said, "Well, you know, I said in my application for this program year that I was going to serve 160 days. What's going to happen if I can only -- " You know, people worried about monitoring. I want to say, folks, let go of that. If you don't have a program, you can't serve the number of days that you said you were going to serve. And again, we will work with each individual grantee to figure out what's reasonable and what they can and cannot do. And no one is going to be penalized for something that you're incapable of fulfilling.

Sangeeta: And I just want to take a moment. There's a question here that I think, kind of highlights, maybe sometimes the hesitancy [Inaudible] And the question is, "If a roof is damaged, but the building is still in use. The insurance company has been notified, and if approved for the new roof or repair, will OHS supplement the balance." So, if this is the circumstance where the damage to the roof was caused by the hurricane, then existing program funds from the base grant can be used to make that repair. If that repair is under \$250,000, no part 1303 requirement applies, and as long as the grantee hasn't moved more than \$250,000 between budget categories already, they already have that flexibility to move funds from other budget categories where they might have had savings to apply that to the group or repair. But in terms of additional funding, as Ann said earlier, we're working now with flexibilities that apply to the existing budget. Otherwise, additional amounts would be the standard one-time request that we can entertain periodically, or if there are additional funds appropriated by Congress.

Ann: And, you know, we have been -- And that's why the reporting of accurate information. We know that information changes every day. The situation is very fluid in your communities. But the more accurate we can get to begin to project what the costs are, then the information, that we can give to the department, and then they can submit, you know, to Congress. And again, it will depend on the flexibilities. If you get a relief package, what's the language in the appropriations say. And again, we can assure you, as soon as we know, we would have another conversation and issue another IM that will detail any new monies. Again, what we're focusing on today is doing with what you have.

So I think, you know, we can go into -- I know questions have come through. Again, having info -- having the information. Things change. We want to continue, continue to update your program's specialists to

the extent that you can. As David was referencing, we certainly want to apply any lessons that we've learned from Sandy and even Katrina. And I think that people know, you know, we don't have to tell you what's important and what's for, certainly the mental health needs of folks, and not only the children and families, but your staff. And again, we're looking at our goals and being to support you in providing any sense of normal, normalcy to the children and families. And that may look very different than being in their center-based slots, or their home-based lots, or their family child care slots. So why don't you, Colleen -- You've been looking at the questions. You want to, I don't know. Who's got the questions? Do we have copies?

Colleen Rathgeb: Yeah, we got the questions here. So one of the -- I think that -- And this is Colleen. This is when Ann or Fran was giving a presentation. But someone had asked when you were talking about class size and space ratios, did you mean that if they have to relocate classes, that the minimum square footage per child requirements could be waived.

Fran: So what we said in the IM about that is that you will still need to meet your local or state licensing requirements, but those may be less stringent than what the Head Start requirements are. And we understand that this is on a temporary basis. What we want is the best available space that you can find to serve those children and families.

Ann: You know, one thing that I will say in this. We have been working, as we said. We are looking forward to working more closely with Save the Children and Urban Strategies, and World Visions, and we know in other countries where there has been disasters, they erect what they call child safe places. You know, it might be a tent, and it might be tarp on the floor. And in situations like those, it's not even a situation of square footage, or classroom, or -- It's what can we do, you know, to bring some, you know, some toys that are familiar to the children. Or some books. And it might be just sitting down with the children. Forget anyone that's coming there is eligible because they are homeless. They've lost their homes. They've lost their, their, you know, places to go to school. So we would envision being able to, you know, bring some relief around those activities that are a little bit different than thinking about moving into typical operations. Head Start operations.

Fran: That's absolutely right. I think the goal is to connect people as soon as possible in a safe, secure, less stressful environment. So I -- Whatever that situation is, and we have heard even in Texas of some shelters having safe spaces set up, and to the extent that that can work in those types of spaces. That's what we want. You know. The kids recog -- recognize familiar faces. Or even practices. It's better than sometimes the other circumstance that they may be experiencing.

Ann: I mean like that, I can think of a form of, you know -- Sangeeta, you talked about how important it is for people to -- a social connection. And even if I can think of the parent, the perfect family engagement would be, you know, some, some staff will do something the children. Maybe in another corner of the tent, parents are just gathering together, and just -- they can just listen each other, or to be listened to. I mean, one of the things that the Sandy folks told us was that the thing that got them through it with people asking them how are you. How are you doing? That connection that every day they had. And they said that really helped them get through it. So I think the connection is really, where, where we want to start here.

Fran: Actually just this morning, I can do -- When we were at an earlier meeting, a director in Texas, and she was saying the exact same thing. She was in Houston saying, just make enough time, the effort with

families, that they were, really, you know, the community people that were really reaching out and were making those connections. You know, another question here that was asking around serving relocated -- just -- misplaced or relocated families, in which, you know a thing folks really want to do. They had asked could they serve their permanently enrolled children on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and then serve new children that are coming into the community on Tuesdays and Thursdays. And I think that's something, you know, it's a little different from what we originally talked about, that we don't -- We're not looking to take services away from children that are currently being served. But really figure out other ways that we can be, that we can add new services. But I think that's something that, you know, they had really had an implicit question like that before. So I really wanted us to react to that.

Ann: It's interesting. Because my reaction is wow, that's really thinking out of the box. It also says to me that any program would want to go down that path for this program year would want the par -- the current parents, and the policy council, and the board to say this is what we want to do. I mean, so. I think that there are possibilities. The other thing I was thinking about when Fran was talking earlier about options. And again, centers may -- that center that may be operation six hours a day may not be operating from 4:00 to 10:00 at night. Or on weekends. So I think thinking about nontraditional hours, they could really, you know, utilize say, is also a way of creatively looking at this. And, you know, someone said -- Sangeeta you said sleep is really important. You know, sometimes I think just providing kids with a safe, quiet place to sleep with adequate supervision, and may be providing adults with a place just to get some rest. So. I think that -- You know, I'm glad the person asked a question, because I think it pushes us along that creative envelop. And --

Sangeeta: And to the extent we have those safe spaces, even if it is in the later hours of the day, then that gives parents a little bit of freedom, as well, to start taking care of, you know, just really immediate needs. They still may be looking for food and water.

Ann: Right.

Fran: We also got a question about whether programs should be giving additional selection criteria to points and families that have been affected or relocated, or should they treat them like homeless families. And I think, again, that's really something that programs should be thinking about working in their communities about that. We don't have, we don't tell you how you have to set up your selection criteria. But I think those are really great things to be thinking about. And that maybe, you know, really reflecting the neediest peop -- some of the neediest families in your communities right now.

Sangeeta: A related question. Someone asked should programs be tracking applicants that relocated to the area or [Inaudible].

Ann: So should programs be tracking applicants? I think the more information we have about where families go, the better we are going to better connect them to services and other partners. So I don't know if that address it, but I think the more -- if parents are going to relocate. Because some fences we think may not be rebuilt in communities that -- And maybe the homes are not going to be rebuilt. And so, to the extent that they could track them for purposes of connecting them, I think would be important. Fran?

Fran: Yeah. And I also think that if it happens to be in community that isn't reporting to us because they have not been directly affected by the a hurricane, but they are in area where they are seeing numbers

of families come in, to the extent they can share that with us. It's very helpful information. Whether you do it through your regional office, or the current webcast email that we talked about, or even if you, as a result, are starting to over-enroll, tell us about that, you know, even in your enrollment comments. It's important for us to know that.

Ann: You know that, I just want to say -- And I think this happened more in Katrina. I don't think it -- I can't recall it happening in Sandy. But let's say you have a neighboring program, and you're, you know, you've been impacted, and you know you're not going to get back in, you know, for the school year. If your neighboring program has the space, maybe you develop the -- maybe the impacted grantee has contract with them just for the remainder of this year, where they take their children and hire their staff, and basically operate the program almost at a partnership or, I'm not suggesting jeopardizing a delegate relationship, but there could be, certainly, exchanges and funds between a grantee that can't operate, and providing funds to another program to operate while they're in recovery.

Fran: Yeah. And again, I think that over time this is, you know, as things unfold and time goes by, we'll continue to communicate. So something you've described, there, Ann, maybe you know, whether it's the short term or the long term plan, it's just really important, I think, to get those services on a ground as fast as possible.

Colleen: Related to that, we got a question about -- if people relocated and they don't have financial or documentation [Inaudible] or things like that, what can we do. And I think that's something that we really say in the IM that they -- We really should be flexible. We understand that people are not necessarily going to be coming with all of their paperwork, particularly if they, if they've been flooded, and things like that. And so, we really want people to be able to know that they kind have flexibility of families and stuff that happened, and we really, again, encourage people to get more comfortable with the IM, know the flexibilities are there.

Ann: And when you say it, it's really a parent who is saying, you know, maybe the [Inaudible]. I understand you've been impacted, and you've lost your home, and you've lost your center. Is this true? And a parent can sign. Let's make it as easy possible.

Colleen: Absolutely. There's a number of people who asked questions about the 45 days. So if I'm closed for a period of time, during the 45 days, you know, am I going to be dinged in monitoring for not meeting those requirements?

Ann: Absolutely not. [Inaudible]

Ann: Absolutely not.

Together: Screening. Screening. Screening. Things like that.

Colleen: Yeah.

Ann: I mean, those kind of timelines we need to, as I said earlier, the National Head Start Association may have used some common sense. We can't hold people to timelines if they cannot reasonably meet.

Colleen: We also got a question about whether the new background check requirements, or fingerprints and the comprehensive background check will, are in place, will they go in place, and will programs that are trying to hire new staff be subject to those. And we want people to know that, as well, there's an IM

going out this week. We also today in the federal register published a notice [Inaudible] to grantees on this, that for for all grantees, regardless of the, the disasters, the background, the criminal background check with the fingerprints and the forward checks has been extended until next September. So, they are not going into effect this September. Like most state child care agencies, getting an extension until next year, and we have moved the effective date for those requirements off until next September. And so, programs don't need to just do the background check that have been in place in the law since 2007, when they are hiring new staff.

Ann: But just to be clear, Colleen, there wasn't a waiver of the background check requirements. What you're saying is those more extensive requirements got extended for a year, so grantees would look back to the requirements in the Head Start Act.

Colleen: Exactly.

Ann: But those are not waived because of these hurricanes.

Colleen: That's right. So that, Ann talked about those certain things with health and safety that we really just cannot waive, and want to make sure happens. And the background checks, which I think, you know, are relatively easy to meet, when they have been in existence for the last 10 years, and programs have been by and large compliant with those, what will remain in effect right now.

Fran: Received a couple of questions about enrollment. So if the flexibility, meaning funding enrollment and enrollment reporting for Early Head Start programs only?

Colleen: I think a program had worry that they would, that if a lot of their families had left the area, they might have some problem in holding enrolling in the Early Head Start program for these few months.

Belinda: Yeah, I think that's much like the screen in question. You can only do what you can do. So just tell us about that to the extent that you can report enrollments, and you have some enrollment, just let us know why it is, what it is.

Sangeeta: You know, kind of that question about attendance. That knowing that attendance is been impacted, and it's one of the standards that we would, where we would give some flexibility.

Ann: And again, we just want to say to people relax. Relax. Relax. Relax. We absolutely understand that, you know, enrollment is going to be impacted. Attendance is going to be impacted. The ability to meet the 45 days is going to be impacted. All those things are out of your control. I mean, I think what we what we ask of you is as soon as you identify the families, can get them back connected, can get them into services, you know, then think about how quickly you can do the screenings, or -- You know, but you should not be worried from a monitoring perspective that someone is going to come in and ding you because you're in a crisis. And you didn't do something that was out of your out of your control.

Colleen: And this is a reminder to programs. A program asking about -- whether migrant programs could enroll displaced families that were not in agricultural work. And again, I think, that is something we do speak to in the IM, and say that programs can enroll, or consider enrolling. [Inaudible] again, that programs should, should look in their community and look with their board, and their families. If they want to enroll displaced families, regardless of whether they work in agriculture, as long as they can do that without diminishing the services that are available to children of, that are in agricultural work.

Ann: For the program year. Yes.

Colleen: -- for the central purpose. But programs that have empty slots certainly can consider doing that. Any last questions? Fran, do you think that we've -- pressing questions? We want to be able to answer before?

Fran: There's a quick clarification question. And is 1303 needed if the total of all minor repairs is more than \$250,000, or is it per item?

Belinda: It's for the group of repairs. So if it -- If there is a series of small items that are needed to get the temporary operations, those don't constitute a major renovation. But if you come in, and you're ready to redo all of that facility, and you want to put up, a request in for however many dollars that that's going to take, that's going to take a 1303. So you can do a lot of minor repairs. They are not going to aggregate up to a major renovation, unless there part of the overall project. So if it's, "I need to replace six windows. And I need to replace this flooring. And I need to get the duck work cleaned. And I need a new air conditioner." Those are all either equipment purchases, minor repairs, minor renovations. But at the point where the grantees comes in and says, "Okay, I've done everything I can on the temporary basis. I now realize that I have to do my long-term, permanent recovery. I need to completely gut the building, start over. That's the 1303.

Colleen: I think that, Ann, [Inaudible] we can answer on an individual basis. People will continue to work with the regional offices to get these answers. Questions. I will sort of let Ann kind of close it out before we get too far over time.

Ann: Sure, let me ask. Is that, the email in which people are logging in their questions now. Is that why that that's in the webcast?

Fran: These are the questions that are coming in the chat box.

Ann: Okay.

Colleen: But the email is still available.

Ann: Could you just tell them -- Tell folks that they can continue if they have questions related to this, that they they could also email us at --

Colleen: We will continue to accept questions at hurricanewebcast, all one word, at hsicc.org.

Ann: And that's "H" as in hoard. "S" as in "Sam?"

Colleen: Okay. "H" "S" "I" "C" "C" dot org.

Ann: Okay. I guess I would sum this up as, you know, we call this, it's based on a Information Memorandum. I want to say that it's compassionate guidance. We're trying to do everything we can to be reasonable, to be supportive. We cannot imagine what you're going through, what your families are going through, and we will continue to be supportive and push the flexibility band within the federal bureaucracy as much as we can. And we will continue to work with our national and international partners to try to figure out how we can leverage their resources and get services reconnected to your families. And we would just say take care of yourselves. We know that this is an incredibly grueling period for you, and it's just the beginning of a long marathon, or maybe a triathlon, and the Office of

Head Start, and the regional -- along with our regional colleagues are here to support you through it. So, thank you. And we so appreciate the work that you're doing probably 24-7, every day. Thank you.

Colleen: Thanks.