United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA
22302-1500

DATE: August 31, 2005

SUBJECT: Emergency Feeding of School Children in Areas Devastated by Hurricane Katrina

TO: Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Agencies
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

This memorandum is to announce the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) policy for the feeding of school children in areas recently devastated by Hurricane Katrina. The agency will continually monitor the situation and provide updates as appropriate.

- Schools in the disaster area unable to maintain normal accountability systems and which are able to operate will be allowed to serve all meals free to attending children. This waiver is valid through September 30, 2005.

- Meal pattern flexibility is allowable. Schools may be exempt from the milk and other component requirements. In addition, flexibility is allowed as to time of meal service and offer versus serve.

- Households certified for emergency food stamps are automatically eligible for free school meals.

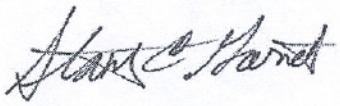
- When there are large numbers of homeless families and children because of property loss or damage, school officials may keep a list to document free meal eligibility, in lieu of individual applications (this is current policy for homeless children).

- In cases where a household from a designated disaster area moves in with another household the displaced individuals may be considered homeless and consequently automatically eligible for free meals. However, the host family would have to provide a revised application (and can include those displaced by the disaster as long as any income provided to the host family is also included on the application) in order to be eligible for free or reduced price meal benefits.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

- For those areas not immediately affected by the hurricane, but which have individuals displaced by the disaster, if a free and reduced price meal application cannot be obtained from the household, school officials may complete the application on behalf of the child based on the best available knowledge of the household's economic circumstances;

School officials should review eligibility determinations made under these crisis procedures after 45 days to evaluate the household's circumstances. If there are any questions concerning this policy, State agencies should contact their Regional office.



STANLEY C. GARNETT
Director
Child Nutrition Division