

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

**FOR INDIVIDUALS ARRIVING IN CONNECTICUT
FROM PUERTO RICO AND THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS**



Get Connected. Get Answers.

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2-1-1 is supported by the State of Connecticut and Connecticut United Ways.

INFORMATION & RESOURCES TO HELP INDIVIDUALS ARRIVING IN CONNECTICUT FROM PUERTO RICO AND THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Connecticut has strong ties to communities in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico and is proud to welcome displaced residents from both territories. Individuals coming to Connecticut are arriving with very little and are often in need of an array of services. Service providers from the education, healthcare, housing and nonprofit sectors – along with many others – will often find themselves trying to help these individuals and families. Navigating the information, resources, and programs available to hurricane survivors can be difficult. This guide aims to make it easier. Use the guide to quickly find topic-by-topic information and links.

***Please note that the most updated version of this Resource Guide - as well as a video training on how to use it - will always be available electronically at <http://uwc.211ct.org/maria>. If you have updates to the information listed here, please contact the 2-1-1 Resource Department at info@ctunitedway.org or 860-571-6059.*

HOW TO GET HELP

By phone or online: The 2-1-1 hotline is available for those seeking information or assistance regarding services available in the State of Connecticut. Dial 2-1-1 or 1-800-203-1234 and press option '5' (for Spanish, press option '7' and then '5') or visit www.211ct.org. Bilingual specialists or interpreters are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and the 211ct.org website can be translated into 30 different languages by clicking the  globe icon at the top right of the homepage.

In person at a Relief Center:

Bridgeport – The American Job Centers site at **2 Lafayette Square, Bridgeport** is hosting a one-stop resource center to help Bridgeport residents impacted by Hurricane Maria. Residents in need of assistance can visit or contact the center Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 8:30am – 4:30pm or by calling 203-953-3272. The center will assist with job finding, housing, healthcare, transportation, food and clothing. [The Bridgeport Hurricane Resource Center is scheduled to close on March 31, 2018].

Hartford – The Hurricane Relief Center for displaced residents of Puerto Rico and other Caribbean islands has closed down at CREC and has been relocated to Catholic Charities. The Center will be open on **Tuesdays, 10am-4pm, at the Southside Family Center located at 35 Groton Street, Hartford**. And the Center will also be open on **Wednesdays, 10am-4pm, at the Institute for the Hispanic Family at 45 Wadsworth Street, Hartford**.

Meriden/Wallingford – Casa Boricua in Meriden and the Spanish Community of Wallingford (SCOW) are working together to run the Hope Welcome Center. The center will assist families who have been displaced due to Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Families can get help accessing basic needs, connecting to other local resources, as well as free and private counseling sessions. The center will be open every Thursday from 5-7pm and the location will alternate between Casa Boricua (**204 Colony Street, Meriden**) and Spanish Community of Wallingford (**284 Washington Street, Wallingford**). Dial 2-1-1 for more information about specific dates and locations. [The Hope Welcome Center is scheduled to close on April 26, 2018.]

New Britain - The Consolidated School District of New Britain (CSDNB) along with the CCSU-Ana Grace Project Relief Effort are partnering together for a Hurricane Relief Welcoming Campaign. All students are asked to register for school (grades K-8) at the CSDNB Central Registration Office, located at 183 Steel Street. Students registering in grades 9-12 should go to New Britain High School, located at 110 Mill Street. Both offices are open 8am – 2pm, Monday – Friday. The Central Registration Office can be reached at 860-223-5501 and New Britain High School can be reached at 860-225-6300. A family resource staff member will be at Central Registration Office to assist families in registering and to help connect with with the CCSU-Ana Grace Relief Effort and community partners for other needs. Questions about the Hurricane Relief Welcoming Campaign can be directed to Central Registration at 860-223-5501.

New Haven – Junta for Progressive Action is hosting a welcome center at **169 Grand Avenue, New Haven** for victims of Hurricane Maria in the New Haven area. The center is open Monday – Thursday from 9am – 8pm and will assist individuals with housing, food, clothing, furniture, benefit programs, healthcare, job finding, English classes, transportation, and more. The center can be reached at 203-787-0191.

Waterbury – A relief center is available at the **Family and Community Engagement Center (F.A.C.E.) at 236 Grand Street, Room 106, Waterbury** for individuals who have been displaced from their homes due to Hurricane Maria. The center is open Monday – Friday from 9am – 3pm and can be reached at 203-574-8217. The center will help connect individuals to community resources as well as assist with job searching, healthcare, and English classes.

For information about additional reception centers that may open around the state, dial 2-1-1.

Contacting FEMA: It is important that you register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to see if you are eligible for any individual assistance. You can call the FEMA Assistance Line at 1-800-621-3362 or register on line at www.disasterassistance.gov.

Contacting Massachusetts: If you are seeking assistance or information regarding services available in the State of Massachusetts, and are calling from Connecticut, please dial 877-211-6277.

(Topics listed alphabetically)

ANIMALS/PETS

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture has revised its requirements to better accommodate dogs and cats accompanying their owners when arriving from Puerto Rico. The requirement that dogs and cats be accompanied by a health certificate issued by a veterinarian in Puerto Rico is temporarily suspended until further notice. Additionally, the requirement that dogs and cats have proof of rabies vaccination is also temporarily suspended until further notice. However, if an animal does not have proof of rabies vaccine upon arrival, they must be vaccinated by a Connecticut veterinarian within two weeks of the date of entry **AND** remain under home confinement from date of entry until 30 days after the vaccine is administered. For more information, contact the Connecticut Department of Agriculture State Animal Control Unit at 860-713-2506.

CASE MANAGEMENT

There are limited case management resources available currently to help arrivals who have complex needs and require a higher level of support. The agencies listed below are able to take on some cases for disaster case management.

- Catholic Charities: 860-527-1124
- Salvation Army: 860-702-0013

The Community Action Agencies located throughout the state also offer case management services, in addition to a variety of other basic need programs. To find a Community Action Agency in your area, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search they keyword  'Community Action Agencies' for the zip code or town you need.

CHILD CARE

The Office of Early Childhood has issued guidance to licensed child care centers that the requirement of a physical examination may be initially waived when a child has been displaced due to a declared disaster. In lieu of the physical examination record, the parent can initially write and sign a statement requesting such a waiver and accepting complete responsibility for the health of the child. A similar statement can be written by the parent stating that the immunization records are inaccessible and that the child's immunizations are current; or a licensed medical provider may indicate that the child has a scheduled appointment to keep the immunizations current. Additionally, state-funded Child Day Care Contractors will be allowed to temporarily waive the requirement of a birth certificate for displaced children. For more information regarding the details of the requirements, child care providers may contact the Office of Early Childhood's Division of Child Care Licensing at 860-500-4450.

Communities that would like to include early childhood expertise in their planning for these services for young children and their families should contact the Office of Early Childhood's Early Care and Education Division at 860-500-4430.

Families who need help finding a child care program can dial 2-1-1 and press '2' or visit www.211childcare.org to search for programs.

CLOTHING

Many community based organizations throughout Connecticut have clothing available for free or low-cost to those in need. Dial 2-1-1 to find an agency or thrift shop near you or use the following links to view the electronic list on the 2-1-1 website – simply click on the link and then change the location at the top of the page from 'Connecticut' to the zip code or town

where you need help: [🔍 General Clothing Provision](#); [Winter Clothing](#); [School Clothing](#).

EDUCATION

Kindergarten Through Grade 12:

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, students arriving from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands or any affected storm area who are identified as homeless or unaccompanied youth must be provided with immediate access to school and services they may need. This includes students who may seek entry to school but lack health or immunization records. The Connecticut State Department of Education has issued guidance to all superintendents on the enrollment of displaced students, which can be found on the Department's [website \(www.sde.ct.gov\)](http://www.sde.ct.gov). Displaced students will automatically qualify for free school meals and will be provided with other health-related services, if needed.

Enrolling in School: Families new to Connecticut should contact the Board of Education for the town in which they are residing for instructions on how to enroll a school-aged child in the public school system. For Board of Education contact info, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search keyword [🔍 'School Districts'](#) for the zip code or town you need.

- **Health Assessments:** A health assessment for enrolled students should be completed by a primary care provider. A student's insurance company (HUSKY or private) can help locate a provider. Or the assessment can be completed by a school based health center, the school medical advisor, or a community health clinic. To locate a school based health center or community clinic, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keywords [🔍 'Student Health Programs'](#) or ['Community Clinics'](#) for the zip code or town where help is needed.

- **Immunizations:** School nurses may request read only access to the Puerto Rico Immunization Registry (PRIR) at <https://prir.salud.gov.pr> to obtain students' immunization histories. Immunization history is not electronically available for students arriving from the U.S. Virgin Islands. Nurses may contact Michele Ramos from the Connecticut Immunization Registry and Tracking System at 860-509-7935 for assistance researching a new student's immunization history.

Higher Education:

The University of Connecticut (UConn) is encouraging students impacted by the recent hurricanes to contact Admissions at 860-486-3137 to get information about enrolling. UConn Admissions will work with students to waive application fees, move deadlines and provide assistance completing the application. UConn accepts the Puerto Rico College Board Results (PEAU) in lieu of the SAT or ACT for applicants from Puerto Rico.

The Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) will allow students from the University of Puerto Rico and the University of the Virgin Islands, as well as recent high school graduates, impacted by Hurricane Maria to continue their studies at CSCU for in-state tuition. Beginning in either the Fall 2017 or Spring 2018 semester, displaced students can attend one of the four CSCU Universities or twelve community colleges. All applications should be submitted as soon as possible, but no later than December 1, 2017, application fees can be waived. Interested applicants must complete the [National Common Application](#) (4 year universities) or the [Community College Application](#) (2 year colleges) or submit an application in person. They should choose the 'Fee Waiver' option before submission. High school and/or college transcript(s) should also

be submitted, if available. For more information, visit www.ct.edu/relief.

Independent colleges throughout Connecticut are also offering aid to students arriving in CT who have been displaced by Hurricane Maria.

- **Connecticut College** in New London has established a guest student program for up to 6 students, enrolling in the spring 2018 semester, whose education at an accredited institution in Puerto Rico was disrupted by Hurricane Maria. The guest students will pay what they would have paid at their home institution – the remaining room and board will be paid for by the College. The application deadline is January 3, 2018. For more information, visit www.conncoll.edu/academics/registrar/guest-students.
- **Trinity College** in Hartford is offering 5 students from the University of Puerto Rico to attend Trinity in the spring 2018 semester with full tuition, room and board. Students will not be charged for anything including health insurance. For more information, contact Angel Perez at 860-297-2175 or at angel.perez@trincoll.edu.
- **University of Hartford** is making half-tuition scholarships available to any undergraduate student who was enrolled at an accredited college in Puerto Rico for the Fall 2017 term. Students will receive an application fee waiver and expedited admission decision. If admitted, students will receive a scholarship equivalent to half of the tuition cost for Spring 2018. For more information, contact Rick Zeiser at zeiser@hartford.edu.
- **University of Saint Joseph** in West Hartford welcomes any displaced students from universities in Puerto Rico to use their on-campus library and computer facilities for free to complete online courses at their home university. For more information, contact Diana Sousa at dianasousa@usj.edu.

- **Wesleyan University** in Middletown is offering students enrolled at the University of Puerto Rico a free semester of study. Students in the program will pay their normal tuition to their home institution, and will receive free tuition for the spring 2018 semester at Wesleyan. For more information, visit www.wesleyan.edu/acaf/puertorico.html.

English as a Second Language:

English classes are offered for free or at low-cost at many community organizations and education facilities throughout Connecticut. New CT residents who are interested in enrolling in an English as a Second Language (ESL) class should dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword 🔍 'ESL' for the zip code or town where help is needed.

EMPLOYMENT

Connecticut's American Job Centers offer job search assistance services including workshops, placement support, and access to a database of job openings. American Job Centers Career Centers have phones, fax machines, postage, computers, free internet access and other tools to help individuals in their job search. American Job Centers also offer information about education programs for job seekers, offered by job center partners and other organizations. To find a job center, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword 🔍 'American Job Centers' for the zip code or town you need help in. A full list of programs that help job seekers can be found by searching the keyword 🔍 'Job Finding Assistance.'

Educators displaced by Hurricane Maria should determine their eligibility to teach in Connecticut. Some educators may be exempt from coursework and assessment requirements, depending on their experience and credentials. To determine eligibility for testing exemption and certification, individuals should create an account on the Connecticut

Educator Certification System (CECS) at www.ct.gov/sde/cert, submit an application and as many of the required documents as possible (submit a note or email if there are items you are unable to currently obtain). Once the Department reviews the application, they will email the individual a credential letter. For more information or to submit questions, email teacher.cert@ct.gov with the words 'Puerto Rico Applicant' in the subject line or call 860-713-6969 Mon, Tues, Thurs, or Fri from 12pm – 4pm.

EMOTIONAL & FAMILY SUPPORT

Families affected by the disaster in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have experienced significant emotional pain and trauma. Getting connected to emotional, family and cultural supports will be important. The following is a list of some of the community supports available.

- **EMPS (Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services):** EMPS deliver a range of crisis response services to children and adults. EMPS clinicians are available to meet with individuals in need at their homes or wherever the crisis is occurring. To access EMPS services for youth, dial 2-1-1 anytime of day to be connected. For a list of the EMPS programs that serve both adults and youth, visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword  'EMPS' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help.
- **Family Resource Centers (FRCs):** FRCs provide access to a wide range of early childhood and family support services, including parent education, child care, and training. FRCs are also well connected to other resources in their communities, helping families navigate available services. To find a family resource center near you, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword  'Family Support Centers/Outreach' for

the zip code or town where you are seeking help.

- **Cultural Support:** Neighborhood groups and programs that support Hispanic/Latino individuals and families can be located by dialing 2-1-1 or visiting www.211ct.org and searching the keyword  'Ethnic Oriented Multipurpose Centers.'

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

FEMA:

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides financial Individual Assistance (IA) to those who suffered property damage or loss caused by Hurricane Maria. Individuals must register for this help with FEMA by dialing 800-621-3362 or registering online at www.disasterassistance.gov. Inspections are typically required for Individual Assistance, but FEMA is allowing survivors to verbally designate a local point of contact or representative to act on their behalf, if they are unable to be present for the inspection.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) also offers disaster loans to help cover expenses that are greater than what insurance and FEMA may be able to cover.

FEMA can also provide **Transitional Sheltering Assistance (TSA)** to individuals who qualify. TSA is a form of assistance that may provide disaster survivors with a short-term stay in a hotel or motel if their residence is uninhabitable or in accessible. A FEMA registrant/applicant who self-evacuated to the Continental United States and meets the eligibility requirements may receive TSA. Eligibility requirements include 1) registering with FEMA for assistance and verifying identity and citizenship/qualified alien status and 2) having a pre-disaster primary residence in the areas designated for TSA. Applicants can confirm their eligibility for the TSA program by contacting FEMA at 800-621-3362. If eligible, the individual can find a

participating hotel online at <http://www.femaevachotels.com/index.php> or by calling 800-621-3362. Applicants should make their own hotel reservations and bring their FEMA registration ID number to the hotel when they check in. Payments are made directly to the hotel by FEMA.

IMPORTANT: The deadline to apply for FEMA assistance has been extended until June 18, 2018. This is for new applicants who need assistance post-Hurricane Maria. The deadline to apply for TSA has been extended until May 14, 2018. Specific eligibility requirements apply to TSA, most notably – someone who has not used TSA benefits between October 31, 2017 and March 20, 2018 will not be eligible to apply. Those who have applied during the above timeframe can reapply if they meet all other eligibility guidelines.

FEMA Denials and Appeals:

Individuals denied FEMA assistance should receive a written denial notice and have the right to appeal the decision. Appeals must be made in writing within 60 days of the date on the notification letter. Appeal letters should be mailed to: Appeals Officer, FEMA – Individuals & Households Program, National Processing Service Center, P.O. Box 10055, Hyattsville, MD 20782-7055.

Appeal letters should be as specific as possible. For example, if an individual has been denied Transitional Shelter Assistance (TSA) they should not state that they are appealing the TSA decision, but rather that they are appealing the **reason** why the TSA was denied (e.g. “the insufficient damages decision”).

If a FEMA applicant has been denied rental assistance because inspection records indicate no habitability repairs needed, but they cannot return home due to their rented property being no longer available, they should obtain a

statement from their former landlord indicating such to submit to FEMA.

Individuals needing help with FEMA denials and appeals should dial 2-1-1 to be connected with a disaster case manager who can provide assistance.

Unemployment Insurance/Disaster Unemployment Assistance:

Puerto Rico: Puerto Rico residents who have relocated to Connecticut and who wish to file for Unemployment Insurance (UI) can file a claim online at <http://www.trabajo.pr.gov>. An initial UI claim can be filed by clicking on the label titled *Reclamación Inicial* and continued UI claims can be filed by clicking on the label titled *Reclamación Semanas Subsiguientes*. **Important note:** Individuals should **not** file claims through Connecticut’s online claims system as the file will be rejected; they must file through the Puerto Rico online claim system.

Individuals who were self-employed, were about to commence work, have little or no prior work history and are unemployed as a result of the hurricane may qualify for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA). To apply for DUA, individuals must:

1. File an initial claim for regular unemployment on the Puerto Rico online claim system. You must first be determined ineligible for regular UI before you can qualify for DUA.
2. File for DUA. At this time, there is no option to file online for DUA. Download a DUA application from www.ct.gov/dol and mail a copy to: PRDOL – Interstate Unit, Nacional Plaza, 12th Floor, PO Box 195540, ATTN: Pastora Esteves, San Juan, PR 00919-5540.

Individuals who do not have internet access or need assistance filing a DUA claim can call Puerto Rico’s Department of Labor at 787-945-7900, but should expect extended wait times.

The CTDOL American Job Centers also have self-service computers available at all locations. Please remember it is important to have your employment history, including a list of current and past employers and the wages you earned, in order to file for UI online and to complete the DUA application.

IMPORTANT: The deadline to apply for Disaster Unemployment Assistance is February 9, 2018.

Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA):

Low income families residing in Connecticut with children under age 18 may be eligible for Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) through the Department of Social Services. TFA is a time-limited cash assistance program that provides monthly cash for basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, and employment assistance. The Department of Social Services is encouraging displaced families to apply in person at one of their offices. To find an office near you, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword  'TFA' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help. Unsure if you are eligible for TFA? Complete the 2-1-1 Navigator at <http://www.211navigator.com/>.

Income Tax Assistance

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has extended the deadline for filing until June 29, 2018 for individuals affected by the hurricanes in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. For more information, call the IRS Disaster Assistance Hotline at 866-562-5227 or visit the site at <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/help-for-victims-of-hurricanes-irma-and-maria>.

2-1-1 Navigator

Use the 2-1-1 Navigator Benefits Screener to learn whether you might be able to get help to pay for things like food, health insurance, and child care. <http://www.211navigator.com>

FOOD & NUTRITION

Displaced individuals and families can benefit from access to federal and state assistance programs to help purchase food, as well as local safety net programs that provide free groceries and meals.

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP (Food Stamps):** The Department of Social Services is encouraging any displaced individual or family who might be eligible for SNAP to go directly to one of their regional offices to apply for the program. To find an office near you, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword  'SNAP' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help. Unsure if you are eligible for SNAP? Complete the 2-1-1 Navigator at <http://www.211navigator.com/> or the End Hunger Prescreener at <http://www.endhungerct.org/prescreener> (select Spanish in upper left corner to translate).
- **Women, Infant and Children's Program – WIC:** WIC provides specific nutritious foods and nutrition education to eligible children up to the age of 5 and eligible pregnant and postpartum women. The United States Department of Agriculture allows displaced applicants to participate in the program without proof of identity, residency or income if those documents were lost/destroyed. And, in cases where an evacuee moves in with another household, the displaced individuals may be treated as a separate economic unit. To find a WIC application site, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword  'WIC' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help. Unsure if you are eligible for WIC? Complete the 2-1-1 Navigator at <http://www.211navigator.com/>

- **Food Pantries:** To find a pantry that can provide free food items, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword  'Food Pantries' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help.
- **Soup Kitchens:** To find a location to get a free meal, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword  'Soup Kitchens' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help.
- **Elderly Nutrition Program:** The Elderly Nutrition Program provides nutritious meals to individuals age 60 and older and their spouses at community café settings in senior centers, churches, restaurants, and other community settings. Home delivered meals may be provided to adults age 60 and older who are homebound or isolated. To find a community cafe near you, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword  'Community Cafe' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help.

HEALTHCARE

Individuals and families enrolled in **HUSKY** health insurance – Connecticut's Medicaid program – can use the following phone numbers to access healthcare services.

- For help accessing primary care, specialty care, prenatal care, prescriptions, transportation to appointments, and medical equipment: Contact the HUSKY program at 800-859-9889.
- For help finding a dentist: Contact the CT Dental Health Partnership at 866-420-2924.
- For help finding a mental or behavioral health provider: Contact the CT Behavioral Health Partnership at 877-552-8247.

Community clinics can also provide free or low-cost primary and specialty care, regardless of insurance status or coverage. For a list of

community clinics, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword  'Community Clinics' for the zip or town where you are seeking help.

Individuals needing durable medical equipment such as wheelchairs, walkers, canes, and other assistive devices, can find a location by dialing 2-1-1 or visiting www.211ct.org and searching the keyword  'Assistive Technology Equipment' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help.

Adults with a developmental disability arriving in Connecticut without a case manager should connect with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). DDS has helplines in each of their 3 regions that individuals can call for help applying for DDS Family Support Services and to get connected to local programs.

- North Region: Help Line 1-877-437-4577
- South Region: Help Line 1-877-437-4567
- West Region: Help Line 1-877-491-2720

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) Child Abuse and Neglect Careline is available 24 hours for phone reports of suspected child abuse or neglect. The Careline can be reached at 800-842-2288.

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

Displaced individuals arriving in CT need basic household items such as furniture, bedding, and kitchen utensils to help them get settled. Thrift shops and other community based organizations provide such items for free or at a low cost. To find a location, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keywords  'Thrift Shops' or 'Household Goods' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help.

HOUSING

Individuals entering Connecticut from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands can use the state's housing locator service to help find apartments available to rent that meet the needs of their family. The service can be

accessed online at www.cthousingsearch.org or by dialing 877-428-8844 to reach the bilingual call center. The website has other helpful tools like a rental checklist and information on renter rights and responsibilities.

Individuals looking specifically for subsidized housing can dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword  'Low Income/Subsidized Private Rental Housing.'

There are often long waiting lists for subsidized housing so individuals will need to call individual housing complexes and get added to the waitlist, if there is one. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has provided information about the federal statute that allows displaced residents to be given priority on the waiting lists at certain housing units, if they have their FEMA certificate and are otherwise eligible for the unit. For more information, dial 2-1-1 or contact the following individuals at HUD: Carmen Rodriguez (860-240-9700), Suzanne Piacentini (860-240-9702).

HUD has also issued additional guidance about Section 8. **Voucher Transfer:** Individuals with tenant based Section 8 vouchers in Puerto Rico can 'port' – or transfer- their voucher to Connecticut, in most cases. Once an individual locates an available unit (which often takes a long time), they would then need to contact the Housing Authority in Puerto Rico that issued the voucher and work with them to 'port' it to the new town where the housing unit is located.

Staying with Someone in Section 8 Housing: If you are planning on staying with friends or family who reside in privately owned Section 8 housing, you can contact the property manager to request an addendum to your lease to allow disaster guests, providing the guests have registered with FEMA, to stay for a longer period of time than is normally permitted.

FEMA can also provide **Transitional Sheltering Assistance (TSA)** to individuals who qualify. TSA is a form of assistance that may provide disaster

survivors with a short-term stay in a hotel or motel if their residence is uninhabitable or inaccessible. A FEMA registrant/applicant who self-evacuated to the Continental United States and meets the eligibility requirements may receive TSA. Eligibility requirements include 1) registering with FEMA for assistance and verifying identity and citizenship/qualified alien status and 2) having a pre-disaster primary residence in the areas designated for TSA. Applicants can confirm their eligibility for the TSA program by contacting FEMA at 800-621-3362. If eligible, the individual can find a participating hotel online at <http://www.femaevachotels.com/index.php> or by calling 800-621-3362. Applicants should make their own hotel reservations and bring their FEMA registration ID number to the hotel when they check in. Payments are made directly to the hotel by FEMA.

Anyone in Connecticut who is in immediate need of shelter should dial 2-1-1 for shelter options.

INSURANCE

The medical/health insurance that individuals had in Puerto Rico or the U.S. Virgin Islands may not allow for access to services in Connecticut. Individuals residing in Connecticut should consider applying for a Connecticut health insurance plan.

- **HUSKY:** HUSKY is Connecticut's Medicaid program for low-income children, parents, pregnant women, and single adults. There is also a part of the program that covers children at higher incomes. HUSKY provides access to a comprehensive set of medical services. To apply for HUSKY, the Department of Social Services encourages displaced families to go directly to one of their offices to apply in person. To find an office near you, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword

🔍 'Medicaid' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help. Unsure if you are eligible for HUSKY? Complete the 2-1-1 Navigator at <http://www.211navigator.com/>. Have questions about your application? Call the DSS Benefits Center at 855-626-6632.

- **Access Health CT:** Access Health CT is Connecticut's health insurance marketplace to connect uninsured individuals who are not eligible for HUSKY to other health insurance plans, which may be subsidized based on the household income. Individuals can apply online at www.accesshealthct.com or by dialing 855-805-4325
- **Department of Insurance:** Information on other private health insurance plans can be obtained from the CT Department of Insurance at 800-203-3447 or on-line <http://www.ct.gov/cid/cwp/view.asp?a=1272&Q=480608>.
- **Medicare:** Connecticut's Area Agencies on Aging can help individuals experiencing difficulty using their Medicare benefits in Connecticut. To locate an agency near you, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword 🔍 'Medicare Information/Counseling' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help.

****Other important Social Security and Medicare information:**

- If a hurricane survivor receives Social Security (SSA) or Social Security Disability (SSDI), it is important to report the change of address to the Social Security Administration.
- Individuals on SSA/SSDI from Puerto Rico have Medicare Part A/B from Puerto Rico and have a Medicare Advantage Plan in Puerto Rico. Notifying the Medicare Advantage Plan of a new address is not the same as

notifying SSA directly. Beneficiaries should always contact SSA with their new address.

- Individuals with Medicare Advantage Plans from Puerto Rico are typically required to use that plan's network of providers. A special enrollment period through March 31, 2018 has been granted for these individuals to change Medicare plans. Failure to change plans prior to March 31 might affect their ability to obtain medications and access non-emergency care in CT.
- Individuals should 1) Contact SSA to report change of address, 2) Address change should trigger an enrollment into Traditional Medicare Part A and B, 3) Individual should select another Medicare Part D or Medicare Advantage Plan within 63 days and 4) Individual should connect with their local Area Agency on Aging to understand all of their options.

The CT Department of Insurance can also help individuals work through any other issues regarding existing coverage with the Puerto Rico Department of Insurance. They can be reached by dialing 800-203-3447 or via their website at <http://www.ct.gov/cid/site/default.asp>.

LEGAL

Connecticut Statewide Legal Services offers free legal assistance on civil matters to low-income individuals. To apply for legal help, dial 800-453-3320 or visit <http://apply.slsct.org/>.

For legal matters specific to children and youth, the Center for Children's Advocacy is a good legal resource and can be reached by dialing 860-570-5327. If a child has arrived in Connecticut without his or her parents, it is a good idea to assign a standby guardian for the child. You do not need to go to court to name someone as a standby guardian for your child.

You can name a standby guardian by filling out some simple forms, as long as the other parent of your child agrees to the standby guardianship, or has lost their parental rights by a court order, or has died. A standby guardian cares for the child, gets medical care for the child, gives your child food, clothing and shelter, and makes sure your child goes to school. A standby guardian has the legal authority to make medical and educational decisions for your child. The guardianship lasts one year from the time it goes into effect. The English and Spanish versions of the forms can be viewed, downloaded, and printed at <http://uwc.211ct.org/maria>.

RECORDS/DOCUMENTS

Hurricane survivors are arriving without many official records or documents. These documents are important for enrollment in and access to many programs and benefits.

- **Getting a CT State ID:** Drivers licenses or identification cards can be obtained from the Department of Motor Vehicles. To obtain a license or identification card, individuals need to bring documents that can prove their identity, Social Security number, and residence in Connecticut. For a full list of acceptable documents, dial 2-1-1 or visit <http://uwc.211ct.org/drivers-license-or-dmv-identification-cards/>. Persons staying in CT temporarily who hold current valid licenses from Puerto Rico, Guam or the U.S. Virgin Islands can drive under those licenses in CT. Persons who plan to stay in CT permanently should obtain a CT license within 30 days.
- **Birth Certificates:** Puerto Ricans who need their birth certificate can contact the Puerto Rico Department of Health at 866-842-6765 or order a copy online through VitalCheck at <https://www.vitalchek.com/vital-records/puerto-rico>. St. Croix birth

certificates requests can be mailed to: Department of Health, Vital Statistics, Charles Harwood Memorial Hospital, St. Croix, VI 00820 with a \$15 payment. Written requests for birth certificates from St. Thomas and St. John can be mailed to: Department of Health, Vital Statistics, Knud Hansen Complex, St. Thomas, VI 00802 with a \$15 payment. For more information on St. John and St. Thomas records, call 340-774-9000, ext. 4685.

- **Tax Records:** The Internal Revenue Service is reminding hurricane victims of the importance of reconstructing their records after a disaster, including getting copies of previous tax returns. Disaster victims can request a free copy of their tax return by calling 800-908-9946 or requesting it online at <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/get-transcript>.

TRANSPORTATION

- **Options for individuals with disabilities and older adults:** Many towns have transportation programs for disabled individuals, as well as older adults, that are available at a low-cost. To find these programs, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the 🔍 keywords 'Disability Related Transportation' and 'Senior Ride Programs.'
- **Public transit:** Public bus and train services are options for individuals who may not qualify for some of the other transportation services. Contact information is available by dialing 2-1-1 or visiting www.211ct.org and searching the 🔍 keywords 'Local Bus Services' and 'Local Rail Services.' For programs that may provide discounted transit passes, search the keyword 🔍 'Discount Transit Passes.'