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**For Immediate Release**

## **Human Services Department Offers More Help for Hurricane Evacuees in New Mexico**

**State website now online detailing disaster relief information**  
<http://nmhelps.state.nm.us>

*Albuquerque, September 9, 2005* – The Human Services Department (HSD) is offering more cash assistance and energy assistance to those families and individuals who are coming to New Mexico for shelter. “HSD has discretionary funds that we are making available to evacuees that will help with rental assistance, school supplies, school clothing, prescriptions, gas, and just about anything they can buy in the state,” said Pamela Hyde, HSD Secretary.

The funds are through two separate programs: The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The latest count of Hurricane Katrina evacuees in New Mexico now stands at 294 spread out across the state.

HSD partners with Community Action Agencies, which serve all 33 counties across the state. “Each day the state learns about families who have “self evacuated” from the Gulf Coast and are in need of assistance in New Mexico,” said Katie Falls, HSD Income Support Division Director. “These individuals and families can now go to the local Community Action Agency and apply for the CSBG funds, which will be issued through a voucher system.” A listing of CAAs across New Mexico can be found at the following website: <http://www.state.nm.us/hsd/commAgencies.html>.

The other program now available for evacuees is the LIHEAP program, which pays energy bills. “LIHEAP can help a family with connectivity fees, filling propane tanks, or even pre-paying a utility bill,” said Falls. LIHEAP applications can be filled out at one of the ISD offices across the state, or can be faxed in. The LIHEAP application and listing of ISD offices can be found at the following website: <http://www.state.nm.us/hsd/liheap.html>.

HSD partnered with other state agencies and the City of Albuquerque to help the 93 evacuees who arrived in the state Sunday afternoon. Through the processing center at the Albuquerque Convention Center 126 HSD applications were filled by evacuees, staying at the Convention Center and other evacuees who heard about the processing center, and got signed up for services like health care through the Medicaid program and food stamps. Other services like unemployment benefits, social security assistance, post office boxes and of course housing were also available through the processing center.

Governor Bill Richardson along with other governors across the nation are requesting appropriate reimbursement from the Federal Government for services offered to evacuees, including 100% Medicaid federal reimbursement.

There is also a new website the state has created to answer questions for New Mexicans who want to help with disaster relief and also for evacuees who are looking help. The website can be found at <http://nmhelps.state.nm.us> and has the latest developments in disaster relief in New Mexico.

The State Disaster Relief Hotline remains active, 1-866-638-6819. Here New Mexicans are offering monetary and clothing donations, as well as homes and jobs for the displaced hurricane victims. People can also e-mail the hotline at [disasterrelief@state.nm.us](mailto:disasterrelief@state.nm.us).

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