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Tuition Assistance Available for Individuals and Schools—Immediate Action Required



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A new federal program provides “temporary emergency impact aid” for public and private schools and for displaced families that incurred additional educational costs resulting from Katrina and Rita. All necessary information must be submitted to the appropriate agency no later than **January 26, 2006**.

Under the program, the Department of Education will grant money to state education departments which will then allocate the money to local education agencies which will then allocate the money to the schools that hosted displaced students. The applying schools will establish a separate “education account” for each displaced student into which the money will be deposited. The program benefits schools that waived tuition for displaced students and parents that were required to pay tuition while they were displaced. The maximum payment under the Act is \$1,500 per student per quarter (\$1,875 per special education student).

For non-public schools, the process works as follows:

Parents/Guardians. Parents/Guardians of the displaced student must complete a short one-page eligibility application. The federal legislation dictates the information that is required to be included in the application; the U.S. Department of Education has adopted a sample form to be adapted by the states; and many states have adopted their own forms. The Department of Education’s sample form can be found at <http://hurricanehelpforschools.gov/proginfo/index.html>. We have included the links to numerous different state forms at the bottom of this document. The parent/guardian submits this form to the school attended by the student while displaced as soon as possible and in enough time so that #2 and #3 below can be accomplished by January 26, 2006

Host Schools. The host school must compile the parents’ applications and submit a Certification form to the local educational agency (LEA) in sufficient time so that #3 can be accomplished by January 26, 2006. A generic form of the school certification is on the U.S. Department of Education’s website at <http://hurricanehelpforschools.gov/proginfo/index.html>. The Certification can be faxed. The U.S. Department of Education has indicated that schools will be able to adjust the numbers to account for later received information, but that schools must submit their Certifications before the deadline; however, we do not recommend relying on a supplement to the Certification because the limited money appropriated by Congress may not still be available by the time of the school’s Certification amendment.

Local Educational Agencies. The LEA must compile the schools’ applications and submit its own application to the state educational agency (SEA) before January 26, 2006. The U.S. Department of Education has indicated that LEAs will later be able to adjust the numbers to account for later received information but that the LEAs must submit their applications before the deadline. For the reasons discussed above, we do not recommend relying on a supplement to the application.

State Educational Agencies. Each SEA must consolidate all of the information presented to it from the LEAs and make its own application to the U.S. Department of Education before February 2, 2006. The Department of Education reimburses the SEA which then flows the money back through the LEAs to the host schools.

The maximum amount for which a host school can be reimbursed is \$1,500 per displaced student per quarter, except in the case of special education students. Host schools may be reimbursed only if the student was not required to pay tuition or if tuition money is refunded. If a host school charged tuition in excess of \$1,500 per quarter, the host school need only refund \$1,500 per quarter to be eligible for a payment under the program in that amount.

Instructions and Louisiana forms for individuals and for schools are available at the Louisiana Department of Education web site at: <http://www.doe.state.la.us/ide/index.html>. Click on the "Private School Financial Assistance" banner. The Louisiana web site and the U.S. Department of Education's web site (<http://hurricanehelpforschools.gov/proginfo/index.html>) both have a copy of the implementing federal legislation and a set of "Frequently Asked Questions" which is very helpful.

For displaced students, and schools that enrolled them, in the following states, go to the following sites:

Alabama	http://www.alsde.edu/html/KatrinaRecoveryAct.asp
Mississippi	http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/Katrina/index.html
Georgia	http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/pea_communications.aspx?ViewMode=1&obj=1072
Colorado	http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/hkatrina_resources.htm
Missouri	http://www.dese.mo.gov/divimprove/fedprog/discretionarygrants/index.html
Arkansas	http://arkedu.state.ar.us/news/hurricane_info.html
Tennessee	http://tennessee.gov/education/hurricanerelief/hera.php
Indiana	http://www.doe.state.in.us/alted/welcome.html
Illinois	http://www.isbe.state.il.us/news/2006/jan06.htm
Michigan	http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-38062--,00.html
Ohio	http://www.ode.state.oh.us/superintendent/email/2006/1-13-06/default.asp
Texas	http://www.tea.state.tx.us/hcane/heradraftparentapp.pdf

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