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To: CSEA Directors and Administrators  
County Child Support Enforcement Agencies

From: Joseph J. Pilat, Deputy Director, Office of Child Support

Date: September 9, 2005

**Subject: Hurricane Katrina Information (2005-81)**

On September 6 and September 8, we obtained guidance from the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) regarding handling of child support payments for states impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

The three states affected, Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi have fully operational SDUs and continue to receive support payments. Ohio transmits all interstate payments to these states electronically and those services are fully operational. The state SDUs are holding all paper checks for custodial parents that reside in zip codes where the United States Postal Service (USPS) has suspended mail delivery.

A number of efforts are underway by all states and employers to exchange information that will assist in determining current locations of custodial parents in order that child support payment delivery can be established quickly. However, many people impacted have not yet established a temporary address.

Today another telephone conference is scheduled with OCSE for guidance on further handling of interstate payment processing by the state SDUs. If a county receives a call from an **interstate case client** that is seeking information on restoring child support payments, please obtain current address information for the client and if possible, encourage the client to complete an address change request through USPS. The three (3) states have established telephone numbers specifically to obtain address update information for payments issued by them and to also address any other questions related to this disaster. If you obtain this information from a client, please call the appropriate number and provide what information you receive. The contact information for the states is as follows:

## **Louisiana**

The published 800 number (1-800-922-8100) was destroyed by the storm and is not in service.

1-225-922-8100

1-888-LA-HELPU – will transfer the caller to the right customer service representative and also provides additional services.

[Laeft@acs-inc.com](mailto:Laeft@acs-inc.com)

[Trina.Richardson@acs-inc.com](mailto:Trina.Richardson@acs-inc.com)

## **MISSISSIPPI UPDATE**

Lifting holds as getting an address change

1-866-388-2836 (any other storm related issue)

601-359-4861 (for employers)

Email: [poluade@mdhs.state.ms.us](mailto:poluade@mdhs.state.ms.us)

[mbenjamin@mdhs.state.ms.us](mailto:mbenjamin@mdhs.state.ms.us)

## **ALABAMA UPDATE**

1-800-951-1274 (any storm related issue)

[childsupportstorm@dhr.state.al.us](mailto:childsupportstorm@dhr.state.al.us)

Minnie Thomas

[mthomas@dhr.state.al.us](mailto:mthomas@dhr.state.al.us)

Updates: Not holding any mail, most mail is getting delivered, even in Mobile, hardest his area. Waiting to see if will get a large return of checks.

Ohio also issues checks directly to support recipients in the affected areas to **non-interstate case** recipients. We have pulled all payments that have suspension of mail delivery by USPS to the following three-digit zip code ranges starting September 1, 2005: 369, 393, 394, 395, 396, 700, 701 and 704. Effective September 9, 2005 we have resumed delivery of all checks except to 700, 701 and 704. For the payments that we have pulled, an HVD-MI code is returned to SETS for all checks on these non-interstate cases. The process is not systemic and therefore requires several days before the update will appear in SETS. For all checks that issued to clients in any of these three-digit zip code ranges just prior to the hurricane, issues may arise about whether or not the client received the check. Special arrangements will be made to handle this issue and you will need to contact Laura Philabaum as listed at the end of this memo for further instructions.

As you hear from custodial parents that are affected by pulls resulting from **non-interstate cases** payments, please update the address in SETS and encourage the client to consider electronic disbursement of support payments. This will ensure that if the client has additional moves as a result of temporary placements that the child support will be immediately available.

SETS Help Desk will issue notice to the counties with a list of checks that have been pulled to date. The list will then be issued daily until you receive additional updates from us.

A number of other issues will surface from the downstream impact of this disaster, which we are just beginning to discuss with other states, employers, Social Security Administration and OCSE. To provide initial guidance to you and to suggest some of those issues, we are including the following program considerations that will impact custodial parents and non-custodial parents from these affected states.

- Releases of information regarding the other parent that is the subject of the support order. At this time, the 3 states impacted are accepting all updated information and are working with other states to pass that information to temporary sites, primarily in Texas, to assist people in the location of the other parent and children. Releases for information disclosures are being handled on-site with a relaxation of standard rules. It is believed that Ohio counties would likely only provide that information to the three (3) states, which would then control the distribution of information under emergency guidelines that they have in place.
- Address updates from either parent: We would ask that you relax your standard rules in the acceptance of address update information for the people impacted by this disaster. Telephone call updates should be sufficient and flexibility should be the key to processing this information. We also believe that most people impacted will indicate this is a temporary address update. Additional address updates should be expected and should be processed, again with flexibility.
- While there is no authority for an Ohio CSEA to temporarily suspend a support order, we should assist anyone seeking this type of action with information about legal resources that will permit them to pursue an independent action to obtain relief. Additionally, most employed and self-employed individuals in those states that lost their jobs as a result of the hurricane damage are eligible for unemployment benefits.
- Administrative Review of Support Orders will likely be an issue as time progresses. The rule does provide exceptions to the standard 36-month review limitation at 5101:12-60-05.1(E) in the CSPM. Questions that may arise on this issue can be directed to our Policy Bureau.

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Last, we encourage all CSEAs to be judicious in the implementation of optional support enforcement techniques on a case in which Hurricane Katrina has adversely affected the obligor. We will continue to explore the automatic enforcement actions and will provide additional information in the near future.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact Laura Philabaum at [philal@odjfs.state.oh.us](mailto:philal@odjfs.state.oh.us) or at 614-682-2049.

cc     Kim Newsom, Executive Director, OCDA  
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       Crystal Allen, PCSAO