FEMA
DISASTER ASSISTANCE POLICY
INTERIM

I. TITLE: Critical Needs Assistance for Displaced Individuals and Households

II. DATE: SEP 2 2008

III. PURPOSE:

To provide eligibility criteria for awarding a limited amount of financial assistance to eligible individuals and households who, as the result of an incident subsequently declared a major disaster by the President, are displaced from their primary dwellings, and when Individual Assistance is authorized under the declaration.

IV. DESCRIPTION:

FEMA and States may, under the Other Needs Assistance (ONA) provision of the Individuals and Households Program (IHP), provide a limited amount of financial assistance to eligible individuals and households who are or will remain displaced, as the result of a Presidentially declared major disaster, from their primary dwellings for at least 7 days. Critical Needs Assistance for Displaced Individuals and Households (hereinafter "Displacement Assistance") may be implemented in major disasters when applicants eligible for Individual Assistance demonstrate an immediate need for financial assistance to help with critical needs required to support their displacement.

V. SCOPE AND AUDIENCE:

This policy is effective as of September 1, 2008. All personnel are directed to follow this policy.

VI. AUTHORITY:

Section 408 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5174; 44 CFR 206.119(c)(6)(ii).

VII. DEFINITIONS:

A. **Critical Needs**: Life-saving and/or life-sustaining items such as (but not necessarily limited to) water, food, first aid, prescriptions, infant formula, diapers, personal hygiene items, and fuel for transportation.

VIII. POLICY:

A. **Program Implementation:** Following a Presidential declaration of a major disaster that includes Individual Assistance, and upon receipt of a written request from the declared State and the concurrence of the Regional Administrator or Federal Coordinating Officer, the Assistant Administrator for Disaster Assistance may authorize Displacement Assistance to be provided to eligible applicants for the purpose of meeting their immediate need for financial assistance to help with critical needs required to support their displacement.

1. Displacement Assistance may be implemented when FEMA and the State agree that the circumstances of extended displacement may create an unusual financial burden on individuals and households.

2. Displacement Assistance will only be implemented in those specific geographic areas identified by FEMA and the State as being inaccessible for an extended period of time, i.e., 7 days or longer.

B. **Period of Eligibility**: The eligibility period for Displacement Assistance will correspond to the standard FEMA registration period of 60 days, but will not include extension periods unless specifically authorized by the Assistant Administrator for Disaster Assistance.

C. **Eligibility Criteria for Assistance:** Upon implementation of Displacement Assistance, applicants will be eligible for assistance if:

1. The disaster-affected individual registers with FEMA for assistance; AND

2. The applicant passes identity verification; AND:

3. At registration, the applicant asserts that they have critical needs and requests financial assistance for those needs and expenses; AND:

4. The applicant's pre-disaster primary residence is located in a county/parish that is designated for Individual Assistance and identified as eligible for Displacement Assistance, and occupancy is verified; AND

5. As a result of the disaster, the applicant is displaced from their pre-disaster primary residence; that is, the applicant's current living location is not their pre-disaster primary residence or a non-primary dwelling owned by the applicant.

B. **Amount of Assistance**: Displacement Assistance will be awarded at a fixed-amount of $500 per eligible FEMA application.

C. **Rate of Recurrence:** Displacement Assistance will be a one-time payment per household, unless the Assistant Administrator for Disaster Assistance authorizes additional payments (not to exceed $500 per payment) when justified by circumstances and with the consent of the State.

D. **Category of Assistance**: Displacement Assistance will be provided under the "Miscellaneous Other" category and is not dependent on the applicant applying for or being denied for a loan from the Small Business Administration. Displacement Assistance is not income dependent. Displacement Assistance funds provided to individuals and households for critical needs will not be counted against funds provided by other categories in ONA (e.g., Personal Property category).

E. **Assistance Included in Program Limit**: Any funds provided for Displacement Assistance will be applied against the maximum amount of IHP assistance.

F. **Duplication of Benefit Coordination**: FEMA will coordinate with agencies offering monetary assistance for critical needs to prevent duplication of assistance.

IX. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: Disaster Assistance Directorate (Individual Assistance Division).

X. REVIEW DATE: Three years from date of publication

Carlos J. Castillo
Assistant Administrator
Disaster Assistance Directorate