



## Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness

### JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES NEWS

### **DSS Announces Shelters to Prepare for Evacuees**

BATON ROUGE - The Department of Social Services (DSS) has state operated shelters ready to house evacuees today. Medical Special Needs Shelters in Baton Rouge and Alexandria and a Critical Transportation Needs Shelter are ready to accept people now. All others will be prepared by 6 p.m. Also, in working with Parish Emergency Preparedness officials, DSS expects general population shelters will be prepared today as well.

People who are evacuating on their own and who do not have an alternative shelter should stop at shelter-information points along the evacuation route to receive a reservation for the nearest shelter with openings. They will open as mass-scale evacuations begin.

The shelter-information points (also listed on the Louisiana evacuation guides) are located at:

Tourist Welcome Center, U.S. 65 & 84, 1401 Carter St., Vidalia.

Tourist Welcome Center, 836 I-20 West, Tallulah.

Sammy's Truck Stop, I-49, Exit 53, 3601 La. 115 West, Bunkie.

Med Express Office, 7525 U.S. 71, Alexandria.

LSU-Shreveport, P.E. Gym, One University Place, Shreveport.

Pickering High School, 180 Lebleu Road, Leesville.

Tourist Information Center, 8904 U.S. 165, Oberlin, La

Residents will also be able to dial 211 to get the latest information about shelters. "We are grateful to our partners at 211 for expanding their services and offering this critical information for residents evacuating," said DSS Secretary Ann Silverberg Williamson.

Medical Special Needs Shelters are designed for individuals who are homebound, chronically ill, or who have disabilities and are in need of medical or nursing care, and have no other place to receive care. The intent of the Medical Special Needs Shelter is to provide, to the extent practical, an environment in which the current level of health of evacuees with special needs can be sustained. Electrical power for support equipment like oxygen converters will be provided by generators if local power fails.

Those seeking a medical shelter should call the number below for their area to be screened by nurses to determine the level of care needed. If they meet admissions criteria, they will be sheltered. If their condition is too critical, they will be referred to a hospital for sheltering, or admission. If their condition is not severe enough for Medical Special Needs Sheltering, they will be referred to a general shelter.

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New Orleans 1-866-280-2068

Baton Rouge 1-800-349-1372

Houma-Thibodaux 1-800-228-9409

Lafayette 1-800-901-3210

Lake Charles 1-866-280-2711

Alexandria 1-800-841-5778

Shreveport 1-800-841-5776  
Monroe 1-866-280-7287  
Mandeville 1-866-280-7724

DSS also will assist with the registration of New Orleans area evacuees who require city and/or state assistance in evacuation at the Union Pacific Terminal in New Orleans. These citizens will be taken by bus to the nearest Critical Transportation Needs shelter.

Williamson assured Louisiana citizens that the department is ready to respond to emergency shelter and food stamp benefit needs during Hurricane Gustav.

"Our concern is to respond in an efficient and responsible manner so that citizens' needs are met during and after an emergency," according to Williamson. "As we obtain more information about the storm's path, we will communicate through the media, legislators and local officials. We are in continual contact with these officials regarding citizens' needs and will respond accordingly."

DSS employees have the primary emergency function of shelter operations and leadership during hurricanes and disasters. DSS employees also are responsible for maintaining services such as replacement of food benefits and issuing emergency food benefits should the need arise.

Self-evacuees headed to general-population shelters should bring bedding and a few days' worth of non-perishable items.

As lead agency for Emergency Support Function 6, "Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing and Human Services," DSS has tallied an estimated hurricane emergency capacity of more than 93,265 to date, Williamson said. The total includes more than 67,000 in the state's host parishes for the general population; 10,000 in-state at Critical Transportation Needs shelters for who need assistance evacuating and 4,000 at out-of-state CTN shelters; and 2,265 (1,400 patients) at Medical Special Needs shelters. FEMA has agreed to prepare and operate a shelter in Alexandria and another in Shreveport for citizens without their own independent transportation. FEMA has also secured an agreement for out-of state shelters if necessary.

The state's evacuation guides for Southwest and Southeast Louisiana can be viewed at [www.GetaGameplan.org](http://www.GetaGameplan.org). Free copies also are available through the area chapters of the American Red Cross in the Lafayette, Lake Charles and the Greater New Orleans areas and from parish libraries and the following stores in those areas: Wal-Mart, Lowe's and Home Depot. Also, you can go to the Hurricane Center at [www.dss.state.la.us](http://www.dss.state.la.us) for the most updated information on DSS efforts.