



Hurricane Harvey Resources for People with Disabilities

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*If you need legal assistance regarding disability rights issues related to the hurricane such as access in shelters to ASL interpretation, service animals, medical care, etc., please call our intake line at 1-800-252-9108. **This phone line is NOT for emergencies. If you have an emergency, please call 9-1-1 or refer to the special emergency resources listed in this document.***

You can also follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for additional updates and resources.

Disability Specific Information and Resources

Accessible Hotel Rooms: <http://www.femaevachotels.com/>

If you are eligible for Transitional Sheltering Assistance, FEMA will pay for the cost to stay in certain hotels or motels for a limited period of time. Costs covered are for the cost of the room and taxes, and any other expenses are not included. Search the list below of participating locations to see if they have availability in the area you have selected and how many rooms they have that are accessible. Since room availability changes quickly, please call the hotel prior to travelling to be sure the hotel can accommodate your need.

American Sign Language

- ASL services can be requested in all state-run shelters. VOR equipment should be available.
- DeafLink ASL video with sheltering and emergency contact information: www.deaflink.com/houston
- FEMA ASL video about registering for assistance:
[Video 1 of 2](#)
[Video 2 of 2](#)
- [FEMA ASL video debunking flood insurance coverage rumors and scams](#)
- Harvey Interpreter Hotline 281-845-4443 (text or VRS)

Autism

The Autism Society of Texas can assist with shelter sensory rooms, shelter behavioral supports, sensory support kits, limited financial resources for autism families to replace lost items or sensory supports. Contact Suzanne Potts, suzanne@texasautismsociety.org or 512-479-4199.

Cleanup Assistance

People anywhere in Texas needing support cleaning up their homes and property damaged by Harvey can sign up for help from the Cleanup Assistance Hotline at 1-844-965-1386. You must call before Sept. 15, 2017. **THEY WILL GIVE PRIORITY TO SENIORS AND PEOPLE WITH**

DISABILITIES. Not all people will be assisted, or it may take a while for someone to get to you to help. They will share your information with volunteer relief agencies and civic and community leaders.

Diabetes

The American Diabetes Association can provide information and guidance to people with diabetes who are turned away from shelters because of their diabetes or experience difficulty securing needed accommodations at shelters. For information on how to request assistance, please visit their webpage: <http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/we-can-help/legal-assistance.html>. You may also contact the American Diabetes Association's hotline by calling 1-800 DIABETES (800-342-2383) or by emailing AskADA@diabetes.org.

Disaster Survivors with Disabilities Hotline: 1-800-626-4959

Provides referrals for assistance with:

- Disaster-related problem-solving
- Evacuation strategies and issues
- Shelter accessibility issues
- Temporary housing strategies
- Assistive device, durable medical equipment and consumable medical supply referrals
- Just-In-Time Disaster Response and Recovery Training- Web-Based and On-Site

Durable Medical Equipment

[Pass It On](#) provides coordination and support in the event of natural disasters to assure that reutilized assistive technology can reach those who need it quickly:

http://www.passitoncenter.org/reuse_results.php?state=TX

Pass It On is working with [Portlight Inclusive Disaster Strategies](#) to distribute DME in areas impacted by the hurricane. You can call Portlight's Disaster Survivors with Disabilities Hotline if you have a DME need at 1-800-626-4959.

The Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) have determined it is appropriate to issue a blanket waiver to suppliers of Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies (DMEPOS) where these items are lost, destroyed, irreparably damaged, or otherwise rendered unusable. Under this waiver, the face-to-face requirement, a new physician's order, and new medical necessity documentation are not required for replacement.

Suppliers must still include a narrative description on the claim explaining the reason why the equipment must be replaced and are reminded to maintain documentation indicating that the DMEPOS was lost, destroyed, irreparably damaged or otherwise rendered unusable as a result of these hurricanes. More information at: <https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/Emergency/Hurricanes.html> (Scroll down to find Hurricane Harvey information.)

Education

If your child receives 504 or special education services and your family was displaced and/or affected by the hurricane, there is important information you need to know in order to ensure your child's services continue as needed. Please refer to this resource developed by Disability Rights Texas and Texans for Special Ed Reform. There is a version in English and Spanish: <https://www.texans4spedreform.org/hurricane/>

FEMA Disability Resources

[Resources for People with Access and Functional Needs](#)

Food/SNAP Program

On Sept. 1, Texas announced it is providing a surge of food benefits to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients in the 58 counties included in the State Disaster Declaration following Hurricane Harvey.

SNAP recipients in the affected counties will see their September benefits automatically loaded Sept. 1, onto their Lone Star Cards. Normally benefits are staggered among recipients throughout the first half of the month.

And on Sept. 2, SNAP recipients in the affected counties will see a percentage of their August benefits automatically added to their Lone Star Cards to replace food that was lost during the storm.

There is no action required by the recipient to receive either of these additional benefits.

Homebound

Call 211 if you are homebound and need food and water. If you have a hard time reaching anyone due to the high volume of calls, if you have access to the internet you can go to [United Way 211 website](#) and look up organizations that can help.

Housing

If you have not lived in a nursing home or an institution prior to being in a shelter and someone attempts to move you to a nursing home or institution, please contact Disability Rights Texas at 1-800-252-9108.

Information about temporary and permanent housing after being in a shelter is forthcoming. Depending on the amount of damage your home has had, you may be eligible for FEMA temporary housing. FEMA is in discussions on what type of housing and is looking at options in addition to trailers. More news to come.

To learn more about your rights regarding housing, see the new DRTx [handout](#) on the DRTx.org [Housing Rights Resource page](#).

Other after disaster housing resources from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):

[HUD Disaster Recovery Resources Brochure](#)

[HUD Disaster Recovery Assistance for Victims of Hurricane Harvey](#)

[HUD Hurricane Harvey Information](#)

Legal Assistance – Disability Rights Related Issues Only

Call Disability Rights Texas at 1-800-252-9108 if you are experiencing a violation of your rights due to your disability.

Medicaid Appeals

Notice to Medicaid Beneficiaries appealing reductions or denials of Medicaid-funded health services or Medicaid eligibility and who missed or will miss their Medicaid fair hearing (or need more time to prepare for their hearing) due to Harvey.

According to Texas Medicaid's Appeals Division, any Medicaid fair hearings that have been dismissed where the appellant resides in a disaster area will be automatically reopened and rescheduled. Also, any Medicaid fair hearings scheduled within the next two weeks, for those residing in the disaster areas, and do not appear for their fair hearing will automatically be rescheduled rather than dismissed. If you are or should be receiving continued services (or continued eligibility) pending the appeal process, those services or eligibility should remain continued until the fair hearing is held, and a decision is issued. If an appellant needs to reschedule their fair hearing due to the disaster, or has other questions, he or she should call Sandra Pinales with HHSC Appeals at 512-231-5701.

Medical Needs and Supplies

- Anthem Nursing Hotline (for all, not just those covered by Anthem insurance): 1-866-417-1707.
Provides online telemedicine resource, opportunity for anyone to see a doctor on an online portal through October.
You will not be asked any questions about benefits, insurance, immigration status.
- Critical Medical Needs: Assistance is now available for people with critical medical needs in the amount of \$500/family. When you register for assistance with FEMA, make sure you complete all questions regarding your disability.
- Dialysis: Emergency Dialysis Services, DaVita: 1-800-400-8331 and Sugar Land Texas Dialysis Centers Disaster Response Team: 1-800-626-1297
- Diapers: [The Texas Diaper Bank](#)
- [Direct Relief USA](#) (works with doctors and clinics to provide prescription drugs and other medical supplies)
- Emergency Medication and Supplies: [National Association of Free and Charitable Clinics](#) (partner with [Americares](#))
- LiveHealth Online: <https://www.livehealthonline.com/>
This service you have face-to-face conversations with a doctor on your computer or mobile device. It's medical advice the moment you need it. No appointments. No waiting. So simple. And it costs the same or less than you'd pay for a regular doctor visit. FREE TO DISASTER SURVIVORS THROUGH OCTOBER.
- Pediatric Medical Supplies: [Trach Mommas](#) or 504-723-7193 (working with: [Protect TX Fragile Kids](#), [The Parker Lee Project](#), [Advocates for Medically Fragile Kids NC](#), and [Moms of Trach Babies](#))

Medication

In an emergency, a pharmacist can refill prescriptions for a 30-day supply if the prescription bottles with current labels can be presented. This can be any pharmacy. This may be more straightforward if the dispensing pharmacy is part of the same pharmacy chain, but it's not necessary. If the prescription bottles with labels are not available, it may be difficult to secure a refill and the person may need to be seen by a physician. If a person is in a large shelter, there will likely be pharmacy support and physicians. Many pharmacies in the affected areas are up and running again.

Some helpful resources regarding medication:

[National Community Pharmacists Association Hurricane Harvey Resources List and Map of Open Pharmacies in Affected Regions](#)

Health Insurance Providers Medication Information:

[Aetna](#)

[Anthem](#)

[Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas](#)

[Cigna](#)

[Humana](#)

Mental Health Assistance

All local mental health crisis lines in affected areas are operational. To find the phone number of your local hotline, go to: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/mhsa-crisishotline/> If you are not getting a response or the crisis line is not responsive, call HHSC Consumer Services and Rights Protection at 1-800-252-8154.

The Mental Health Alliance of Houston has provided 24-hour access to crisis counselors at many of the large shelters including the George R. Brown and also has the following online resources:

[MHAH Hurricane General Resource List](#)

[Coping and Helping Others Cope with Hurricane Harvey](#)

You can also call the National Disaster Distress Hotline at 1-800-985-5990 or text “talkwithus” to 66746 or text “Hablamos” to 66746 for a Spanish-speaking counselor. This line provides counseling and support before, during, and after disasters and refer people to local disaster-related resources for follow-up care and support.

Service Animals

Service animals and emotional support animals should be allowed into a shelter with the person the animal assists. In some instances, they may request the animals not roam the shelter and provide a portable kennel.

Social Security Benefits

SSA’s disaster procedures are now in place for beneficiaries affected by Hurricane Harvey, so SSA offices should be as flexible as possible in determining emergency need for replacement funds. If a displaced individual does not receive his or her regularly scheduled payment from Social Security as a result of severe weather or other emergencies, in most cases the individual can go to any open Social Security office and request an immediate payment.

If an individual has a debit card affiliated with a local bank or a bank with branches still open, they should contact their bank first. Sites that may be helpful:

- [US Postal Service alert site](#)
- [SSA Office Closings and Emergencies](#)
- [SSA online](#)

Transportation

METROLift Houston is now available only for customers in need of medically necessary transportation. Requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Trips should be scheduled one day in advance in the normal manner online or by calling 713-225-6716. Phone delays are possible due to high call demand. Staff is available 24/7 in the METROLift Dispatch Center at 713-225-0410 to answer any questions.

General Information and Resources

For all cities: 9-1-1 for emergencies, 3-1-1 for non-emergency help and information.

Cities

Beaumont:

<http://beaumonttexas.gov/press-releases/> or 409-980-8311

<https://www.facebook.com/beaumontpolice/>

https://twitter.com/beaumont_police

Corpus Christi:

<http://www.cctexas.com/harvey> or 361-826-2489

<https://www.facebook.com/citygov/>

<https://twitter.com/cityofcc>

Houston:

www.houstonemergency.org or 713-837-0311

<https://www.facebook.com/HoustonOEM/>

<https://twitter.com/HoustonTX>

<https://twitter.com/ArtAcevedo> (police chief)

Port Aransas:

<http://www.cityofportaransas.org/> or 361-749-4111

<https://www.facebook.com/PortAransasTex/>

<https://twitter.com/PortAransasTex>

Port Arthur:

<http://www.portarthurtx.gov/369/Evacuation-During-a-Hurricane>

<https://www.facebook.com/CityofPortArthur/>

https://twitter.com/port_arthurtx

Rockport:

<http://www.cityofrockport.com/> or 361-729-2213

Victoria:

<http://www.victoriatx.org/> or 361-580-5770

<https://www.facebook.com/cityof.victoria.5>

Disaster Distress 24/7 Helpline

1-800-985-5990 or Text “talkwithus” to 66746 or text “Hablamos” to 66746 for a Spanish-speaking counselor

Provides counseling and support before, during, and after disasters and refer people to local disaster-related resources for follow-up care and support.

FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) Website

www.fema.gov/hurricane-harvey

FEMA Assistance

Apply at: www.disasterassistance.gov/ or 1-800-621-3362

*Question #20 or #24 asks if you have a disability. This is where you declare ANY type of a disability. Be specific and state needs clearly. **It is critical that you include your disability information on your initial application online or by phone.***

FEMA Assistance Registration Instructions

[ASL Video](#)

FEMA Critical Medical Needs Assistance

Assistance is now available for people with critical medical needs in the amount of \$500/family. Register with [FEMA](#)

FEMA Mobile App

Download from Apple or Android to get weather alerts, upload and share photos, create a family emergency plan, info on what to do when there is a disaster, shelter information, and more.

Governor of Texas Website

gov.texas.gov/hurricane

Legal Assistance

State Bar of Texas Hotline: 1-800-504-7030

Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid: 1-866-757-1570 or www.TRLA.org/disasters

Non-Shelter Places to Stay

Hotel and Lodging - <https://texaslodging.com/>

Texas Park Campsites - <https://texascampgrounds.com/>

Airbnb.com – list of people who are opening their homes for free to Texans in need

Missing Children

To report a **missing child**, contact the National Emergency Child Locator Center at 1-866-908-9570.

Recovery

[After the Storm Resource](#) Guide from United Way

Red Cross

www.redcross.org or 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767)

Road and Highway Conditions

<https://drivetexas.org>

<http://traffic.houstontranstar.org/roadclosures/#highwater>

Shelters

Call 211 if you are in need of shelter, visit www.RedCross.org/shelter or call 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

Texas 2-1-1

No matter where you live in Texas, you can dial 2-1-1 or 1-877-541-7905 and find information about resources in your local community. Note: this is NOT an emergency number.

Volunteering

- Attorneys and Law Students/Graduates. Sign up at: <http://www.texasbar.com/attorneyvolunteer>
- Get certified with the Red Cross at www.redcross.org. **You must be certified with a background check to volunteer with a Red Cross shelter.**
- Airbnb.com – list your home to rent out for free to Texans in need
- Disaster Accountability Project: <http://www.smartresponse.org/> or <http://disasteraccountability.org/get-involved/>

The DAP saves lives and reduces suffering after disasters by maximizing the impact of preparedness, response and relief through citizen oversight and engagement, policy research and advocacy, and public education. Educated citizen oversight is necessary to ensure resources dedicated to preparedness, relief, and recovery are effectively utilized, communities are sufficiently engaged and more resilient, and best practices and lessons learned are implemented so mistakes are not repeated.

This information is not exhaustive. Situations are changing hourly or more often, and we will keep this list as updated as possible. Please send an email to commdir@drtx.org if you find any information needs updating.