

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

**FOR INDIVIDUALS ARRIVING IN CONNECTICUT
FROM PUERTO RICO AND THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS**



Get Connected. Get Answers.

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INFORMATION & RESOURCES TO HELP INDIVIDUALS ARRIVING IN CONNECTICUT FROM PUERTO RICO AND THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Connecticut has strong ties to communities in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico and is proud to welcome displaced residents from both territories. Individuals coming to Connecticut are arriving with very little and are often in need of an array of services. Service providers from the education, healthcare, housing and nonprofit sectors – along with many others – will often find themselves trying to help these individuals and families. Navigating the information, resources, and programs available to hurricane survivors can be difficult. This guide aims to make it easier. Use the guide to quickly find topic-by-topic information and links.

***Please note that the most updated version of this Resource Guide - as well as a video training on how to use it - will always be available electronically at <http://uwc.211ct.org/maria>. If you have updates to the information listed here, please contact the 2-1-1 Resource Department at info@ctunitedway.org or 860-571-6059.*

HOW TO GET HELP

By phone or online: The 2-1-1 hotline is available for those seeking information or assistance regarding services available in the State of Connecticut. Dial 2-1-1 or 1-800-203-1234 and press option '5' (for Spanish, press option '7' and then '5') or visit www.211ct.org. Bilingual specialists or interpreters are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and the 211ct.org website can be translated into 30 different languages by clicking the  globe icon at the top right of the homepage.

In person: The Capital Region Education Council (CREC) is operating a Hurricane Relief Center at **15 Van Dyke Ave, Hartford**, beginning November 1st. The center will be open Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10:00am -6:00pm and Saturdays from 9:00am -1:00pm. There will be staff at the center to help connect displaced individuals to services. Questions about the CREC Hurricane Relief Center can be directed to Maryanne Pascone at 860-422-7095 or reliefcenter@crec.org.

The City of New Britain, New Britain Public Schools, Central Connecticut State University, and the Ana Grace Project (run by the Klingberg Family Center) will also be opening a welcome center at **370 Linwood Street, New Britain**. Providers and case managers will be there to meet with individuals who drop-in, helping them with school registration, to obtain basic needs, and connect with healthcare services. Questions about the Klingberg welcome center can be directed to Dr. Noel Casiano at 860-515-2332 or noel@anagraceproject.org.

For information about additional reception centers that may open around the state, dial 2-1-1.

Contacting FEMA: It is important that you register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to see if you are eligible for any individual assistance. You can call the FEMA Assistance Line at 1-800-621-3362 or register on line at www.disasterassistance.gov.

Contacting Massachusetts: If you are seeking assistance or information regarding services available in the State of Massachusetts, and are calling from Connecticut, please dial 877-211-6277.

(Topics listed alphabetically)

ANIMALS/PETS

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture has revised its requirements to better accommodate dogs and cats accompanying their owners when arriving from Puerto Rico. The requirement that dogs and cats be accompanied by a health certificate issued by a veterinarian in Puerto Rico is temporarily suspended until further notice. Additionally, the requirement that dogs and cats have proof of rabies vaccination is also temporarily suspended until further notice. However, if an animal does not have proof of rabies vaccine upon arrival, they must be vaccinated by a Connecticut veterinarian within two weeks of the date of entry **AND** remain under home confinement from date of entry until 30 days after the vaccine is administered. For more information, contact the Connecticut Department of Agriculture State Animal Control Unit at 860-713-2506.

CASE MANAGEMENT

There are limited case management resources available currently to help arrivals who have complex needs and require a higher level of support. The agencies listed below are able to take on some cases for disaster case management.

- Catholic Charities: 860-527-1124
- Salvation Army: 860-702-0013

CHILD CARE

The Office of Early Childhood has issued guidance to licensed child care centers that the requirement of a physical examination may be initially waived when a child has been displaced due to a declared disaster. In lieu of the physical examination record, the parent can initially write and sign a statement requesting such a waiver and accepting complete responsibility for the health of the child. A similar statement can be written by the parent stating that the

immunization records are inaccessible and that the child's immunizations are current; or a licensed medical provider may indicate that the child has a scheduled appointment to keep the immunizations current. Additionally, state-funded Child Day Care Contractors will be allowed to temporarily waive the requirement of a birth certificate for displaced children. For more information regarding the details of the requirements, child care providers may contact the Office of Early Childhood's Division of Child Care Licensing at 860-500-4450.

Communities that would like to include early childhood expertise in their planning for these services for young children and their families should contact the Office of Early Childhood's Early Care and Education Division at 860-500-4430.

Families who need help finding a child care program can dial 2-1-1 and press '2' or visit www.211childcare.org to search for programs.

CLOTHING

Many community based organizations throughout Connecticut have clothing available for free or low-cost to those in need. Dial 2-1-1 to find an agency or thrift shop near you or use the following links to view the electronic list on the 2-1-1 website – simply click on the link and then change the location at the top of the page from 'Connecticut' to the zip code or town where you need help: [🔍 General Clothing Provision](#); [Winter Clothing](#); [School Clothing](#).

EDUCATION

Kindergarten Through Grade 12:

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, students arriving from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands or any affected storm area who are identified as homeless or unaccompanied youth must be provided with immediate access to school and services they

may need. This includes students who may seek entry to school but lack health or immunization records. The Connecticut State Department of Education has issued guidance to all superintendents on the enrollment of displaced students, which can be found on the Department's [website](#). Displaced students will automatically qualify for free school meals and will be provided with other health-related services, if needed.

Enrolling in School: Families new to Connecticut should contact the Board of Education for the town in which they are residing for instructions on how to enroll a school-aged child in the public school system. For Board of Education contact info, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search keyword  'School Districts' for the zip code or town you need.

- **Health Assessments:** A health assessment for enrolled students should be completed by a primary care provider. A student's insurance company (HUSKY or private) can help locate a provider. Or the assessment can be completed by a school based health center, the school medical advisor, or a community health clinic. To locate a school based health center or community clinic, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keywords  'Student Health Programs' or 'Community Clinics' for the zip code or town where help is needed.
- **Immunizations:** School nurses may request read only access to the Puerto Rico Immunization Registry (PRIR) at <https://prir.salud.gov.pr> to obtain students' immunization histories. Immunization history is not electronically available for students arriving from the U.S. Virgin Islands. Nurses may contact Michele Ramos from the Connecticut Immunization Registry and Tracking System at 860-509-7935 for assistance

researching a new student's immunization history.

Higher Education:

The University of Connecticut (UConn) is encouraging students impacted by the recent hurricanes to contact Admissions at 860-486-3137 to get information about enrolling. UConn Admissions will work with students to waive application fees, move deadlines and provide assistance completing the application. UConn accepts the Puerto Rico College Board Results (PEAU) in lieu of the SAT or ACT for applicants from Puerto Rico.

The Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) will allow students from the University of Puerto Rico and the University of the Virgin Islands, as well as recent high school graduates, impacted by Hurricane Maria to continue their studies at CSCU for in-state tuition. Beginning in either the Fall 2017 or Spring 2018 semester, displaced students can attend one of the four CSCU Universities or twelve community colleges. All applications should be submitted as soon as possible, but no later than December 1, 2017, application fees can be waived. Interested applicants must complete the [National Common Application](#) (4 year universities) or the [Community College Application](#) (2 year colleges) or submit an application in person. They should choose the 'Fee Waiver' option before submission. High school and/or college transcript(s) should also be submitted, if available. For more information, visit www.ct.edu.

English as a Second Language:

English classes are offered for free or at low-cost at many community organizations and education facilities throughout Connecticut. New CT residents who are interested in enrolling in an English as a Second Language (ESL) class should dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword 

'ESL' for the zip code or town where help is needed.

EMPLOYMENT

Connecticut's American Job Centers offer job search assistance services including workshops, placement support, and access to a database of job openings. American Job Centers Career Centers have phones, fax machines, postage, computers, free internet access and other tools to help individuals in their job search. American Job Centers also offer information about education programs for job seekers, offered by job center partners and other organizations. To find a job center, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword  'American Job Centers' for the zip code or town you need help in. A full list of programs that help job seekers can be found by searching the keyword  'Job Finding Assistance.'

EMOTIONAL & FAMILY SUPPORT

Families affected by the disaster in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have experienced significant emotional pain and trauma. Getting connected to emotional, family and cultural supports will be important. The following is a list of some of the community supports available.

- **EMPS (Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services):** EMPS deliver a range of crisis response services to children and adults. EMPS clinicians are available to meet with individuals in need at their homes or wherever the crisis is occurring. To access EMPS services for youth, dial 2-1-1 anytime of day to be connected. For a list of the EMPS programs that serve both adults and youth, visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword  'EMPS' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help.
- **Family Resource Centers (FRCs):** FRCs provide access to a wide range of early

childhood and family support services, including parent education, child care, and training. FRCs are also well connected to other resources in their communities, helping families navigate available services. To find a family resource center near you, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword  'Family Support Centers/Outreach' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help.

- **Cultural Support:** Neighborhood groups and programs that support Hispanic/Latino individuals and families can be located by dialing 2-1-1 or visiting www.211ct.org and searching the keyword  'Ethnic Oriented Multipurpose Centers.'

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides financial individual assistance (IA) to those who suffered property damage or loss caused by Hurricane Maria. Individuals must register for this help with FEMA by dialing 800-621-3362 or registering online at www.disasterassistance.gov. The Small Business Administration (SBA) also offers disaster loans to help cover expenses that are greater than what insurance and FEMA may be able to cover.

FEMA is also offering Critical Needs Assistance (CNA). These are one-time \$500 payments per household to Hurricane Maria victims who have critical needs due to being displaced from their primary residence. FEMA defines a 'critical need' as a life-saving or life-sustaining item such as water, food, first aid, prescription medicine, baby formula, diapers, durable medical equipment or fuel. To be eligible for CNA, households must register with FEMA, verify their identity, attest to their critical needs at the time of registration, and be displaced from their primary residence.

The Connecticut Department of Labor (DOL) is currently assisting U.S. Virgin Islands residents in CT who need to file for unemployment insurance. U.S. Virgin Islands residents should go to <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/> and click on the link on the homepage to complete the necessary form. The Puerto Rico Department of Labor has been delayed in processing unemployment insurance claims due to the disaster, but residents can attempt to file claims at <http://www.trabajo.pr.gov>.

Low income families residing in Connecticut with children under age 18 may be eligible for Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) through the Department of Social Services. TFA is a time-limited cash assistance program that provides monthly cash for basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, and employment assistance. The Department of Social Services is encouraging displaced families to apply in person at one of their offices. To find an office near you, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword 🔍 'TFA' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help. Unsure if you are eligible for TFA? Complete the 2-1-1 Navigator at <http://www.211navigator.com/>.

2-1-1 Navigator

Use the 2-1-1 Navigator Benefits Screener to learn whether you might be able to get help to pay for things like food, health insurance, and child care. <http://www.211navigator.com>

FOOD & NUTRITION

Displaced individuals and families can benefit from access to federal and state assistance programs to help purchase food, as well as local safety net programs that provide free groceries and meals.

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP (Food Stamps):** The Department of Social Services is

encouraging any displaced individual or family who might be eligible for SNAP to go directly to one of their regional offices to apply for the program. To find an office near you, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword 🔍 'SNAP' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help. Unsure if you are eligible for SNAP? Complete the 2-1-1 Navigator at <http://www.211navigator.com/> or the End Hunger Prescreener at <http://www.endhungerct.org/prescreener> (select Spanish in upper left corner to translate).

- **Women, Infant and Children's Program – WIC:** WIC provides specific nutritious foods and nutrition education to eligible children up to the age of 5 and eligible pregnant and postpartum women. The United States Department of Agriculture allows displaced applicants to participate in the program without proof of identity, residency or income if those documents were lost/destroyed. And, in cases where an evacuee moves in with another household, the displaced individuals may be treated as a separate economic unit. To find a WIC application site, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword 🔍 'WIC' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help. Unsure if you are eligible for WIC? Complete the 2-1-1 Navigator at <http://www.211navigator.com/>
- **Food Pantries:** To find a pantry that can provide free food items, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword 🔍 'Food Pantries' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help.
- **Soup Kitchens:** To find a location to get a free meal, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword 🔍 'Soup Kitchens' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help.

- **Elderly Nutrition Program:** The Elderly Nutrition Program provides nutritious meals to individuals age 60 and older and their spouses at community café settings in senior centers, churches, restaurants, and other community settings. Home delivered meals may be provided to adults age 60 and older who are homebound or isolated. To find a community cafe near you, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword  'Community Cafe' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help.

HEALTHCARE

Individuals and families enrolled in **HUSKY** health insurance – Connecticut’s Medicaid program – can use the following phone numbers to access healthcare services.

- For help accessing primary care, specialty care, prenatal care, prescriptions, transportation to appointments, and medical equipment: Contact the HUSKY program at 800-859-9889.
- For help finding a dentist: Contact the CT Dental Health Partnership at 866-420-2924.
- For help finding a mental or behavioral health provider: Contact the CT Behavioral Health Partnership at 877-552-8247.

Community clinics can also provide free or low-cost primary and specialty care, regardless of insurance status or coverage. For a list of community clinics, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword  'Community Clinics' for the zip or town where you are seeking help.

Individuals needing durable medical equipment such as wheelchairs, walkers, canes, and other assistive devices, can find a location by dialing 2-1-1 or visiting www.211ct.org and searching the keyword  'Assistive Technology

Equipment' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help.

Adults with a developmental disability arriving in Connecticut without a case manager should connect with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). DDS has helplines in each of their 3 regions that individuals can call for help applying for DDS Family Support Services and to get connected to local programs.

- North Region: Help Line 1-877-437-4577
- South Region: Help Line 1-877-437-4567
- West Region: Help Line 1-877-491-2720

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

Displaced individuals arriving in CT need basic household items such as furniture, bedding, and kitchen utensils to help them get settled. Thrift shops and other community based organizations provide such items for free or at a low cost. To find a location, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keywords  'Thrift Shops' or 'Household Goods' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help.

HOUSING

Individuals entering Connecticut from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands can use the state’s housing locator service to help find apartments available to rent that meet the needs of their family. The service can be accessed online at www.cthousingsearch.org or by dialing 877-428-8844 to reach the bilingual call center. The website has other helpful tools like a rental checklist and information on renter rights and responsibilities.

Individuals looking specifically for subsidized housing can dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword  'Low Income/Subsidized Private Rental Housing.' There are often long waiting lists for subsidized housing so individuals will need to call individual housing complexes and get added to the waitlist, if there is one. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has

provided information about the federal statute that allows displaced residents to be given priority on the waiting lists at certain housing units, if they have their FEMA certificate and are otherwise eligible for the unit. For more information, dial 2-1-1 or contact the following individuals at HUD: Carmen Rodriguez (860-240-9700), Suzanne Piacentini (860-240-9702).

HUD has also issued additional guidance about Section 8. **Voucher Transfer:** Individuals with tenant based Section 8 vouchers in Puerto Rico can 'port' – or transfer- their voucher to Connecticut, in most cases. Once an individual locates an available unit (which often takes a long time), they would then need to contact the Housing Authority in Puerto Rico that issued the voucher and work with them to 'port' it to the new town where the housing unit is located.

Staying with Someone in Section 8 Housing: If you are planning on staying with friends or family who reside in privately owned Section 8 housing, you can contact your property

Anyone in Connecticut who is in immediate need of shelter should dial 2-1-1 for shelter options.

INSURANCE

The medical/health insurance that individuals had in Puerto Rico or the U.S. Virgin Islands may not allow for access to services in Connecticut. Individuals residing in Connecticut should consider applying for a Connecticut health insurance plan.

- **HUSKY:** HUSKY is Connecticut's Medicaid program for low-income children, parents, pregnant women, and single adults. There is also a part of the program that covers children at higher incomes. HUSKY provides access to a comprehensive set of medical services. To apply for HUSKY, the Department of Social Services encourages displaced families to go directly to one of their

offices to apply in person. To find an office near you, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the keyword  'Medicaid' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help. Unsure if you are eligible for HUSKY? Complete the 2-1-1 Navigator at <http://www.211navigator.com/>. Have questions about your application? Call the DSS Benefits Center at 855-626-6632.

- **Access Health CT:** Access Health CT is Connecticut's health insurance marketplace to connect uninsured individuals who are not eligible for HUSKY to other health insurance plans, which may be subsidized based on the household income. Individuals can apply online at www.accesshealthct.com or by dialing 855-805-4325
- **Department of Insurance:** Information on other private health insurance plans can be obtained from the CT Department of Insurance at 800-203-3447 or on-line <http://www.ct.gov/cid/cwp/view.asp?a=1272&Q=480608>.
- **Medicare:** Connecticut's Area Agencies on Aging can help individuals experiencing difficulty using their Medicare benefits in Connecticut. To locate an agency near you, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211c.org and search the keyword  'Medicare Information/Counseling' for the zip code or town where you are seeking help.

The CT Department of Insurance can also help individuals work through any other issues regarding existing coverage with the Puerto Rico Department of Insurance. They can be reached by dialing 800-203-3447 or via their website at <http://www.ct.gov/cid/site/default.asp>.

LEGAL

Connecticut Statewide Legal Services offers free legal assistance on civil matters to low-income individuals. To apply for legal help, dial 800-453-3320 or visit <http://apply.slscct.org/>.

For legal matters specific to children and youth, the Center for Children's Advocacy is a good legal resource and can be reached by dialing 860-570-5327. If a child has arrived in Connecticut without his or her parents, it is a good idea to assign a standby guardian for the child. You do not need to go to court to name someone as a standby guardian for your child. You can name a standby guardian by filling out some simple forms, as long as the other parent of your child agrees to the standby guardianship, or has lost their parental rights by a court order, or has died. A standby guardian cares for the child, gets medical care for the child, gives your child food, clothing and shelter, and makes sure your child goes to school. A standby guardian has the legal authority to make medical and educational decisions for your child. The guardianship lasts one year from the time it goes into effect. The English and Spanish versions of the forms can be viewed, downloaded, and printed at <http://uwc.211ct.org/maria>.

RECORDS/DOCUMENTS

Hurricane survivors are arriving without many official records or documents. These documents are important for enrollment in and access to many programs and benefits.

- **Getting a CT State ID:** Drivers licenses or identification cards can be obtained from the Department of Motor Vehicles. To obtain a license or identification card, individuals need to bring documents that can prove their identity, Social Security number, and residence in Connecticut. For a full list of acceptable documents, dial 2-1-1 or visit <http://uwc.211ct.org/drivers-license-or->

[dmv-identification-cards/](#). Persons staying in CT temporarily who hold current valid licenses from Puerto Rico, Guam or the U.S. Virgin Islands can drive under those licenses in CT. Persons who plan to stay in CT permanently should obtain a CT license within 30 days.

- **Birth Certificates:** Puerto Ricans who need their birth certificate can contact the Puerto Rico Department of Health at 866-842-6765 or order a copy online through VitalCheck at <https://www.vitalchek.com/vital-records/puerto-rico>. St. Croix birth certificates requests can be mailed to: Department of Health, Vital Statistics, Charles Harwood Memorial Hospital, St. Croix, VI 00820 with a \$15 payment. Written requests for birth certificates from St. Thomas and St. John can be mailed to: Department of Health, Vital Statistics, Knud Hansen Complex, St. Thomas, VI 00802 with a \$15 payment. For more information on St. John and St. Thomas records, call 340-774-9000, ext. 4685.
- **Tax Records:** The Internal Revenue Service is reminding hurricane victims of the importance of reconstructing their records after a disaster, including getting copies of previous tax returns. Disaster victims can request a free copy of their tax return by calling 800-908-9946 or requesting it online at <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/get-transcript>.

TRANSPORTATION

- **Disabled and older adult options:** Many towns have transportation programs for disabled individuals, as well as older adults, that are available at a low-cost. To find these programs, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org and search the 🔍

keywords 'Disability Related Transportation' and 'Senior Ride Programs.'

- **Public transit:** Public bus and train services are options for individuals who may not qualify for some of the other transportation services. Contact information is available by dialing 2-1-1 or visiting www.211ct.org and searching the 🔍 keywords 'Local Bus Services' and 'Local Rail Services.' For programs that may provide discounted transit passes, search the keyword 🔍 'Discount Transit Passes.'