

**NEW GUIDANCE**

TITLE: Cash Advances and Options for Chapters to Provide Client Assistance

AUDIENCE: Service Areas

PURPOSE: To facilitate financial assistance to Hurricane Katrina clients.

We realize this is a stressful time and it is a **top priority to get much needed cash into the hands of clients as quickly and efficiently as possible**. Below are three options either available or in process.

***Unless a chapter still has Client Assistance Cards available, the most effective manner at this moment to disburse funds to clients is...***

**Chapter-Issued Checks, Disbursing Orders**

Chapters are using whatever means possible to provide cash to clients, including chapter-issued checks and Disbursing Orders. **If a chapter is running short on cash, you may use the following new streamlined procedures for transferring funds:**

1. The service area staff contacts chapters concerning their cash needs to perform the service delivery for Katrina clients.
2. The service area staff will enter the advance and payment request information directly to the Disaster Services Automated Reporting System (DSARS). The payment request requires two service area level approvals – usually the Senior Associate who enters the request and the Response Manager.
3. If a wire transfer is desired (same day transfer of funds to the chapter's bank account), the "electronic funds transfer" option in DSARS must be selected. Once this option is selected, the DSARS Advance Request is then printed and should be faxed to Treasury Operations for processing at 202-303-0163. Requests received in Treasury Operations by 2:00PM eastern time will be executed the same day. Every effort will be made to execute requests received after 2:00PM but, depending on the volume, they will likely be executed the next business day.
4. If a paper check is desired rather than a wire transfer, the "check" option should be selected. If the chapter wants the check sent via overnight delivery, there is an option to select "overnight" mail. A street address must be provided since overnight services do not deliver to PO boxes. DSARS will accumulate all check requests entered during the day and will automatically send a file to the Shared Services Center (SSC) shortly after midnight. The SSC will pull in the file from DSARS the next morning and will issue the check(s) that day according to the option selected in DSARS (regular mail or overnight mail).
5. A copy of the approved DSARS Advance Request should be sent by the service area to the DRO for their information.

If chapter requests outpace the service area capacity to enter them into DSARS in a timely manner, staff members in Field Card Services (1-800-967-2432) are available to assist in this process. In this case, the service area should fax the request to 202-303-0160 and it will be entered into DSARS and then forwarded to Treasury for processing.

Questions about DSARS can be directed to Mary Anne Kelly at 202-303-5286 or [KellyMa@usa.red.cross.org](mailto:KellyMa@usa.red.cross.org). Questions regarding the SSC's check process can be directed to Charlisha Hollingsworth at 704-943-6826 or [HollingswoC@usa.redcross.org](mailto:HollingswoC@usa.redcross.org). Questions for Treasury Operations can be directed to Larry Buckner at 202-303-8046 or [BucknerL@usa.redcross.org](mailto:BucknerL@usa.redcross.org).

### ***Secondly...***

#### **Client Assistance Cards - Status**

Client Assistance Cards remain a viable option for those chapters that have a supply. As you know, with the incredible amount of assistance being provided, the existing national stock of Client Assistance Cards has been depleted. An additional 30,000 cards are expected within the week and will be used to fill back orders from chapters. Approximately 400,000 more cards will be coming in between the 17th and 20th of September; however this is not expected to fully meet the short term demand. If you have additional questions contact [ClientCard@usa.redcross.org](mailto:ClientCard@usa.redcross.org) or call 800-967-2432.

### ***On the Horizon...***

#### **Call Center with Western Union Transfer of Funds**

In light of the demand for cash assistance outpacing our supply of Client Assistance Cards, a new program is being developed which will allow for a transfer of funds through Western Union to clients using a call center. This program is being tested this week and more information will be forthcoming shortly.

**It is critically important to make sure that chapter's understand up front what is needed to get reimbursed to assure the proper tracking, etc.** For guidance on how to get reimbursed for expenses incurred on a nationally accounted relief operation, see Preparedness and Response Connection 2005 -015, June 27, 2005 located on CrossNet at [https://crossnet.redcross.org/chapters/connections/2005-015\\_vendor\\_payment.pdf](https://crossnet.redcross.org/chapters/connections/2005-015_vendor_payment.pdf)

**If a chapter does request an advance, they also need to know up front what they will need to do to close it out.** Additional guidance will be sent out shortly on this as well.